

Stockton on Teme Parish Meeting Monday 5th October 2015

Extraordinary Parish Meeting to consider amendments to the proposal for the Application for a Solar Energy Farm and ancillary equipment.

Attendees: Margaret Danby (Chair), Sioux Breeze-Derrigan (Clerk), Councillor Chris Dell 51 Stockton residents and 6 visitors from neighbouring parishes.

Prior to the meeting Kate Fitzpatrick updated all those attending about the recent funds raised by the Stockton Bazaar and how hard Sue Fisher had worked in organising of the event. She also mentioned the Stockton Quiz being held at the Bridge at Stanford and the Harvest Service.

Margaret Danby opened the meeting, recognised that the meeting had a good turn out and thanked those attending.

The chair stated that Gill Farmer (Councillor for Stanford and Orleton) had died last week from a cardiac arrest and commented on the sadness of her passing.

The Chair stated at the outset of the meeting that its purpose was to consider the revised planning application and urged people to stick to the facts. She asked that only one person speak at a time – in order to assist everyone in hearing what was being said.

The Chair explained that there would be a secret ballot at the end of the discussion and that several of those who were unable to attend the meeting had sent in their votes in advance. Councillor Chris Dell had agreed to be the official overseer of the count.

Purpose of meeting was to decide whether to recommend to MHDC that they approve or refuse the solar energy farm application in the light of amendment/further information that had been submitted by the developers.

The Chair then reminded those present of the decision and supporting notes that were submitted to MHDC following the Parish Meeting on the 3rd Sept. The chair stated that the amended plans and additional information were on the MHDC website as well as having been displayed in the Church for over a week in order that the village could access the information.

The chair went on to explain that planners are most interested in comments that relate to 'Material Considerations', which include Government and local policies and guidance, planning and ministerial statements, layout, density, privacy, daylight, access, traffic, design, appearance, noise, smell and planning history.

Our focus must be whether we want to change our decision or restate our previous decision in the light of the amendments and updates.

One of the very recent updates was the Flood Risk Assessment, which included the construction of a holding pool to temporarily store water run-off during periods of prolonged rain.

The Chair noted that we had discussed many aspects of the original planning application at the previous meeting so at this meeting we need only focus on new or additional comments based on the revised/additional materials submitted by the developer.

The Chair then asked those present for any considerations that they wished to raise.

Philip Morgan - Ecological impact beyond the site needed to be considered, especially as Pensax Wood is a designated site of local wildlife interest. Worcestershire Wildlife Trust are currently investigating the potential impact.

Jamie Probert commented that an inverter house appeared on the amended plan in a field remote from the site which wasn't on the original plans. John Sinnett responded that he didn't know how it came to be there, saying that it was a mistake. Bill Webb, in whose field the stray inverter was placed, stated that he didn't know about it and would not allow it on his land. The Chair confirmed that the developer's planning statement says there are 5 inverters but that they have verbally confirmed there will only be three. Brief discussion about this ensued, resulting in the chair agreeing to recommend that Malvern Hills request a further amendment to clarify the situation. Ed Pepperall stated that we should vote on the application's merits as a whole, not on the mistake.

Sandra Jabbett stated that photographs submitted by the developers had been taken down from the website as they were not a true representation.

The Chair asked if there were any further comments, which there were not. The Chair then sealed the voting box in front of everyone. The ballot papers received from absent voters were added to the box then it was passed around Stockton voters, who had received their voting slips on signing in.

Councillor Dell observed the opening of the ballot box and the counting process. All votes were double checked and later the unique number on each ballot paper was checked to ensure that there were no duplicates.

The outcome was:

Recommend Approval 24

Recommend Refusal 45

The Chair read out the results to the meeting and stated that Stockton Parish Meeting would therefore recommend refusal of the application.

The Chair re-iterated that the recommendation reflected the view of the Parish Meeting as a corporate body and recommended that individuals should contribute their views, whether for or against the proposal, to Malvern Hills District Council – details of the email and postal addresses would be circulated by email.

The Chair thanked all those who had attended and the meeting closed at 20:18.