

Barkestone, Plungar & Redmile Parish Council

Minutes of the Extra-ordinary Parish Council meeting from Thursday 26th November 2020 at

7:00pm
via **ZOOM**

Present: Councillors Lowther (chair) Greaves, Evans, Grant and Parry

Officer Present: Parish Clerk

Borough & County Representatives: 0

Members of the public: 19

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, Councillor Lowther advised that the meeting was being recorded and Councillor Evans read out the regulations appertaining to recording meetings via ZOOM. Secondly, Councillor Lowther, in line with the Parish Council's Standing Orders, advised that he had the power to extend the maximum 3 minute ruling per person.

- Ref: Subject:
147/20 Apologies for absence:
Apologies were received from Councillor Smith.
- 148/20 Declarations of Interest:
There were no declarations of interest.
- 149/20 20/01182/FUL – Land East of Jericho Covert, Jericho Lane, Barkestone –
Installation of Solar Farm:

Councillor Lowther explained that the Parish Council could not make the planning decision but that we are a consultee and will be submitting our response to the planning application to Melton Borough Council before Monday 14th December 2020.

During the meeting, members of the public in attendance, expressed concerns appertaining to the size of the Solar Farm, difficulties in vehicles accessing the site, the possibility of a rural area becoming an industrial area, the potential negative impact on house prices, obscured views across the Vale from homes and listed buildings together with the impact on walkers who enjoy the views around our Parish.

Councillor Evans advised that the Solar Farm, if approved, would be in the top ten size wise in the country, would have a 2m fence around it for security, CCTV over it and buildings to store the batteries to keep the Solar Farm running. The construction of the Solar Farm will affect both Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire.

Councillor Parry advised that the Solar Farm has to be as large as the application states as the applicant has stated that it is not economically viable to build a smaller farm. He recognised that some villagers might agree to a Solar Farm but not one this large and to the environmental benefit of 'green energy'. A number of completed questionnaires, sent to all households in Barkestone, had been received by Councillor Parry and the majority of replies were against the Solar Farm.

Members of the public advised that the agricultural quality of the land is not poor and that over the years it has been very productive. A soil survey had been carried out by the applicant and it was suggested that the Parish Council apply for a copy of the survey.

The Parish Council were advised that our MP, Alicia Kearns, would like the Vale of Belvoir to be stated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It was agreed that the Solar Farm would be a huge detrimental long term effect to the Vale.

ACTIONS:

During the meeting it was resolved that:

The Parish Council should request and fund an Environmental Impact Report. The Parish Council will obtain quotes for this report. This was proposed by Councillor Lowther and seconded by Councillor Evans.

Councillor Lowther will write to Natural England.

The Clerk will write to Savills to request a copy of their Soil Survey and a copy of their Winter Bird Survey.

Obtain a copy of the RSPB Protective List identifying species that are at risk.

Write to Robert Jennerick, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government requesting a proper investigation from the Government into the Solar Farm application. This was proposed by Councillor Evans and seconded by Councillor Parry.

Contact Melton Borough Council to request that they do nothing in relation to this application until the Parish Council has written and heard back from the Government.

150/20 20/01243/FUL – Hill Farm, 7 Jericho Lane, Barkestone –
Change of Use from agricultural school to all schooling Facilities:

Councillor Parry advised that he had spoken with the Case Officer for this application and it will now be discussed at our next meeting.

151/20 Councillors' Reports:
There were none.

152/20 Clerk's Report:
The Clerk had nothing to report.

153/20 The next meeting will be held on Thursday 10th December 2020

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm