

BARFORD SHERBOURNE AND WASPERTON JOINT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee
held in Barford Memorial Hall on Mon 11 Jul 22

Present:	Cllr T Merrygold, (Chairman) Cllr: Mrs D Haynes, G Jackson, Mrs L M Jones, M J Metcalfe, J V Murphy, Mrs Newsome
Apologies:	Cllr: J D Billingham, R Clay,

Opening

30 The meeting opened at 9:00pm.

Public Participation

31 No members of the public attended the meeting.

Planning Applications

32

Application No:	W/22/0997
Description:	Installation of a solar farm consisting of PV panels mounted on metal frames, new access tracks, underground cabling, perimeter fencing with CCTV cameras and access gates, two temporary construction compounds and all ancillary grid infrastructure and associated works.
Address:	Land to West of A46 Sherbourne.
Applicant:	Namene Service Company Ltd
JPC Decision:	See comments below

The Barford Sherbourne & Wasperton Joint Parish Council has decided to remain neutral on this application. The JPC accepts the current Climate Emergency and the need to de-carbonise energy production and the principle that solar power generation is one of the ways to achieve this, but there are too many issues and unanswered questions with this application as it stands, for us to support it.

1 Battery Storage

A number of residents have great concerns about the fire risk from battery storage units based on press reports of explosions and fires. There are no detailed plans of what the battery storage units will consist of any fire prevention or suppression measures.

Can we make sure Warwickshire Fire and Rescue are consulted on this application?

2 Road Access

The main access to Field 4 is via B4463, north of the Sherbourne roundabout. This is a narrow winding lane which recently was the location of a fatal accident. The proposed site access is not suitable, as is, for the construction traffic.

What will be done to the site entrance to make it suitable and safe?

What signage and traffic management measures will be put in place during the construction phase to ensure road safety?

3 Flood risk/management

There is no detail about the Drainage Management Plan 8.83 mentioned, how this will avoid any flooding issues either during construction or handling water runoff once the PV panels are in place.

While we don't believe there is a flood risk to the solar farm itself, Sherbourne Brook is known to flood regularly and we believe a detailed study needs to be completed to either prove that Vicarage Lane and Church Lane will not be at any more risk than currently, or for the developers to itemise the mitigation measures that they will put in place to prevent this.

The JPC requests that a proper detailed flood survey is mandated as a condition of granting this application.

4 Diversification of farming

While the impact on farming is described as temporary – this is a 40-year plan and we regret the loss of good arable land for a period of 40 years particularly at a time of food shortages and increasing food prices. We understand that the layout will allow for sheep grazing and we seek confirmation that this will actually happen, as historically this land has not been used to raise sheep.

Summary

In conclusion, the JPC considers that this proposal for a solar farm has some merit and would make a contribution towards de-carbonising the energy supply, but there are too many unanswered questions for us to support the application.

There is one other issue which has been raised by a number of the local residents which potentially works in

favour of the application. While we/they are not keen on any development in the Green Belt, this solar farm will have the effect that it will remove the risk of any housing or industrial development on these sites for at least 40 years which would be to the long-term benefit of the residents of Sherbourne.

Closure

33 There being no other items on the agenda the meeting was closed at 9:40pm