

## WINGERWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 28 February 2007

**Present:** Cllr Mrs A Sainty (Chair)  
Cllr CE Hutchings  
Cllr PW O'Neill  
Cllr Mrs M Parker  
with Mike Taylor (Clerk)  
Cllr W Pickford  
Cllr J Ollis  
Cllr T Snowdon

#### **043/2007 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr SJ Ellis, Cllr T Fisher, Cllr K Moore, Cllr RAC Scothern, Cllr R Stafford and Cllr K Walker.

#### **044/2007 Grassmoor Composting Proposal**

The Chair welcomed Mr Steve Pearson, Derbyshire County Council's Waste Manager, to the meeting and invited him to make a short presentation about the proposal.

Mr Pearson outlined the proposal stressing that there was no connection with the Avenue site as the area relating to the proposal was on the far side of the railway line with access from the Grassmoor/Hasland road. He proceeded to describe the composting part of the application with the help of display boards. It would be located at the southern end of the long, narrow site. In addition to a reception area there would be two 3.5 metre square 12 metre long composting tubes and a covered maturation area where the composted material would dry out during a period of some three to four weeks.

In answer to questions from Members, Mr Pearson stated that the nearest dwelling to the plant was at least 250 metres distant and that the material to be composted would be from green bin collections. This could include waste food from domestic use but would not include raw animal products or other waste from industrial processes. The green bins would be those from North East Derbyshire District Council, Chesterfield Borough Council and Bolsover District Council. It was anticipated that about 90% of the green bin contents would be garden waste and cardboard with only 10% being domestic kitchen waste. The material sent to the plant would be exclusively from green bins from the three council areas and the plant would become an all year round operation as the local councils began green bin collections in the winter months.

A number of questions were raised about the rationale behind the selection of the particular process and the Grassmoor site. A visit had taken place to a site at Edmonton in London although the lay members present on the trip had not had their concerns eased, especially given the critical comments from local residents in the vicinity of that plant. Contrasts were made with plants – one near Cromford (already operating on a farmer's land), one at Etwell in Derbyshire (due to commence operation in April and run by BIFFA to deal with Staffordshire waste) and one at Morpeth (a SETA operation treating waste from the City of Newcastle). It was explained that these were differing processes – by way of example, the Morpeth plant took green bin and some of the black bin waste which meant the the output, known as grey compost, had only restricted use as with reinstatement or restoration work. In contrast the proposed plant at Grassmoor would produce a good quality compost with some 30% being bagged for retail sale and some of the rest approved for use on agricultural land.

Questions were raised about the extent to which alternative sites had been explored. Mr Pearson believed that some seven sites had been considered including one near Junction 29 on the M1, a couple in Staveley and one near Glapwell. It appeared that the Grassmoor site was selected mainly because it was appropriate and the owner was willing to sell. Countering suggestions that it would have been better sited on farm land where it was known that farmers were willing to either operate the plant or sell the land, Mr Pearson pointed out that such options were impractical due to the planning problems associated with land classified as green belt and open countryside. There was a question as to why the plant was not based at the site of the former Markham Colliery as it appeared an ideal location.

Members were keen to know the process of finding possible sites, the way in which selection criteria

were used and whether this information was available to members of the public. Mr Pearson was aware of a list of pros and cons relating to the Grassmoor proposal but was unable to go into further detail on matters of site exploration and selection criteria.

A number of concerns were raised about the possible impact of the Grassmoor application on the local community. Mr Pearson stated that fears about the installation of an incinerator at the Grassmoor site were unfounded as there was no intention to install one and in any case there was insufficient room for one on the site. In terms of traffic movement the maximum daily number of vehicles delivering waste to the site was in the range 15 to 20 trucks which could be easily accommodated on access roads.

Worries over the close proximity to the Avenue site were raised as was the possible threat posed by the proposed plant to plans for residential houses, outdoor sports facilities and nature reserves that were planned following remediation of the site. However Mr Pearson confirmed that the East Midlands Development Agency (emda) had been consulted and the agency had raised no objections to the composting proposals. There was some uncertainty about the strength of opposition expressed by North East Derbyshire District Council and Chesterfield Borough Council were believed to be in favour of the application provided that certain traffic concerns were satisfactorily resolved.

DEFRA and the Environment Agency had both undertaken research into the impact of waste processes and it was considered that any detrimental effect was minimal and, at 50 metres and beyond, non-existent. In response to other queries about planning issues and conditions, Mr Pearson stated that the Environment Agency would need more detail on the process proposed and that work would need to be undertaken on two Rother River culverts to bring them up to the "one in a 100 years flood" standard.

The discussion then moved on to the part of the application concerned with a Highways Depot for the County Council on part of the site. This would entail the relocation of the depot at the rear of the Tesco superstore in Chesterfield. It would continue to serve the north eastern part of the county and could not be expanded due to space constraints. The volume of heavy traffic for the depot would be in excess of that for the composting plant, but even so the expected overall increase on local roads would only be of the order of two to three percent and this was on roads that were currently at about 50% of capacity. Unlike the composting traffic, there would be some night traffic with the depot but this would mainly be for night time gritting in bad weather. However measures would be taken to minimise vehicle noise at night (as with reversing sirens) and the only other significant noise would be in the shredding section of the composting plant which would not operate at night. Similarly, measures would be taken to minimise light pollution. The salt/grit store would be fully contained in a leak proof store and any bits of spillage in the area would be trapped by an efficient drainage system with appropriate interceptors.

The Chair thanked Mr Pearson for the presentation and for answering so many questions from Members. She emphasised that the Council was not against re-cycling as it fully recognised its importance. However the Council was extremely concerned about the decision to locate the plant at Grassmoor when it was felt that there were much better locations that were well removed from homes and schools. Mr Pearson offered to deal with any further questions which could be forwarded to him at County Hall. *(Mr Pearson left the meeting at this point).*

On a matter of information, the Chair invited Mr Tom Blyth to update Members on the work of the campaigning group. Mr Blyth mentioned the unprecedented attendance at the open meeting recently held in Wingerworth and the work of an expanded committee. The feeling was that there were many holes in the proposals and that the plan would be easy to unpick. In particular it was felt that the proposals were based at Grassmoor largely because land was available and alternative sites had not been fully investigated. It was also felt that the process selected was a cheap version and that an investment in a more technologically advanced process was required. The group feared that there could eventually be an incinerator on the site which could mean that the Avenue site reverted to industrial use. Mr Blyth understood the constraints on the Parish Council and its Members which meant that such support as could be offered to the group was all the more appreciated. The group's website was regularly updated and he undertook to keep the Chair informed of any significant developments.

The Chair thanked Mr Blyth for his update and Members then agreed that the Clerk write to the County Council expressing the further concerns about the proposals to those already forwarded to District Council. These were that the exploration process to find possible sites had been insufficient and lacking in methodology; that there was a lack of confidence in the proper use of selection criteria in deciding on Grassmoor as the preferred site; and that there were increasing fears about the adverse impact on the health of the residents in the locality resulting from a composting site using the process detailed.

Resolved: that the Clerk writes to the County Council with expressing the further concerns of the Council about the Grassmoor proposals and that he makes reference to the seemingly overwhelming concerns about the proposals throughout the Parish.

**045/2007 Date of Next Meeting**

The Chair confirmed the date of the next meeting of the Council as Wednesday 7 March 2007 and reminded Members that the Grassmoor proposals would again be considered as an agenda item.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 9.22pm.