

WETHERINGSETT CUM BROCKFORD PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held Monday 12 September 2016

Present: Cllrs R Anscombe (Chairman), Mrs E Aldred, Mrs A Arnold, B Lacey and J Leadbetter.
District Cllr G Horn and three members of the public

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllrs M Baker, Miss J Canham, Mrs C Nickson, Ms S Payne, Mrs S Perry and T Alston.
2. **Declarations of interest relating to item on the agenda** – none.
3. **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Mr and Mrs Daley, Potash Cottage stated they were in attendance to put forward their concerns regarding the MSLR planning application 2691/16. As near neighbours to the proposed extended track they raised the following concerns :

For operational and technical reasons the track would actually be closer than 125m to their property.

This close proximity would adversely impact on their amenity and enjoyment of their home due to the noise, smell, smut and smoke generated by the engine and this had been confirmed by MSDC during 1998 when a similar application had been refused at a time when the MSLR was only able to run trains for 12 days per year.

The MSLR now appeared to be a commercial facility operated from a very quiet area. During the summer months there would be a restriction on opening windows due to the aforementioned smoke, smut and noise.

The braking noise of the engines was above unacceptable levels.

There was no reference to the engine idling noise.

Continued slamming of train doors by people visiting proposed Wilby Halt.

The published list of steaming events was not correct. The current permission allowed 30 steam events a year, the MSLR were running 35 steam event days running until 7.30pm instead of the permitted 5pm.

The mid week steaming days were not published on the list.

If the MSLR were not adhering to the conditions at present there were concerns any additional conditions would not be adhered to.

There appeared to be no monitoring or control of conditions by MSDC.

The size of the proposed Wilby Halt, 50m long, appeared excessive and the proposed building was not replacing a previous construction.

Would parish council comments be taken into account by MSDC Planning.

Mr and Mrs Daly believed the proposed track extension and Wilby Halt would have a huge impact on their residential amenity and would affect the way their home was used in the future due to the level of noise and nuisance. Working away from home from 7am – 7pm during the week the proposals would impact on enjoyment of their home at weekends (the Home Rights Act provides a statutory right for enjoyment of a property by the occupier).

Mr Stuart McKenna, Blacksmiths Cottage expressed concerns over access to the Wilby Halt and the single track Joes Road. He believed visitors would try to gain access via Joes Road currently used by farm traffic and it was naïve to think that visitors would not try to gain vehicular access via that route.

Mr McKenna's other concern related to the destruction of the hedge line, Joes Road was a well established bird lane.

District Cllr Horn confirmed that the views of the Parish Council would be taken into account alongside all other comments submitted to the District Council Planning.

The Chairman thanked parishioners and Cllr Horn for their comments.

4. **To consider Planning Application 2691/16 : Mid Suffolk Light Railway** – relaying existing standard gauge track on existing track bed and erection of new Wilby Halt – additional information

The Chairman reminded the meeting the parish council had been asked to consider the application following submission of the revised D & A statement clarifying the distance of the proposed new track and the information now provided by the near neighbours as summarized during the public session.

Members debated the current application raising concerns over the loss of amenity to Potash Cottage and the residents' statement of lack of adherence to the current planning conditions.

Other concerns raised included potential danger to walkers due to the interference of the public right of way, although the planning application stated this would be monitored and manned when a train was on the track; disruption to the established hedgerow and potential insufficient car parking.

Visitors would be able to leave the train at the proposed Wilby Halt to view the building, they would not however be allowed to leave the station nor join the train at Wilby Halt. It was understood the purpose of the building was to increase the visitor experience but the proposed Wilby Halt was not replacement of a former building.

The Chairman stated his concerns related to the loss of amenity to the residents of Potash Cottage and the close proximity of the proposed track to their property and secondly the arrangements to man the public footpath did not appear to fall within the Parish Council's duty of care to ensure a public right of way was clear, unobstructed and safe.

The size of the proposed Wilby Halt was also felt to be inappropriate in such a rural setting and the need versus loss of amenity was questioned.

Regarding car parking, adequate car parking would rely on future availability of the current meadow.

Cllr Mrs Arnold added there was much support for the railway in the village and she had been approached by residents of Hockey Hill who were very supportive and it was reported the railway had just been awarded lottery funding.

Following conclusion of the debate the Chairman asked for a proposal in support or not of the application. Taking all items raised into account Cllr Leadbetter proposed a recommendation to MSDC that the Parish Council did not support the application on the following grounds:

1. Loss of amenity to Potash Cottage
2. Potentially dangerous arrangements regarding the manning and monitoring of the public right of way
3. The size of the proposed Wilby Halt was too extensive
4. The necessity for the Wilby Halt.

Seconded Cllr Mrs Aldred. 4 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention. Proposal carried.

The Chairman thanked all for their attendance at the meeting.

5. **Date of next meeting: Monday 3 October 2016, 7.30pm at the Village Hall.**

Meeting closed 8.50pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date: