

LITTLE MUNDEN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the EXTRAORDINARY MEETING of the Parish Council (PC), held on 6th July 2015 at Little Munden Memorial Hall at 7.30 pm.

1. ATTENDANCE

Present were: Lizzie Bacon (LB) Chairman; Jonathan Pool (JP) Vice Chairman; Keith Williams (KW); Jenny Macintosh (JM); Keith Boulton (KB); Councillors. Geraldine Ward (Clerk).

Invited: Jim Sapsed, Indegro Ltd (applicant – Dane End Storage Lagoon); Charles Thomas, WISER Environment Ltd (representative of applicant); Frank Sapsed, L&F Sapsed (landowner); Councillor Paul Kenealy, Munden & Cottered Ward; Councillor James Cartwright, Puckeridge Ward.

Members of the Public: About 100 Parishioners

APOLOGIES: Darren Jones (DJ); Hannah Charvill (HC).

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

KW declared an interest in the application for the storage lagoon on the basis that he would be making use of the bio liquids as a source of fertilizer should the application be passed. He had previously informed the Council that he had had no input into the planning application or into the finances of the proposed lagoon.

3. APPLICANT'S STATEMENT

Explanatory statements were made on behalf of the applicant by his representative, Charles Thomas, and, briefly, by the applicant, Jim Sapsed himself. (Annexed to these minutes is a copy of an explanatory summary sheet presented to the meeting by the applicant.)

4. QUESTIONS TO AND ANSWERS FROM THE APPLICANT

The Chairman invited questions from members of the public and permitted a wide ranging debate for around an hour before she considered it appropriate to bring the Q&A session to an end. It is evident that those attending the meeting were unanimously against the proposed storage lagoon in Dane End on the basis of site location, (particularly traffic implications – increase in heavy vehicles, obstruction to bus services, narrow, country, potholed roads, already struggling with current levels of traffic, damage to verges, implications of winter freezing/flooding), road safety, scale of development, noise, potential odours, pollution risk from possible leakage, scheduled length of operating day, absentee operations' manager and landowner, financial standing of Indegro Ltd.

East Herts District Councillor James Cartwright impressed upon the meeting that objections should only be made on planning grounds, not on emotion. He also informed the meeting that both sides were entitled to just 3 minutes at the Planning Committee meeting on 22 July (which everyone is entitled to attend or view proceedings via webcast) to outline their case. If planning permission is refused, the applicant has a right of appeal; if it succeeds, those against cannot appeal.

5. PLANNING APPLICATION NO 3/15/1080/FUL – DISCUSSION BY PARISH COUNCIL ON KEY POINTS

JP stated that it was not the principle of a pit for the storage of digestate to which he objects – he recognises the eco and financial advantages of a nutrient rich organic fertiliser which is a bi-product of processed waste. What he is seriously concerned about is the proposal for a 3,500 square metre, 5 metre deep, 10 million litre storage facility

- within 200 metres of residential properties and local amenities,
- within 400 metres of the centre of Dane End village,
- with a throughput of 30 million litres of material annually,
- delivered by an estimated 1,200 in and 1,200 out 27-tonne capacity tankers,

- via minor country roads without pavements and street lighting,
- 12 hours a day, six days a week,
- distributed from the pit to the surrounding land via pipe and pump system,
- threatening road safety by obstructing public and school bus routes, and
- endangering children, young families, elderly pedestrians and cyclists, causing them to be vulnerable to serious, even fatal, injury.

The PC notes that there had been:

- no Odour Impact Assessment and
- no Environment and Accident Emergency Plan,
- nor, as pointed out by a member of the public, has there been a survey carried out as to whether the three bridges between Sacombe and Dane End would be able to withstand the projected increase in heavy vehicle traffic as a direct result of the deliveries to the proposed storage pit.

The PC welcomed the confirmation from the applicant that delivery access will only originate from the A602 at Sacombe Pound (i.e. there will be no 27-tonne tankers from the North along Munden Road through the centre of Dane End, nor via Benington and Whempstead), clarification that digestate stored would be only from an anaerobic digester processing food waste and the applicant's undertaking that the digestate will be distributed onto the land solely by umbilical pipe applicator ("pipe and pump system") and not by tractor-towed tankers ("back loaded into delivery vehicle" – NO TANKERS ON ROADS).

The PC also noted that (*despite the Planning Statement 5.1 (Management Operations) referring to "Where vehicle payloads are 27 tonne, this provides, on average, 4 deliveries per day"*) the applicant and his representative stated quite clearly that four deliveries of material per day is the MAXIMUM. JP queried the mathematics behind this statement given that the meeting had been told that there was a "closed period" from September to March.

JP is of the opinion that it ought to be possible to find a suitable 1¾ acre site immediately off the A602 trunk road which borders our communities to the south and west which can handle the increased heavy traffic without the need for 27-tonne capacity tankers to invade Sacombe Pound/Munden Road and then up Whempstead Lane and which will service local farmers' needs without the adverse impact of the present proposal on Dane End, Sacombe, Whempstead, Benington and surrounding hamlets?

In summary the PC accepts the principle of a storage pit of the type and size proposed, but strongly objects to its siting off Whempstead Lane for the reasons given above and additionally those expressed at length by the many members of the public who responded to the applicant's and his representative's statement.

6. PARISHIONERS' COMMENTS

A request was made for the Parish Council's agreement to fund costs of the campaign to prevent the construction and operation of the storage pit in Dane End. The costs to date are £1,250. The Council agreed to consider this request at the next meeting.

The meeting was brought to a close at 9.40 pm. The next meeting will be held on **Thursday 16th July 2015** at Little Munden Village Hall, at 8.00 pm.

Signed _____ Date _____
Chairman