

# Minutes of a meeting of Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Parish Council held in St. Mary's Church, Wheaton Aston on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2010 at 7.30 pm.

**Present:** Mrs. B. Cox in the chair      Mrs. E. Morgan-Williams  
Mr. N. Barnsley                      Mr. A. Monckton  
Mr. P. Elson                            Mrs. D. Wildman  
Mr. M. Fox                              Mr. T. Noblett  
Mrs. S. Gould                         Cllr. R. Wright

**Parish Council Manager:** Mrs. D. Bate

**Apologies:** None

## 018 Public Participation

Approximately 40 members of the public attended.

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting, explained that it was an extraordinary meeting of the parish council to consider a response to the planning applications for King Street Wind Farm and Four Ashes Waste Facility. She invited residents to make their thoughts on the planning applications known so that the Parish Council understood residents' views when it later considered what comments to make to the planning authority.

The following comments were made about the wind farm application:

### General

- What is the decision from the Parish Council on the planning application?
- The wind farm is not wanted, not needed and is not viable.
- Some residents are not bothered whether the wind farm goes ahead or not.
- What justification is there for the wind farm?
- In cold weather wind farms are not effective.
- Schemes are not economically viable without government grants.
- The wind speed is not known by Wind Prospect.
- There are much better locations for wind farms than King Street.
- A suggestion was made that the application for the test anemometer be approved before the main application is considered.
- The aim of the proposal is for the Bradford Estate to make money.
- The land where the development is planned is the lowest height of land in the area.
- Concern was raised that the wind farm will be there for longer than the 25 years.
- They will draw electricity from the grid when not in use (at the cheapest price) and then sell back the electricity at 3 times that price.
- The safety of the site was questioned.
- Concern was raised that if permission is granted of 6 turbines now, permission might be granted in future for additional wind turbines.
- The disruption caused by the construction is of concern.
- Concern was raised that research used for the application tends to be desk research. The possible impact on residents and natural areas should be investigated in the field. Can the Parish Council suggest a practical investigation should take place to the planners?
- Residents are concerned that horse riders and walkers will be put at risk by the heavy construction vehicles using the lanes to reach the site.

- A member of STAG informed the parish council that, Blymhill Parish Council, Church Eaton Parish Council and Stafford Borough Council have asked for STAG's advice on the wind farm.

#### Innappropriate Site

- There are ancient Roman and Saxon roads in the area and evidence of settlements in the area.
- Concern at the possible construction of the towers. They will be out of character and will destroy the countryside. As will the road. They don't even know if it's a good site.

#### Effect on Wildlife

- The Friends of Mottey Meadows, fear for the future on the meadow. It is one of the most important flood meadows in the UK and is protected.
- It was felt that Natural England would not consent to the application unless it could be proved that the meadows would be unharmed.
- Mottey Meadows needs a full investigation with field research not just using old data.
- The foundations of the turbines will be massive and concern was raised over the effect of the foundations on the water table.
- The access road is within 1000m of Mottey Meadows and Mottey Meadows is highly likely to be affected.
- Mottey Meadows could be damaged beyond repair. Residents have contacted the Environment Agency and Natural England. The Environment Agency has only used desk research which isn't accurate.
- The Parish Council was asked to request that field research be carried out.
- Mottey Meadows: The Flood Plain Meadows Partnership monitors it. It is of local, national and European significance. Mottey Meadows is possibly the first robust meadows. It has maintained the same level of flora over the years. The conditions are ideal at the moment and there is concern that if the water table changes this will be negatively affected.
- The Parish Council should do what it can to maintain the meadows.
- Concern was raised over the effects on migrating birds and other wildlife.
- Residents want confirmation that Mottey Meadows will not be affected by the construction.

#### Visual Impact

- Residents do not want the visible impact.
- Several residents from Fentonhouse Lane complained that they will see them and it will spoil their view.
- Wind farms should be located in the sea not in one of the most picturesque places in the area.
- The local landscape will be negatively affected.

#### Noise

- There is concern over the level of noise if the wind blows in a certain direction.
- Several residents stated that Wheaton Aston has no main roads or railways and that it's one of the quietest parts of South Staffordshire with very low level noise. Therefore any additional noise that the wind farm will bring will be an intrusion.

The Chairman thanked those present for their comments and assured residents that the Parish Council would include all of their comments when making its response to the planning authority.

### **019 Apologies**

There were no apologies.

## **020 Declarations of interest**

There were the following declarations of interest.

Phil Elson – Personal interest: Member of Friends of Mottey Meadows

Doreen Wildman – Personal interest: Member of Friends of Mottey Meadows

Mike Fox – Personal interest: Member of RSPB West Midland Bird Club, British Trust for Ornithology, Friends of Mottey Meadows and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust.

## **021 To consider planning matters:**

Following discussion the following response was agreed:

10/00963/FUL        King Street Wind Farm

10/00964/FUL        King Street Wind Farm

Residents of the parish of Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston have several concerns about the proposed wind farm. The Parish Council would like to bring the main ones to the attention of the Planning Committee as follows:

### **Impact on Mottey Meadows**

Mottey Meadows is one of the most important flood meadows in the country. It is of national significance and is protected. Its level of wildlife has remained constant for the last few years and experts feel that this is because the current conditions are ideal. The Friends of Mottey Meadows are very concerned that the proposed site is so close to the meadows that the proposed construction work will affect the water table and harm the wildlife and the meadows beyond repair.

The Parish Council requests that practical field research (not desk research) is carried out on the potential effect on Mottey Meadows before planning permission is granted.

### **Birds**

Concern has been raised by local bird enthusiasts about the effect of the proposed turbines on birds' flight paths. Birds roost at night in fields in the area and they may be disturbed by the turbines or cause damage to the turbines themselves.

### **Construction**

Ramblers and horse riders use the lanes surrounding the site and there is concern that the long vehicles that will be used during the construction phase will cause problems, frighten animals and endanger walkers.

There is also local concern that the hedgerows and trees that will have to be removed to make way for the vehicles will never be restored to their original state.

### **Noise Levels**

There is very low level noise in Wheaton Aston and residents feel that any increase in noise may impact on their well being and standard of life.

The Parish Council requests that noise assessments (similar to those done at properties close to the proposed site) are carried out in Wheaton Aston before planning permission is granted.

### **Visual Impact**

Wheaton Aston, and the area surrounding it, is picturesque and rural. Many residents feel that the changes that the proposed wind farm will bring to the landscape are inappropriate and will spoil the area.

The Parish Council is concerned about the flicker effect from the proposed turbines and would ask that if planning permission is granted that a condition be applied to ensure that an anti-reflective coating is used on the blades.

The Parish Council is concerned about the aviation lights on the tips of the blades, which the Ministry of Defence has insisted upon. It feels that 18 flashing aviation lights are not appropriate on the rural landscape in such an historic area.

**New Access Road**

The proposed new road is 5m wide and is inappropriate for the area, considering its considerable history, and will spoil the look of the area.

Trees and hedgerows will be removed to make room and although the plans are to put them back, it is felt that it will not be able to put them back in the right way and the wildlife will be lost forever.

**General**

Whilst the Parish Council understands that South Staffordshire Council is under pressure to achieve its required level of renewable energy, it also understand its residents' frustration that many of them feel that the level of wind at the site is too low to justify constructing six turbines and is concerned that the proposed site may not be an appropriate location for either the wind turbines or the planned access road.

SS.10/16/636/W Four Ashes Waste Facility

The size of the proposed building has been reduced. It was resolved that the Parish Council has no further comment to make on the proposal.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.50pm

Signed..... Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2010