

## ERCALL MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at 6.30pm in Ellerdine Village Hall.

**Present:** Councillor R Wickson (Chairman)  
Councillor K Connor  
Councillor G Barrow  
Councillor E Aston  
Councillor M Ward

In attendance: Councillor S Noyes-Thomas  
Councillor S Taylor  
Councillor L Hughes  
Councillor S Bentley  
5 Members of the public  
Katrina Baker, Clerk

### **2023.01.166 Welcome & Introductions**

The Chairman, Councillor Wickson, welcomed members and thanked them for attending. All Members of Erccall Magna Parish Council had been invited to this meeting in order to hear the views of residents on the current solar farm application for land at Osbaston. This application appears on the Full Council Agenda for consideration.

### **2023.01.167 Apologies for Absence**

None

### **2023.01.168 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor S Bentley                      Member of the TW Planning Committee

### **2023.01.169 Minutes of the last meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022**

It was proposed by Cllr Connor and Seconded by Cllr Barrow, that the Minutes of the last Planning Committee meeting, held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, be accepted. With two abstentions, all were in favour and thus it was

<b>RESOLVED that the Minutes of the last Planning Committee be signed as a true record at the next available opportunity.</b>
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### **2023.01.170 Matters Arising**

None

### **2023.01.171 TWC/2023/0064          Erection of a Solar Farm at Osbaston, Near High Erccall**

The Chairman gave a short presentation on the application which is for a 49.9MHZ solar farm covering 90 hectares.

A public consultation had taken place in Ellerdine Village Hall on 16<sup>th</sup> November where 35 members of the public attended, with some Parish Councillors to hear from the applicant and agent. The community engagement report is included within the application and details of the comments were available. There appeared, at that time to be three main concerns: construction traffic, appearance and noise.

Traffic

It is stated that construction will take around 8 months with access to the site from Crab Tree Lane only. They will appoint a Traffic Marshall and all vehicles will be parked inside the site boundary. A Logistics Co-ordinator will schedule deliveries for between 9.30am and 3pm to reduce congestion. There will be wet and dry areas to assist in keeping the highway clear of mud.

They anticipate 4 – 5, 2 way movements each week day increasing to 6 HGV movements during the middle phase of construction. A similar number would be expected when the site is decommissioned. There will be a workforce of 50, with operations 7am until 7pm Monday to Friday and 7am until 2pm on a Saturday during construction.

During its operational life, they state 12 traffic movements per year for maintenance.

Appearance

Details can be found in the Biodiversity Report. They intend to plant 1.5km of hedgerow and 3.07ha of new woodland consisting of 34 broadleaf trees.

The majority of the site is classed as 3b (59.72 (66%)).

Noise

The noise assessment reports no significant increase in noise levels near to houses. A full archaeological survey states that there is a low to medium risk of some disturbance.

The landowner and agent have been in touch with local residents regarding their specific concerns.

Comments regarding conditions have been noted from Shropshire Council and West Mercia Police.

#### **Comments from the public:**

Connection to the National Grid – if this is by cable, how will it proceed from Osbaston to Hortonwood? This would have a significant impact on land and highways along the route.

Is there capacity as National Grid is receiving around 600 applications per year?

Is there a waiting time for connection?

Is it right the Government are looking to stop solar farm applications on agricultural land or at least have tighter regulations – this is good quality land in places?

The application is very vague re connection, presumably they won't build without knowing they have a connection?

What about environmental impact statements?

Significant impact on this site and the route to Hortonwood, with loss of hedgerows, trees and effects on highways. They will need contractual agreements with all landowners.

Query about the landscaping plan, and the biodiversity net gain – is this also related to the poultry unit and not necessarily the solar farm?

Would there be an expiry date for permission?

Would want to see the written scheme of investigation relating to the archaeological statements from Shropshire Council.

Are the containers to be sited away from residential properties?

Walton will have an elevated view point – planting essential to avoid glare.

Flood risk assessment – TW engineers to review.

Degradation of rural countryside – cumulative effect and impact – Greenhous Village, Chicken houses and now this – become more urbanised.

Will the traffic management plan throughout construction be effective?

The Chairman reminded members of the public of the importance of them submitting their own views on the e-planning portal direct to Telford & Wrekin Council, using the reference number TWC/2023/0064.

Members of the Public and other Parish Councillors left the meeting.

Members will keep in mind the comments received when considering this application at Full Council next week.

In the meantime, Members of the Planning Committee asked the Clerk to respond to Berrys regarding the offer of a £50,000 community benefit, unconditionally offered. The Parish Council will request an initial payment of £10,000 on planning approval, £20,000 when work commences on site and a further £20,000 on or near completion.

The Parish Council would also like to see some of the landscape planting undertaken as soon as possible after approval in order that it has time to establish, particularly the areas of 'screening' where close to residential properties.

With regards to the view of the site from Walton, which is elevated, tree and hedgerow planting to be completed as soon as possible to reduce the visual impact.

**2023.01.172 Date of the next meeting**

To be advised, as required.

There being no further business, the chairman thanked everyone for their important contributions to a successful meeting, and closed the meeting at 7.20pm

Signed .....Date .....