

Stockton on Teme Parish Meeting
Thursday 3rd September 2015
7.30pm

Apologies:

Jo and Coral Gaunt , Steve and Di Norris, Ed Pepperall, Sally Webb, John and Hayley Williams,
Councillor Christopher Dell

Attendees:

Margaret Danby (chair), Sioux Breeze-Derrigan (clerk), WCC Councillor Ken Pollock, Terry May, Paul Danby, Sue and Duncan Fisher, Brian Marsh, Jamie and Jo Probert, Derek and Sandra Jabbett, Kate Fitzpatrick, Susan Dufton, Colin and Urzula Bancroft, Bill Webb, Cheryle Spice, Sheila Craig, Lesley Beesley, Vicki Godwin, Katherine Edwards, Mary Holloway, Mark Childe, John Sinnett, David Sinnett
From Pensax: Rob Gready (Chairman of Pensax Parish Council), Jim and Gail Stanhope, Sue Martyn-Smith, L Randell, Luke Grant

Representing Renewable Power Exchange Ltd: agent Anthony Buckley

Papers tabled: County Councillor Report from Cllr Ken Pollock

- 1 The Chair welcomed everyone and read out the apologies offered.
- 2 The Chair asked those who had attended the previous meeting to certify that the minutes were a true recording of what had taken place – these were ratified.
- 3 There were no matters arising other than ones previously circulated.

4 Solar Energy Farm Planning Application

The Chair gave an overview to all of those present about the recent Solar Energy planning application. We had been requested by MHDC to indicate whether the Parish Meeting recommended approval or refusal of the planning application and that at the end of the discussion we would record votes for and against and submit the majority vote to MHDC. It was clarified that anyone could make comments about the application via Development Control at MHDC. Also that people outside of the Parish would not be able to cast a vote at this meeting. The Chair stated that this was a sensitive matter and reminded all those present that everyone is entitled to an opinion and to please respect that. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the application submitted. Those present should be mindful to separate fact from opinion and bias.

Councillor Pollock explained that the County Council does not endorse planning; that is the role of MHDC. However, WCC would fall in line with National Government in that they would not support the conversion of agricultural land to solar farms when brown field sites, reclaimed landfill sites and waste land might be used instead. Cllr Pollock also spoke briefly on other points in his report.

Discussion ensued about the pros and cons of the Solar Energy application. Key points raised were:

- Trees will be planted to screen the proposed site.
- Errors of fact in the planning application – e.g. the planning application clearly stated that consultation had taken place when in fact no one had been contacted or was aware of the proposal.
- Concern about how this application was being administered - the Council hadn't notified everyone who would be affected by it.
- The application misrepresented the impact of the installation - the proposed site is highly visible to a number of dwellings within the village.

- This application could be the thin end of the wedge as there is a great deal of grade 3 land around here.
- Expansion of the number of solar panels in the area is unlikely as once a converter is full it cannot be extended, but, the advancement of technology and the ability for greater power to go into a converter could lead to more solar installations.
- Concern about the level of noise the proposed installation would generate the level of light reflection and boundary lights. Anthony Buckley explained that boundary lights would be infra-red and mounted on ten foot high poles. The trespass warning would be an audible human warning via a localised speaker with a 10-15 metre zone. Its noise level would be the equivalent of a raised voice. He had no idea as to how many of these devices would be placed around the perimeter. The 75mm posts outlined in the proposal would create no noise pollution during installation as they would need only to be driven into soft clay.
- An environmental impact survey was requested by planning officers; the applicant provided a preliminary ecological appraisal.
- It was confirmed that there would be two points of access to the proposed installation site, one opposite Stockton Court Farm and an alternative off Pensax Road. It was proposed that the equipment would be delivered to John Sinnett's farm and transported on from there. An access road would be built out of membrane with a hard core surface.
- The installation would feed power back to Ludlow.
- After 25 years the proposed site would be returned to its original state.
- Pensax input: Pensax Parish Chairman stated that they would be discussing this proposal at their next parish meeting. He had two key concerns about this particular proposal in that the area is a great natural landscape and is designated so in the structural plan of the area and also the how visibly intrusive this proposed site would be. He was concerned also about the opportunity of the wider spread of this type of installation. A Pensax parishioner raised concerns regarding access via the heavily trafficked Pensax Road and the impact on its already poor condition.

Anthony Buckley noted concerns raised, especially about solar panels on the ridge and on rising ground which would be highly visible to several homes, and undertook to consult with the developer to see if changes could be made. Also that consideration would be given to planting a copse rather than hedging to give more screening. He agreed to compile a photo montage of what the proposed site would look like. If the developers were in agreement, he would seek a deferment in order to submit an amended application to MHDC and would email the revisions to the Chair.

The Chair interceded to confirm that proposed amendments now being discussed were not what had been originally submitted to MHDC on the planning application. This was confirmed as correct.

The Chair reiterated that we needed to vote based on the plans that had been submitted to MHDC, not on possible amendments that had been discussed prior to or during the meeting.

The Chair asked for a show of hands for those who

- Approved the proposed application in its current format – 4
- Reject pending further information and amendments - 15
- Abstentions 5

The vote was carried to reject the current application. The chair will indicate in our response to MHDC that we understand that the developer will be submitting new updates.

A further meeting will be called to consider the revised application. A general debate ensued regarding how best to equitably engage with the entire Parish as some did not have access to IT or were unable to attend meetings. It was agreed that a leaflet drop should be undertaken to increase

inclusion and awareness of the planning proposal and that the proposed plans would be displayed in the church as well as being available online and circulated via email by the Chair. The Chair is to request a representative from MHDC and the District Councillor attend the next meeting.

Queries were raised about a deferment and whether we would be consulted by MHDC again but no-one present was able to resolve them. The Chair is to contact MHDC for clarification.

5 Parish Marquee.

We have two marquees one of which leaks and another is short of a panel. There is not a high demand for use (lent out twice in the last year). It was proposed that we use a panel from the leaky marquee to create one fully operational one, the leaky one being discarded.

Vote:

Recommend we use one marquee 11

Against/Buy a new one 0

Abstain 0

Charges for rental are £45 for non-Stockton residents.

It was proposed that Stockton residents should pay a nominal amount £20

Yes – majority vote

The availability and new charging structures should be advertised in the Teme Span.

6 Parish Finances

It was proposed that the parish precept be raised to a total from all parish households of £450. A vote was taken:

Yes 19

No 0

7 AOB

A reminder that the Church Bazaar is taking place on the 26TH September. Any items such as books, bric a brac, cakes would be very welcome. Contact Sue Fisher for further information.

Brian Marsh – questioned the progress on clearing the roadway between bottom of Stockton to the top. Margaret Danby to pursue with Ken Pollock.

Paul Danby announced that he is intending to retire as Parish Lengthsman at the end of March 2016.

Meeting closed at 09.25