

Selattyn and Gobowen Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Parish Council on Tuesday 1st March 2016 at The Pavilion, St Martins Road, Gobowen at 7.00pm

In the Chair – Councillor Crow

Present; Councillors: S Crow, J Davies, P Drury, H Ellis, R Macey, D Lloyd, S West-Wynn, L Lindup

Also present: 20 members of the public present

There was no attendance at the meeting by the applicant or any representative of the applicant

384 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies

Cllr Emery - work

Cllr Westwood Bate - work

Cllr Bennett - work

Cllr Morgan – representation at Allotment Committee Meeting

Absent

Cllr Jones

Cllr Cherrington

Cllr Heap – resigned

385 Declaration of Interest

a) Declaration of any disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter to be discussed at the meeting and which is not included in the register of interests.

None Declared

b) To consider any applications for dispensation

None Declared

386 Public Participation session - a period of 15 minutes will be set aside for the public to speak on items on the agenda.

Members of the public spoke in opposition to the planning application 14/03946/FUL Proposed Solar Farm At, Rhosygadfa, Gobowen and objecting to the appeal. They raised the following points:

- Significant detrimental visual impact to the landscape
- Surrounded by high steel fences and have the visual appeal of a prison camp
- Detrimental economic impact on local area – taking 6 fields out of production
- Concerns that, in their opinion, it is unlikely the panels and frames will be sourced in UK
- Subsidy involved – cost of electricity will go up
- It is not correct to state that the current one is marginal in economic viability as this is not a planning problem
- Significant depth of local feeling against the application
- Current land user will not continue to use the land if the solar farm goes ahead
- No evidence has been seen to suggest the site can be used for agricultural grazing despite these claims – request for an agricultural plan.
- It can be seen from the road and public footpath
- Diverting a public right of way is questionable
- Revised proposal is 25% less than previous applications – raises the question - was this deliberate? Request an additional calculation

- The impact on people living next to the site and the devaluing of properties as a result.
- Proposed shrubs will take 12 years for these to develop enough to screen off the site

2 additional members of the public joined the meeting at 19.06

387 14/03946/FUL – Proposed Solar Farm at Rhosygadfa, Gobowen.

a) To consider the recent response from Shropshire Council Planning Department.

RESOLVED to note.

b) To consider the appeal (ref: 16/02380/REF) and the submission of any further representations by the Parish Council.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to submit the following comment to the Planning Inspectorate:

The comments previously submitted by the Parish Council in relation to this application cover the technical and detailed reasons for objecting to the application. We have been informed by Shropshire Council that these comments submitted in November 2014 and March 2015 have been put forward with this case.

Further to these comments, we wish to highlight a number of the points again below:

Selattyn and Gobowen Parish Council have considered this application at length. Given the impact and continued public interest have held a number of well attended public meetings at which many parishioners have made clear their concerns.

We would be failing in our duty if we did not register an objection to the appeal against refusal (Shropshire Council 14/03946/FUL).

The initial refusal by the Shropshire Council North Planning Committee was seen as entirely appropriate, given the exposed nature of this area of land which is clearly visible from some distance away and its contravention of both local and national planning policies.

The prime objection was clearly the inappropriate usage of this location for a solar farm extending over 52 acres. The impact on the local road network was also seen as a major deterrent to what is seen as an industrial operation rather than the established usage of the land for the grazing of sheep and cattle and production of a variety of crops. It is very clearly an agricultural asset that should not be despoiled and its output impaired. Heavy construction and servicing vehicles would be a danger to local traffic and the considerable number of walkers, cyclists, horse riders and a roadside pool which is popular for a rest stop and for youngsters to fish.

Local inhabitants felt they would be drowned under a sea of glass together with the loss of an existing right of way. The use of the phrase a monstrous intrusion into open countryside not only by the local population but by many away from the site which is highly visible from the uplands of the locality.

Omissions such as a brownfield site survey and initially misleading information was supplied regarding the quality of the land, which in due course produced valuable crops. Whilst attempts to minimise the needs for CCTV and high fencing was acknowledged, switching to hedgerows and other natural landscaping would not lessen the visible scar on the landscape.

The scheme would not yield any social, economic or environmental benefit to the site, to the local area or its community and was not seen as farm diversification but purely a profitable enterprise with little or no regard for public opinion.

The overbearing nature of the panels and associated buildings would be exposed for a

considerable number of years with landscaping failing to mature, within the early years, until well into the life of this scheme.

This application got off on the wrong foot when the proposers failed to identify the target area and embarked upon the consultation well outside the area finally identified.

It is widely regarded as entirely the wrong sort of development in the wrong location.

We are not against renewable energy but consider that solar panels should not be on good agricultural land which, with the rising population, will be needed to produce food.

Meeting closed at: 19.52