

WARTLING PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

held on 26th January 2023 at The Reid Hall

87 Present

Cllrs K Stevens (Chairman), W Reid and M Shine.

Mr Kevin Parr from Enzygo and sixteen members of the public were also present.

88 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Paterson and E Ashley.

89 Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 14th December 2021

The Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on the 14th December 2021 were read, approved by all and signed by the Chairman.

90 Matter's Arising from the previous meeting.

There were no matters arising on this occasion.

91 Disclosures of Interests

No disclosures of interests were declared.

92 Planning Applications

The meeting was suspended at this point to allow those present to ask questions.

It was pointed out that this application is very similar to the original proposal. Another storage unit similar in size on slightly higher ground. It will not be hidden by the screening and sound could easily travel to Boreham Street. It appears that no soundings were taken from this area. The visual impact will be detrimental as it overlooks the marshes which given there RAMSAR classification should be protected. Surely a better site could be found not so close to properties.

In response the applicant explained that the location had been selected because (1) It was near a point of connection to the National Grid and (2) The land is available, is accessible and has been assessed. Noise will not come here and the landscape scheme, with the units set into the hillside, has undergone a landscape visual assessment. The units will not be on the skyline as they are set down. There will also not be any changes to the field boundaries.

The question was asked why there as there must be other locations not so close to Pevensey Marshes and further away from residential properties. Again it was explained that the location was chosen because of its accessibility and the need to feed into the National Grid at that point.

It was then asked if the electricity would be taken from the National Grid and then fed back in at peak times or is it a precursor to a Solar Farm. It was confirmed that the use is to store electricity to be used at peak times and there is no intention of developing a Solar Farm especially as there is no capacity elsewhere.

Concern was expressed as to whether or not the pending application for a Solar Farm with battery storage at the back of Boreham Street which will fed into the grid far down Boreham Lane is necessary. That project has nothing to do with the applicants but it was pointed out that there is a need for more electricity as we need resilience in the National Grid system given the growing demand and the growth in electric cars.

Again the applicant was asked if they had looked at other sites without all these drawbacks that will ruin the valley and affect people's houses. The response was that they don't think it will and that the units will look more like agricultural buildings. Had they assessed the views from Boreham Street properties given many of the properties have a clear view and the site can be seen from every back room in some houses? The same point was raised by residents living in Boreham Lane. The applicant confirmed that they had walked over the whole area including Boreham Lane and that the cabinets will be reasonable difficult to see. Given the size of the units are 2.8m high, 1.3m long and 1.3 wide and that there will be 500 of them most people disagreed with this viewpoint.

It was also pointed out that this area has an abundance of hunting owls. They hunt by sound which could be disrupted by noise from the battery units.

The unit feeding into the grid is 6.3m high and thus very visible. The planned screening appears inadequate as it needs mature trees. Concern was expressed that it is not a good area for trees given weather conditions and the effect of salt being blown in. The applicant said conditions could be introduced to plant mature trees, which would be replaced if they died within 5 years and that the trees would be looked after by professionals. It was also agreed that a mix of the variety of trees was necessary.

The plans indicate that the units will be white. The applicant agreed that green or camouflage would be better.

As regards noise the applicant agreed to check the impact assessment and how it might affect Boreham Lane.

It was then pointed out that there is a flooding issue in the valley and the concrete plinths will not help the situation. It was explained that the area is high up and in a flood zone 1. There will be drainage control. The concrete will be impervious and not solid concrete.

Concern was expressed about the construction time table of 18 weeks which could stretch to 6 months depending upon the weather. 8 to 10 lorry movements a day.....about 270 in all....is going to break up the Lane. After completion there will be nominal movement...probably just a maintenance van from time to time. It was also mentioned that lithium batteries don't last so long and certainly not the 25 years of the project. It was explained that the developer will be responsible for replacements. He will also have to see the land returned to how it looks now when the project ceases.

Residents returned to their concern that solar panels will follow but the applicant was insistent that they have no interest in solar panels. It was also explained that there is currently no grid capacity and licences are not being granted so unless developers have a licence now it is going to be quite a while before anything further can happen.

Finally it was highlighted that all the photos in the application have been taken from a low trajectory none have been taken from properties high up such as in Boreham Street. It was agreed this would be looked into.

The meeting was then re-opened.

The following planning application was considered;

WD/2022/3191/MAJ - Land at Olives Farm, Hooe, TN33 9HD - Development and operation of a battery energy storage facility and associated infrastructure including boundary treatment and access works – Wartling Parish Council objects to the application because;

- i. The viewpoints selected in the visual appraisal are some considerable distance from the site but do not include Boreham Street and Boreham Lane. The units are white and will stand out. They need to be green or camouflaged. The visual impact of these 500 units will be detrimental to the area, especially as it overlooks the Pevensy Marshes, a RAMSAR site of great importance.
- ii. The screening is inadequate. There needs to be mature trees and a planning condition imposed which commits the developer to maintain them for at least five years until they are established.

- iii. The battery unit is too close to an existing property and needs to be moved.
- iv. The Noise Impact Statement needs to be reviewed to include Boreham Lane.

93 Questions from Members

There were no further questions and the meeting closed at 2.50pm