

Symondsbury Parish Council Planning Committee

Tuesday 05th October 2021, 16:00 – 17:10

Meeting in Person

Held at Eype Church

Minutes

Attendees:

Committee Members

Pelham Allen PA Chairman

Jenifer Roddy JR

Steve Ralph SR

Paul Hartmann PH

In Attendance:

Public: Local residents including Selwyn Holmes, Danielle Holmes, Mervyn Ashford, Karl Rogers, Steve Gardener, Ray Dobson, Carol Dobson.

There were no Press in attendance.

Summary of Action Points arising

No	Item	Action
1	6.1	PH to generate planning reports.

1. Welcome and apologies:

1.1 The Chairman opened the meeting and thanked attendees for coming. There were no apologies received.

2. Declarations of interest:

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. Approval of the minutes of the September Meetings:

3.1 The minutes of the September meeting of the 6th September and additional meeting of the 20th September were confirmed as accurate notes of the meeting and were approved.

4. Correspondence List (previously circulated)

4.1 There were no correspondence items.

5. DEMOCRATIC HALF HOUR during which members of the public are invited to raise general matters of interest.

5.1 There were no general matters raised. With regards to the project on the agenda it was agreed that the public could make comments at the discretion of the Chairman and then respond to any issues requested by the Planning Committee.

6.0 Planning Applications and to consider any other planning/enforcement issues: (public verbal comments limited to 3 minutes per representation prior to Committee consideration).

6.1 P/FUL/2021/03350 Location: Highlands End Holiday Park, Highlands End, DT6 6AR – Application for the installation of ground mounted solar panel photovoltaic solar array.

The Chairman asked PH to outline the application and the considerations.

6.1.1 Application and considerations: PH described the application to the meeting being the engineering installation of 336 photovoltaic units set out in 5 strips forming the array. There will be a small inverter fixed to the rear of the lowest mounting frame from which an underground armoured cable will be installed running along the hedge-line to the existing switchgear building on the boundary of the administration and services buildings on the Holiday Park. During construction the access to the site would be off Broad Lane and only use roads, tracks and fields in the ownership of the Holiday Park.

PH commented that any application of this nature, within a sensitive area, was a balance of its effect on the immediate/distant environs and neighbours and the overall benefits to the local/surrounding community. The application would be considered against the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan (BANP), the Local Plan (currently under review/consultation) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). PH reminded the meeting that the BANP currently takes precedence over the Local Plan.

PH pointed out that the key elements of the BANP in reviewing the application were as below.

CC4 – Neighbourhood Renewable Energy Schemes.

EE1 – Protection of Existing Employment Sites.

EE3 – Sustainable Tourism.

L1 – Green Corridors, Footpaths, Surrounding Hills and Skylines.

L2 – Biodiversity

In addition, under the current Local Plan and the Local Plan in consultation a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is required to be produced. This will assist in the determination of whether the benefits of the proposed development outweigh any demonstrable harm to the Area of Outstanding natural Beauty (AONB).

Notwithstanding the general requirements of the NPPF, a further consideration would be loss of amenity in relation to neighbouring properties.

PH also reminded the meeting of the current Climate Emergency declared by Dorset Council and its positive effect on development proposals that are seen as delivering alternative forms of energy.

PH commented that he had visited the site on Friday morning the 1st of October and met with Mr Cox (the Applicant) to understand the detail of and discuss the proposal under consideration. In addition, he had viewed the proposed site from the edge of the Holiday Park, had walked the key footpaths directly adjacent to the site and also viewed the area from the coastal path.

6.1.2 Comments from the local community:

a) Ray Dobson commented that on moving into a property in Eype neighbouring the site, the owners of the field confirmed that they would not use the field for anything but agriculture.

b) The development will destroy the beauty of the area enjoyed by the many tourist visitors and local residents.

c) The owner's control 450 acres of land and surely there is another area within the land holding, such as the entrance area that could be used that would not cause harm to the AONB.

d) The caravans could have photovoltaic panels on their roofs.

e) Steve Gardener can see the development from his dwelling. He confirmed it could be seen from the upstairs sitting room but not the downstairs rooms.

f) Selwyn Holmes commented that there were two misleading points in the application:

The first was that the generation of electricity should have been dealt with a long time ago. This development is nothing but a profit-making venture for the owners of the Holiday Park.

The second was that the owners of the Holiday Park only had an agricultural right of way access (for persons and vehicles) off Mount Lane to the field. There is an error on the Site Location Plan submitted with the application as it shows the access track to the field in the ownership of the Holiday Park from Mount Lane, which it is not. The drive area is in separate private ownership. Currently the Holiday Park owners were taking money from builders working in the village for a parking compound without consent of the owners of the track.

g) The impact of the development from the public footpath W 18/32 would destroy an iconic view of the sea and AONB and be totally unacceptable. The view from the adjacent footpath W18/30 looking inland would also be totally unacceptable. Further the site could be seen from the coastal path. PH commented that he could not locate the site from where he had walked

on the coastal path. PH reminded the meeting that demonstrable harm to the AONB landscape needed to be proven when the balance of the proposals was considered.

h) The development was the precursor of further development that may be proposed in the future, including the enlargement of the solar panel array. PH advised the Committee that their consideration could only relate to the application and not speculation of future possibilities.

i) Steve Gardener enquired if foundations would be required for the installation. PH commented that the frames supporting the Solar Panels use a driven metal post for support rather than fixed foundation. They are designed to create minimal damage and survive the life of the panels which is around 35 years. The metal posts can then be removed.

j) PH commented that the matter of loss of amenity would need to be considered. Steve Gardiner suggested that the proposals would create a loss of amenity for him especially as his lounge was at first floor level. He commented that the proposals would increase wind noise creating a further loss. PH reminded the Committee that no one has a right to a view and residential amenity is not defined in law.

PH was asked what he thought the definition of loss of amenity was. PH commented that in planning terms, 'amenity' is how the building is generally used in everyday life and is often used to refer to the quality or character of enjoyment and elements that contribute to the overall enjoyment. Residential amenity considers elements that are particularly relevant to the living conditions of a dwelling which could be privacy, natural light, overlooking, amenity space, shading etc.

6.1.3 Summary conclusions of the Committee.

It was clear that the proposals addressed many of the requirements in the BANP, emerging Local Plan and NPPF. However, the issue was how detrimental were the proposals in affecting the AONB and the landscape. PH commented that with regards to the AONB and Landscape of and around the site, an LVIA was required. He commented that although the overall submission was compelling in relation to the planning requirements and an LVIA was identified and had been addressed in the submission, the content of the LVIA was not sufficient to demonstrate that a decision on the balance of benefits of the proposals against the potential harm could justifiably be made.

The Committee were then asked to make a decision on the application, whether to Approve, Not Object or Object. The Committee decision was split with two councillors wishing to Object and two wishing to Not Object. The Chairman proposed, with the agreement of the Committee, that due to the considerable feeling of the community representation against the proposals, the decision would be to Object.

Conclusion: Object

7.0 Projects: All reports to be submitted to the clerk in writing at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

7.1.1 There were no Projects reported.

8.0 Vearse Farm:

8.1 It was confirmed by PH that no further information has been made available on the application. The Dorset Planning Department had been contacted by PH and the design codes are currently being reviewed by the Planning Department in line with planning protocols.

9.0 Items for inclusion at the next meeting.

9.1 There were no items for inclusion.

10.0 AOB

10.1 There was no AOB.

12.0 Next Meeting

12.1 The next Planning Committee meeting will be on Tuesday the 2nd November at 19:00. The venue will be Eype Church unless otherwise informed.