

# WETHERSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

REPRESENTING WETHERSFIELD, BLACKMORE END & BEAZLEY END



## MINUTES of the Wethersfield Airbase Scrutiny Committee Meeting held at Wethersfield Village Hall on Monday 29 January 2024, commencing at 7:30pm.

Present:

- Cllr A Hull (Chairman) (Shalford PC)
- Cllr R Duffin (Vice Chairman) (Finchingfield PC)
- Cllr P Kennedy (Great Bardfield PC)
- Cllr T Strudwick (Gosfield PC)
- Cllr A French (Shalford PC)
- Cllr C West (Wethersfield PC)
- Cllr J O'Brien (Little Bardfield PC)
- Cllr B Foulkes (Castle Hedingham PC)
- Cllr N Nicholson (Helions Bumpstead PC)
- Mr R Aggis
- Mr J Pearce
- D Roder (Clerk and RFO)

In Attendance: Members of the Public: 3

### **WA71/23-24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None

### **WA72/23-24 MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

None declared.

### **WA73/23-24 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 OCTOBER 2023.**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2023, copies of which had been previously circulated to Members, were confirmed as a true record, and signed by the Chairman. Proposer Cllr A French, Seconder Cllr T Strudwick.

Cllr R Duffin entered the meeting at 7.32pm

### **WA74/23-24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

1. A member of the public suggested organising a demonstration day over the operational traffic numbers received via an FOI to service two mega prisons. Cllr A Hull also suggested a further traffic survey maybe useful to compare with the previous one undertaken two years ago.

Cllr J O'Brien entered the meeting at 7.46pm.

2. A member of the WASC Technical Sub-Committee who has analysed the traffic assessment data, said it is clear that the impact will be far reaching. Due to the remote location of the prisons, staff are expected to come from an area covering 8000 square miles, and 69 various routes to the proposed prisons were identified impacting a wide-ranging area with an obviously huge increase coming through Wethersfield, Shalford, Finchingfield, Bardfield and Hedingham in particular. The report did not consider what specific mitigation would be required to overcome the overwhelming problems such as the pinch points at Finchingfield and Bardfield bridges.
3. Another member of the WASC Technical Sub-Committee also pointed out that a tsunami of cars will be on these roads at the end of each and every shift. These will not be staggered whatsoever and coincide with local rush hour traffic.

## **WA75/23-24 CLERKS REPORT**

### **WETHERSFIELD AIRBASE ASYLUM RECEPTION CENTRE / WASC & WPC UPDATE (Dec-Jan):**

The Clerk wrote to a joint letter to Micheal Gove, from WASC and TFA:

11 January 2024  
Rt Hon Michael Gove  
Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities  
2 Marsham Street London  
SW1P 4DF

Dear Mr Gove

#### **Use of Ministry of Defence Wethersfield Airbase as an Asylum Centre by the Home Office.**

We are writing to you with reference to the Home Office (HO) development of a large-scale asylum accommodation centre at the former Wethersfield Airbase (Airbase) in Braintree, Essex. The intention is to house 1,700 single male asylum seekers on the edge of the village of Wethersfield with a population of 700 residents in a remote, rural location. We are writing to you in connection with an expected Special Development Order to be laid before Parliament by the HO and an associated request to you for a Screening Opinion under Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations.

This is a joint representation by the Wethersfield Airbase Scrutiny Committee (formed by Wethersfield Parish Council under the Local Government Act 1972), which comprises representatives of thirteen parish councils in this part of North West Essex, together with The Fields Association, which is a residents association representing local residents and businesses across this area. The reason for this combined approach arises from the virtual unanimity of all people in this area, including asylum seekers, that this development is the **Wrong Plan in the Wrong Place** with deep concern at the impact on this remote rural area as well as the welfare of asylum seekers as widely reported.

Additionally, we are mindful of your responsibility for levelling up and declared interest that local communities should have a greater say in the planning of their area. In pursuance of this we are progressing a Neighbourhood Plan whilst Essex County Council has declared our area as a priority area for levelling up. Thus, we are hoping that you will be concerned at the very strong feeling in our area that, where Crown Land such as the Airbase is involved, large Government departments are riding roughshod over local communities and the Local Planning Authority (LPA) by progressing a totally inappropriate scale of development such as this by the HO and two so called Mega prisons by

the Ministry of Justice (MOJ). This riding roughshod is evidenced by the way these proposals have been handled and the general lack of transparency, as well as the recently enacted Levelling Up and Regeneration Act which gives the Government much greater freedom to develop Crown Land whether or not development is urgent, and the overturn of Inspector recommendations by you on recent prison proposals elsewhere in the country.

Insofar as the Asylum Centre is concerned, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Rt Hon James Cleverly, has expressed opposition to the HO proposals stating on 7th March 2023 "I highlighted the remote nature of the site, the limited transport infrastructure and narrow road network and that these factors would mean **the site wasn't appropriate for asylum accommodation.**" The housing of over 500 asylum seekers so far has also been implemented by the HO against the views of several Parish Councils (including Wethersfield and Finchingfield), Braintree District Council (BDC), Dame Priti Patel MP and charitable organisations and yet despite universal opposition there has been minimal scrutiny of the impact of the proposals on this area and the welfare of asylum seekers because the Government seems to be doing all it can to avoid submitting a planning application in the usual way. In our view, the site has significant environmental risks attached to it, including, inter alia, traffic, public safety, inappropriate segregation, pollution, sewage, contamination, safeguarding heritage assets, health, protection of natural habitat and rare species, landscape impact, poor design standards.

As your department is aware, the work to implement this use of the site from March 2023 has been carried out as permitted development under Class Q of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 2015 which permits emergency development on Crown Land for up to twelve months. It is accepted that the proposal constituted development which required screening under the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and as you may know, a Judicial Review was heard in the High Court during November, in part challenging the direction issued by you as the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, that the intended use of the site is not likely to have significant environmental effects based on use of the site for a temporary period of twelve months.

In her judgement of 7th December Honourable Mrs Justice Thornton accepted "There can be no doubt that the Planning Response Unit in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) proceeded on the basis the development it was required to screen on each site was a 12-month project."

"I accept the submission on behalf of the Claimants that the duration of use of the site is relevant for EIA screening and there is evidence to indicate that the use was likely to continue beyond 12 months. It is one of the criteria for screening set down in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations. However, it is also apparent from the evidence that no decision about the duration of use of the sites had been made by late March 2023."

"Development under Class Q is subject to the paragraph Q(l)(b) condition that it ceases and is reversed within 12 months. The development would only continue to operate beyond 12 months if there is further EIA screening and planning permission granted for the operation beyond 12 months. This is relevant to the assessment of whether the procedure being followed would have the effect of avoiding the requirements for the legislation, as in a salami slicing case (R (Together against Sizewell C) v SS [2023] Env LR 29 at 584)."

It was determined by the court that at the time of your direction in March 2023 the HO had not decided to proceed with the development on the basis that the use of the site would be for longer than the 12 months allowed under Class Q of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order. Yet a few days before the Judicial Review hearing the HO sent letters to BDC and West Lindsey District Council (which was also participating in the Judicial Review) informing them of its intent to use two airbases, including Wethersfield, for three years beyond the 12 months originally

claimed and relied upon when seeking the screening opinion obtained from you. Hon Mrs Justice Thornton has granted leave to appeal on "**compelling grounds**" and we understand an appeal has been lodged.

The HO has said that to extend the period of use that it would lay a Special Development Order (SDO) before Parliament and thus achieve its aims through a statutory instrument process effectively giving planning permission. This is expected quite soon together with a further screening request to you to cover the extended period. Yet again, despite the time that the HO has had to submit a planning application in the usual way, this could circumvent the ability of local communities and the LPA to properly understand and scrutinise the impact of another major Government proposal affecting our area, submit representations and if appropriate suggest suitable conditions.

Our understanding from the above is that in any SDO procedure that may be instigated, DLUHC will need to provide a further Screening Direction this time on the basis of a more permanent use. It is hoped that you will accept that in the longer term potentially very significant environmental effects arising from the HO proposals on this site warrant a full Environmental Statement before the development is allowed to proceed. This should be subjected to proper consultation with statutory undertakers, local authorities and the local community as expected in regulations. As recent experience illustrates, purported intentions for a temporary use can often become long term. Aside from the current use, the initial intended use of the airbase for the duration of the Second World War has endured for a further 78 years!

It is noteworthy that when the MOJ submitted a Screening Opinion request to the LPA at the end of 2021 in respect of the two proposed prisons it fully accepted the need for an EIA and the range of agreed matters covered in the Opinion identifying potential environmental effects was very extensive but appropriate to the site and surroundings. Many similar issues apply with the Asylum Centre particularly as HO advises that it intends to take transfer from the Ministry of Defence (MoD) of the whole 800-acre site, has made reference in papers obtained through FoI requests to **an additional detention centre**\* 1 and MOJ has indicated an intention to **progress its prison proposals "full steam ahead"**\* 2 . In our view HO should submit a planning application in the usual way but even if the SDO route is pursued an EIA should be undertaken so that the full impact of environmental effects can be properly scrutinised, appropriate consultation carried out and all assessment undertaken by competent experts in accordance with the statutory EIA process. As Government advice states "The aim of Environmental Impact Assessment is also to ensure that the public are given early and effective opportunities to participate in the decision-making procedures"

In our opinion, like the Scoping Opinion given by the LPA to the MOJ in response to its prison proposals, an EIA is necessary to review the environmental effects arising from the following key areas of concern: Transport, Traffic and Access; Air Quality; Noise and Vibration; Heritage; Landscape and Visual Impact; Ecology; Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation; Socio-economics and Human Health; Water Resources and Flood Risk; Archaeology; Ground Conditions and Contamination; and Lighting. In parallel, we believe it is important to note the project is entirely contrary to the adopted Local Plan, involves a very substantial quantity of poor standard built development in open countryside and forms part of a substantially larger area which the HO intends to acquire with clear intentions to develop. Very little assessment of likely effects was provided to your department by the HO on the earlier screening request by suitably qualified and experienced experts in these matters but this should be redressed with these longer-term proposals.

As an example of the standard of information given to you previously, we have considered the matter of contamination on what was a Cold War nuclear base. We have expressed to you previously our concerns regarding contamination on the base and the risks of placing 1,700 asylum seekers on the site without proper desk studies, ground investigations and mitigation. We provided your department with a report by respected consultants Buro Happold regarding this particular matter. On the evidence from Freedom of Information (FoI) requests received we believe that the

HO has generally relied upon reports which are inadequate and which have mainly been undertaken by the MOJ in relation to an area not covering that being used for the asylum centre.

We also have a contamination report undertaken by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation which was sent to us which states that there is no documentary evidence of nuclear weapons having been stored there\* 3 ! The HO needs to undertake a comprehensive contamination report covering the entirety of the airbase to show the risk from contaminants (such as, but not solely, the cancer risk from radium dust emanating from luminescent dials burnt in burning pits on the base — see the Ministry of Defence clean-up in Dalgety Bay, Scotland).

Similarly, other FOI requests inform us the MoD holds no records of firefighting training at Wethersfield\* 4 (fire-fighting foam has been a major pollutant on airbases world-wide due to its use of “forever chemicals” such as PFAS). This claim is not credible considering the long-term deployment of the Defence Fire Service by the MoD. Other examples of environmental effects of concern and deserving assessment relate to sewage, water supply and pollution. We know and the HO has been informed by us, that the mains sewage pipe from the airbase, which is privately owned, is subject to overflows on adjacent land. This was last occurring in 2021 when the Airbase housed perhaps 600 Ministry of Defence Police personnel during normal working hours. 1,700 asylum seekers 24 hours a day on site plus additional personnel will risk significant pollution despite the HO installing holding tanks to spread the flow. **As yet, no inspections of the sewage pipe outside of the Airbase have been undertaken and there have been no remedial works along that pipe to the Wethersfield treatment plant.**

We are further informed by Anglian Water that the water supply capacity to the site will not be adequate for further numbers of asylum seekers\*5 .

We would also need to understand if the disturbance of soil, over and above that indicated in the HO's submissions to you, has caused any pollution or contamination risks. We would request for this investigation to be actioned immediately as this is a direct risk to both people working and living on the site and the residents living in proximity of the work that has already undertaken.

There is deep concern within our communities that the cumulative impact of major Government projects would have a devastating effect on and be totally out of scale with what virtually everybody considers our beautiful, peaceful rural area.

Through FOI requests we are also now in possession of email correspondence between the MOJ and the HO which indicates substantial interest by the MOJ remains in respect of building two Mega prisons on the airbase. An email dated 9th November, 2023 states "TBA yesterday DLUHC deferred two new prisons planning appeal decisions yet again (2nd & 5th times) to 7 Dec. This means we now have even more of an imperative to go full steam ahead on Wethersfield - and as discussed, we already had one with the announcement of a new prisons sites development pipeline. I know there are some areas of potential conflict between our plans - I would be grateful if our teams could work these issues through in short order." (attached).

The revelation that the MOJ is still very much intent on the development of the Airbase for two Mega prisons, comprising a total of 3,430 inmates plus staff, puts an onus on DLUHC to consider the **cumulative impact** such a massive development combined with an asylum centre of 1,700 asylum seekers plus staff as well as a detention centre would have on such a remote area and small community.

The Fields Association recently visited the site, we can see there is strong risk the HO will not only fail on planning policies but is also at risk of breaching human rights and will be dealing with further lawsuits and rehousing. A simple example of this is the cramped portacabin accommodation (40-50 people in interlinked bedrooms) positioned on a high open plateau with toilet and shower facilities

in an outside block, behind barbed wire high fencing. As we approach winter, further issues are already raising their head at this site, not least in terms of rising tensions amongst groups of asylum seekers from different countries and differing cultural backgrounds. That fighting has already broken out between competing groups when the site is only one-third full foretells the folly of placing anything like 1,700 on the Airbase.

Additionally, although not within your remit, the fact that housing asylum seekers in portacabins in these conditions is more costly than doing so in hotels was shocking to find out as it has been a primary reason of the HO policy for using such sites.

We are supportive in our wards in rural North Braintree of working with the HO to help find a resolution to reducing the pressure on the asylum system, but we cannot support this helter-skelter approach which has been adopted in a panic because, as the HO has said, "the Asylum System is broken". It is only "broken" because the HO allowed it to reach such a stage of mismanagement. The processing of claims (the large majority of which are passed) requires continued resourcing whilst the dispersal policy needs further assistance and asylum seekers should be allowed to work (we were told by the HO that about 30% leave the Airbase and do not return anyway) - better they contribute to the workforce even if only on a temporary basis whilst their claims are being considered rather than effectively being incarcerated on the "Camp" as the asylum seekers refer to it.

The Fields Association is working hard to represent both our residents and the well-being of asylum seekers in our district (our members assist with English Language teaching on the Airbase), continuing on to the maximum target of housing 1,700 asylum seekers in Wethersfield is not viable.

To emphasise, Government advice on EIAs is that "The regulations set out a procedure for identifying those projects which should be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, and for assessing, consulting and coming to a decision on those projects which are likely to have significant environmental effects." "The aim of Environmental Impact Assessment is also to ensure that the public are given early and effective opportunities to participate in the decision-making procedures." We ask you as Secretary of State to reflect this advice and consider our views when you are asked by the HO for a Screening Opinion and any subsequent Scoping Opinion by supporting our strongly held contention that the proposal should require a full assessment of environmental effects.

We would hope that a sound EIA would influence a decision on whether to grant planning permission, even through an SDO, by highlighting the potential environmental risks and impacts associated with this development. We would expect decision-makers, including Parliamentarians, to be influenced by the environmental concerns raised in an EIA, and if necessary, reject a Special Development Order and hope that public awareness of all the issues and engagement in the EIA process will also aid decision-making in the way that you have advocated as part of community involvement in the planning process.

We hope you will give careful consideration to our views and thank you in anticipation of your response.

Yours sincerely

D. Roder  
N. Chapman

Donna Roder, Clerk and RFO Wethersfield Airbase Scrutiny Committee  
Nick Chapman, The Fields Association

For and on behalf of Wethersfield Airbase Scrutiny Committee and The Fields Association.

Appendices attached:

1. FOI 2023 05564 Annex A26
  2. FOI 2023 05564 Annex A27
  3. DIO UXO assessment July 2017 F attachment 4
  4. Extract from Stantec Report Former RAF Wethersfield – New Prisons Sep 2022
  5. Anglian Water Fol 9.8.23
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**Response received from Goves Office:**

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities  
2 Marsham Street London SW1P 4DF

Our reference: TO2024/01082  
18 January 2024

Dear Donna Roder, and Nick Chapman

Use of Ministry of Defence Wethersfield Airbase as an Asylum Centre by the Home Office

Thank you for your letter to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities dated 11 January 2024 about development by the Home Office at the former Wethersfield Airbase in Braintree, Essex to accommodate asylum seekers.

I understand that you would like a personal reply from the Secretary of State, but I am sure you will appreciate that he receives a significant volume of correspondence every day and it is not possible for him to respond personally to every letter. For this reason, most letters to him are therefore delegated to officials for reply. I can assure, however, that this response has not detracted from the careful consideration of your letter.

I hope you will understand that I cannot comment on the merits of your arguments because I must avoid prejudicing the Secretary of State's role in considering a request before him from the Home Office for a screening direction under regulation 7(1) of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

Please note, as you have made representations about a request that is before the Secretary of State, it may be necessary for the Department to make your letter available to a third party. This could be necessary if a third party made a request for information on representations made to the Secretary of State on the request for a screening direction from the Home Office. Any personal or identifying information would be removed before release.

Thank you for taking the time to write to us.

Yours sincerely,  
Carole  
Correspondence Unit

**OTHER CORRESPONDENCE AND INFORMATION:**

The Clerk wrote to BDC requesting they serve a stop enforcement notice to the HO at RAF Wethersfield. BDC advised they would not at this stage and awaiting outcome of the JR, but would keep this under review.

The judicial review took place at the High Court in London on October 31<sup>st</sup> and November 1<sup>st</sup> 2023. And a judgement reserved and announced in December that was not successful and Mrs Justice Thornton has determined the Home Office acted lawfully when making the decision to use the site for this purpose. We are awaiting to hear if BDC will appeal this decision.

Funding has come from central government at £3500.00 per bed at RAF Wethersfield. We are awaiting to hear how this can be spent in the Parish(s).

The Home Office are now going for a Special Development Order to continue the Asylum Centre at the airbase for a further 3 years. The Clerk wrote to the Rt Hon James Cleverley to object to this SDO and or ensure a full EIA is required as part of this special development order. Awaiting response.

The teams meeting with the Home Office in December was cancelled on short notice. It was then rescheduled but with only 3 hrs notice, subsequently nobody from the PC did attend. Next teams meeting is scheduled for 12 February 2024.

From an FOI seen, there were 28 ambulance call outs to the airbase during the month of November 2023.

BDC has announced that the costs incurred for the Judicial review would be passed back to residents across the district in next year council tax.

From FOI's seen, the MOJ are now going full speed ahead with the 2 mega prisons at RAF Wethersfield and working closely with the HO on it.

#### **WA76/23-24 SUB-COMMITTEES.**

Cllr A Hull gave an update on the FOI requests previously sent. The FOI request to the Home Office asking for the Accounting Officer Assessment and other relevant documents regarding the financial case for an AS centre at Wethersfield. Current response it that the information requires a safe space and further scrutiny on what can be released – ongoing.

The FOI sent to the MOD requesting information on the deployment of the Defence Fire Service at Wethersfield, for how many years and at what cost. In other documents it was stated that the MOD hold no records of firefighting training at Wethersfield, we know the DFS was deployed there for several decades up until 1990 and are part of the MOD, so we find it unlikely the MOD have no records or such activities at Wethersfield however, the MOD response to the FOI was that there has been no defence fire service at Wethersfield since the 1980's and therefore no records. Cllr A Hull sent back an official complain and requested an internal review.

The FOI sent to the MOJ asking for details of their facilities maintenance contract with Keir Group who are undertaking building work at Wethersfield under this contract, what building work and at what cost. £15M has been spent and a further request for a breakdown of this was sent and awaiting response.

There was a meeting between some residents and James Cleverley recently. James Cleverley attended as our MP not as the Home Office Secretary. He did however confirm the Home



Office are now the landowners and that the group should focus on the positives and develop their own masterplan for when the AS eventually closes and is decommissioned.

Furthermore, he did acknowledge operational difficulties with the asylum centre and felt it was approaching its natural capacity.

Dr R Sidebottom gave an update from the Technical Sub-Committee. They are working on a business case for an alternative plan for the airbase. Currently looking at agritech solutions, such as vertical farming, community solar, heritage centre and aligning with ECC climate change targets and BDC ambitions.

The Sub-Committee also sent correspondence to Michael Gove regarding the special development order which is expected to be laid any day now. The planning under Class Q regulations ends in March, and an SDO sought for a further 3 years. We are pushing for and EIA for this and any other uses that come forward. The AS site is 6 hectares however the development order will be for an addition 35 hectares which its use is currently unknown however, the same size for one mega prison.

#### WA77/23-24 FINANCE

WASC Finance			
Updated 1/1/24			
Invoices Received			
<u>Date</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount ex VAT</u>
27/02/2022	Captial Road Safety	Traffic Monitoring	£ 600.00
10/03/2022	Sedley Place	Prison Model	£ 2,137.50
01/03/2022	CBA	Mobilisation Payments	£ 2,000.00
28/02/2022	Andrew Martin Planning	Briefing note and research	£ 1,000.00
05/05/2022	CBA	Consultancy	£ 2,800.00
15/07/2022	Spectra Studios	Prison Model	£ 1,200.00
01/08/2022	CBA	Landscape assesment	£ 3,895.00
10/11/2022	CBA	Heritage application	£ 5,000.00
15/03/2023	T ROBERTS	WASC POSTAGE COSTS	£ 141.49
20/04/2023	BURO HAPPOLD	WASC DESKTOP CONTAMINATION	£ 4,950.00
20/04/2023	BURO HAPPOLD	WASC DESIGN NOTE ON EIA SCREENING	£ 500.00
04/07/2023	TRANSPORT PLANNING CONSULTANTS LTD	TRAFFIC ASSESMENT	£ 4,750.00
		<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 28,973.99</b>

<b>Income Received</b>			
<u>Date</u>	<u>Payee</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
21/02/2022	Shalford Parish Council	10% Contribution 21/22	£ 2,150.00
14/03/2022	Toppesfield Parish Council	Contribution	£ 500.00
11/04/2022	Little Bardfield Parish Council	Contribution	£ 300.00
08/04/2022	The Fields/SWAP	Grant	£ 5,000.00
05/05/2022	Great Bardfield Parish Council	Contribution	£ 1,000.00
18/05/2022	Finchingfield Parish Council	Contribution	£ 4,474.20
20/06/2022	Sible Hedingham	Contribution	£ 500.00
01/08/2022	The Fields/SWAP	Grant	£ 5,000.00
10/08/2022	Castle Hedingham	Contribution	£ 300.00
25/10/2022	Helions Bumpstead Parish Council	Contribution	£ 100.00
01/12/2022	Finchingfield Parish Council	Contribution	£ 4,748.50
17/06/2022	Shalford Parish Council	10% Contribution 22/23	£ 2,150.00
12/12/2022	Sible Hedingham Parish Council	Contribution	£ 2,375.00
24/01/2023	The Salings Parish Council	Contribution	£ 500.00
28/04/2023	The Fields/SWAP	grant	£ 3,500.00
22/05/2023	Little Bardfield Parish Council	Grant	£ 315.00
11/07/2023	Toppesfield Parish Council	Contribution	£ 500.00
06/10/2023	Shalford Parish Council	Contribution	£ 1,121.00
02/10/2023	Finchingfield Parish Council	Contribution	£ 2,000.00
24/11/2023	Gosfield Parish Council	Contribution	£ 250.00
		<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 36,783.70</b>
		<b>Current Position</b>	<b>£ 7,809.71</b>
		<b>EARMARKED RESERVES:</b>	
		<b>Finchingfield Parish Council balance remaining</b>	2000
		<b>Shalford Parish Council balance remaining</b>	1121
		<i>Wethersfield Parish Council contribution Clerk and Hall Hire (£6500.00)</i>	
		<b>Spending in the pipeline resolved:</b>	
		Water testing	1000
		Photo's	200
		BH report	5000
		<b>Total:</b>	<b>6200</b>
		Current balance	7809.71
		less spending agreed	6200
		<b>Current actual position minus pipeline spending:</b>	<b>1609.71</b>
		Plus 50% of earmarked reserves:	
		finchingfield pc	2000
		shalford pc	1121
		<b>Current balance minus pipeline spending plus earmarked reserves</b>	<b>4730.71</b>

## **WA78/23-24 JOINT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN.**

The working group met with senior official's at BDC last week. From the survey results and other talks with residents and businesses here, there were 770 responses. From analysis peoples fear is that big infrastructure will destroy the villages. BDC were impressed with the work done so far on the plan and the speed in which it had been completed.

**WA79/23-24 SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER (SDO) AT RAF WETHERSFIELD.**

The Sub-Committee sent correspondence to Michael Gove regarding the special development order which is expected to be laid any day now. The planning under Class Q regulations ends in March, and an SDO sought for a further 3 years. We are pushing for and EIA for this and any other uses that come forward. The AS site is 6 hectares however the development order will be for an addition 35 hectares which its use is currently unknown however, the same size for one mega prison.

**WA80/23-24 RAF WETHERSFIELD MUSEUM**

After almost 2 years now since the MOD evicted the heritage museum off the site, and with no support from the local authority or central government since, the museum announced it will close at the end of March 2024. Thankfully BDC made contact at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, as did James Cleverly MP to try and save the museum. The 3.5K funding per bed at the Asylum Centre has now been received by BDC and rightful that this funding can help the museum with funding. There is a further meeting with BDC this week, who are working with the HO to find a suitable building at the airbase. A community led trust will be formed to receive the funding. WASC members confirmed they would take this topic back to their own PC's for further discussion and support.

**WA81/23-24 ITEMS FROM COUNCILLORS TO BE ADDED TO THE NEXT AGENDA**

*All items should be sent to the Clerk by 19 February 2024.*

**WA82/23-24 NEXT MEETING OF THE WETHERSFIELD AIRBASE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:**

The next meeting of Wethersfield Airbase Scrutiny Committee will be held on Monday 26 February 2024 at Wethersfield Village Hall.

The Chairman thanked everybody for attending and declared the meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Signed: .....  
Chairman

Date: .....