BROME and OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of Brome and Oakley Parish Council held at 7.30 pm on Monday 14 April 2025 at Brome and Oakley Village Hall.

PRESENT: Councillors Roger Broughton, Isobel Demangeat, Kelly Keeley, Tom Pace and John Parry, representatives from EcoPower Suffolk and 12 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence – apologies were received from Cllrs Prior, Stockham and Doe.
2. Declarations of pecuniary and other interests from members on any item to be discussed and requests for dispensations

Cllrs Broughton, Pace and Parry declared an interest in matters relating to the Village Hall.
It was noted that Cllrs Broughton and Keeley had been granted a dispensation in relation to their pecuniary interest in the EcoPower Development. This dispensation would expire at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2026.

3. Public Forum

Representatives of EcoPower addressed the Council on the proposed NSIP Solar Farm development with sites in Brome identified within the proposal. The current non-statutory consultation would close on 22 April 2025, and as part of this consultation process EcoPower had been carrying out engagement events in local communities. EcoPower would work through and respond to feedback which has been received to date and encouraged further comments particularly on what residents felt were the most problematic elements of the proposal and what mitigations could be applied. It was noted that more than was currently available than was needed for the project and at the statutory stage of the consultation process defined boundaries and all technical details would be available.
The meeting was closed and the public forum commenced at 19.40 with residents asking questions of the EcoPower representatives. Questions asked and concerns expressed included; ownership, credibility and longevity of company status, engagement with other solar farm developers to assess the cumulative impact across Suffolk (it was confirmed that a cumulative impact assessment had to be submitted with the formal application), length of consultation process and opportunities for continued engagement and further consultation (EcoPower confirmed email and phone line would remain open after non-statutory consutation deadline but would prefer comments before the end of this consultation period), ethical production of solar panels and what policies EcoPower applied to their procurement. It was noted that Ecology and Transport surveys were still to be completed.
District Councillor Tim Weller provided a commentary to the report which had been supplied to council prior to the meeting whigh detailed a smaller solar array in Palgrave (Marsh Lane) which had come before planning at MSDC last week and been approved. Cllr Weller suggested it may be useful to look at the MSDC website for more details on how this application was was determined. Cllr Weller summarised what he was hearing in his council ward was that people were not against sustainable energy but were concerned with the volume that was happening in the area. Cllr Weller also explained that central government had set new housing targets and the allocation Brome and Oakley to be delivered in next 20 years was 70 houses and noted that the DDNP would support the figure being challenged or identify where the housing could be.
Cllr Broughton stated that the adopted planning policy which is the Diss and District Neighbourhood Development Plan had counted for nothing in Scole where the South Norfolk Council Planning Authority had permitted development contrary to the DDNP. Cllr Broughton asked if Mid Suffolk Council Planning would take a more favourable view for Brome and Oakley. Cllr Weller offered his support if an application was contrary to the adopted Diss and District Neighbourhood Plan.
At 20.07 Public forum ended and the Parish Council meeting resumed.

4. Minutes of the last meeting

a. The minutes of the meeting of 10 March 2025 were approved.
b. Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting of 10 March 2025 – none.

5. Planning

a. There were no planning determinations to note.
b. Non-statutory consultation for EcoPower Solar Farm Development – details of the proposed development had been considered by members who had also attended engagement event in Brome and

Signed R.D.L.C. Chairperson ..... Clerk

Date 19.5.2025

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Oakley Village Hall earlier in the month. Cllr Parry had provided a draft paper highlighting matters which should be included in the Parish Council's response to the non-statutory consultation. Members were asked to submit further comments on this to the Clerk who would formalise the response for submission to EcoPower before the deadline of 22 April.

c. Joint Parish Council Liaison Group to consider matters relating to the EcoPower Solar Farm Development would meet in Mellis on 16 April and it was agreed that either Cllr Broughton or Demanget would endeavour to attend.

d. No other planning matters.

6. Finance and Governance

a. The current financial position was noted as £5321.75 in current account and £4,055 in business account.

b. It was agreed to make the following payments.

Amount	Payee	Details
£248.06	Sarah Foote	Clerk's salary April 2025
£8.60	Sarah Foote	Clerk's expenses April 2025
£16.20	Sword and Trowel	Payroll Service
£267.00	Community Heartbeat Trust	Replacement battery for Village Hall defibrillator
£500.00	D H Electrical	Village Hall Project

c. The Asset Register for the year ending 31 March 2025 was approved.

7. Correspondence

The following items of correspondence were noted:

Date	From	Subject
03.04.2025	Suffolk Association of Local Councils	SALC AGM and 75th Anniversary
01.04.2025	Mid Suffolk District Council	NSIP and large-scale energy developments update
01.04.2025	Mid Suffolk District Council	Town and Parish Update April 2025

8. Urgent Matters and matters for report

None.

9. Date of next meeting – Monday 19 May 2025. Annual General Meeting of Parish Council.

Meeting closed: 20.37

Signed ..... Chairperson ..... Clerk

Date 19.5.2025