

Winkleigh Parish Council

The minutes of the Open Meeting held on Wednesday 8th January 2014, 7.30pm in Winkleigh Village Hall

Present : Parish Councillors : Flockhart (Chairman), Ware, Mondy, Turner, Gledhill, Griffiths, Bowers, Hodgson, Sansom & Stutt.
District Cllr David Lausen

Mr Jonathan Kearsley – MiGrid (Applicant)
Mr Martin Goddard – Land Owner
Penny Mills – CPRE (Torridge Branch)

117+ members of the public – including reps from Iddesleigh & Broadwoodkelly Parish Councils

Apologies: Parish Councillor Knight

The Chairman welcomed all and formally opened the meeting. The Chairman gave an opening statement advising all of the purpose of the meeting and the protocol expected of all in attendance in order to facilitate a productive and informative meeting to assist Winkleigh Parish Council in their formal consideration of **Planning Application 1/0967/2013/FUL: Siting of a wind turbine measuring 50m to hub, 27m rotor radius & approx 77m blade tip with ancillary equipment at Bryony Hill Farm, Winkleigh at their meeting on 22nd January 2014.**

The Chairman introduced Mr Kearsley of MiGrid to the meeting and gave him the opportunity to address the Council. Mr Kearsley discussed the overall energy position advising that with diminishing resources and increased demand for power all governments are looking at alternative ways to deliver energy and discussed various options. Mr Kearsley advised that MiGrid had issued some flyers detailing some of the aspects of their proposal for a wind turbine which he informed may address some of the issues that are of concern. Mr Kearsley then addressed the PC regards questions he had already been advised of and discussed annual funds(in the form of a Community Benefits package) that would be given to the community should the development be approved, the powers of TDC to shut the turbine down should there be unacceptable noise from the structure and confirmed that the turbine and planning permission would be for 25 years . Mr Kearsley also advised that after the 25 years all components of the turbine can be recycled.

Mr Kearsley then suggested he would wait for questions from Councillors and the public to ensure that he had covered their concerns.

The Chairman thanked Mr Kearsley and introduced Penny Mills of CPRE (Torridge Branch) who then addressed the meeting.

Mrs Mills addressed the meeting advising that the CPRE are a consultee on this application as are the Parish Council and confirmed that TDC have extended the response deadline. Mrs Mills encouraged everyone to write to TDC as the Planning Authority and to ensure that all objections are based on planning issues advising that to date TDC have 72 letters of objections and 7 letters of support registered for this

application. Mrs Mills stated that the CPRE will be objecting to the application and that their main issue is that of the visual impact of this structure but that the combined noise and visual impact in connection with the cumulative effect with many turbines being considered in the area was of concern. Mrs Mills then gave additional detail to the CPRE's position and also the system by which TDC call in applications for Plans Committee determination and the Applicants right to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate against any TDC refusal.

The Chairman thanked Penny Mills and moved the meeting to questions from Winkleigh Parish Councillors.

- What 'Community Benefits Package' would Winkleigh Parish receive to mitigate any negative impacts from the development? How would any 'Community Benefits Package' be delivered (eg Duration/frequency/timings etc)?

Mi-Grid responded that within the application documentation they have proposed a sum of £5,000 per annum to be shared between the relevant Parish Councils and that they would be bound to any agreement through a legally binding contract with the Local Authority (TDC).

- Does Planning Permission for the turbine have an 'expiry date' eg. does an application have to be re-made in future and if so when?

Mi-Grid had already addressed this and again responded that the turbine and Planning permission would be for 25 years and that all turbine components would be recycled.

- If any, what are the 'de-commissioning' arrangements?

Mi-Grid responded that there is a contract with the landowner confirming thorough decommissioning.

- What is the proximity of the development to the three nearest properties?

Mi-Grid responded that he did not have this information to hand.

- If noise and/or flicker (despite theoretical assertions this would not be an issue) manifest as a problem for any neighbouring properties, what procedures and timescales will be implemented to address the problem?

Mi-Grid responded that the conditions of any approval would have strict noise control measures and that any complaints would be dealt with by TDC's Environmental Health/Protection department. He further advised that there is a policy in place and that part of the condition regards noise is that once a complaint has been identified and investigated if the noise level is over the agreed 35 decibels a formal noise assessment will take place at the Applicant/developer's expense and any action required addressed. Mi-Grid advised that TDC can shut the turbine down if the noise issue is not rectified.

- In order to construct the Bryony Hill wind turbine a new stone road will have to be built across three fields. (a) How long is this road? (b) How many tons of stone will be used in the construction of this road? (c) Where will the stone be brought from and in how many lorries?

Mi-Grid responded that the new access is require to enable the equipment to be brought to site, that he was not aware of the amount of concrete required for the track but that the stone to be used was “New Bridge Stone” and was to be purchased from a stone quarry 6 miles from the site.

- At present Bryony Hill is only served with single phase electricity and the wind turbine will necessitate that the electric line to the farm is completely replaced with three phase electricity. (a) How long will the renewed line be? (b) What will the new line cost to construct? (c) Have landowners over which this line passes been consulted?

Mi-Grid responded that they have been in communication with Western Power and been advised of the various options and costing available advising that the cost of grid connection is approximately £100,000. No decision on the route of the line has been made yet and the PC were advised that a separate application would have to be made to Western Power.

- What is the size of the concrete standing this wind turbine will have? (b) How many tons of concrete will be involved and how many lorry loads will be necessary? (c) Is the carbon foot print of this concrete known?

Mi-Grid responded that the base will be 10 -11m in diameter and 1.5m deep and that he was unaware of how many tons of concrete or how many lorries would be necessary. Mi-Grid advised that the carbon footprint for the base has been calculated within the whole development giving an overall carbon foot print for the proposal as a whole.

- What is the longest length section of steel which it will be necessary to bring Bryony Hill and down what roads is it thought it will be possible to convey that length of steel?

Mi-Grid responded that the largest piece of equipment would be 27m long and that this is the blade of the turbine.

- How long have Mi-grid been operating as a company and have they completed any other developments of this nature? How much investment as a company is required and how much does the Landowner make ?

Mi-Grid responded that they have been trading for 3 ½ years and have completed 12 smaller scale applications advising that they received funding last year to enable them to look into larger turbines. Mi-Grid advised that the cost to build this turbine will be approx £1.3M and that approx £135,000 per annum will be generated resulting in an 8 year payback after which is profit and that any financial agreement with a Landowner was confidential but is generally approx 10% of turnover.

The Chairman then opened the meeting to representatives from neighbouring Parish Councils to ask questions.

Iddesleigh Parish Council reps:

- Concern was raised regards the effect on house prices the devaluation of property and the effect on approx 70 neighbouring properties. A request was repeated to Mi-Grid (from a previous meeting) to fund the flight of a blimp to give a greater appreciation of the potential visual impact.

Mi-Grid responded that they would not fund any blimp flight as it is not a planning requirement and stated that they had used extensive video and picture montages.

- The MOD's request for a light at the very top of the turbine was raised and clarification of details was requested.

Mi-Grid responded that to accommodate the MOD's request an infra-red light would be placed on the turbine for pilots to see and would not be visible to the public.

The Chairman then opened the meeting to the large number of public in attendance and gave all the opportunity to ask questions.

Public (Nymet Rolwand) : Concern was raised regards the cumulative effect of turbines locally and that Mi-Grid have missed a number of other applications in their documentation. It was stated that they claim 14 schemes between 10-15km where there are a further 53 and in total there are 69 schemes at various stages within 15-25km . It was stated that it appeared Mi-Grid were being misleading to both the Planning Authority and the Public.

Mi-Grid responded that they accepted that they should have completed the figures for a full 25km radius and apologised at not having done so. It was suggested that this matter should be lodged with TDC to highlight the issue.

Public (Broadwoodkelly): Concerned about noise and visual impact and loss of uninterrupted countryside enjoyment.

Public (Winkleigh): Concerned that Mi-Grid have given no references to some of the information they have provided preventing full investigation of their claims.

Public (Winkleigh): Implored the applicant to reconsider and withdraw the application . Said offered the same deal as a landowner but said he felt the effect on neighbours and the wider countryside far outweighed the financial benefits. Noise and visual impact being a major concern.

Public (Winkleigh) : Concerned about potential health risks said believed that turbines should not be erected within 2 miles of a residential property which is not the case for this application.

Public (Winkleigh): Was concerned that the offer of £5,000 per annum may sway some individuals to lean towards approval and stated that the level was not high enough to mitigate the loss of amenities and that within the turbine life time the benefit of £5,000 per annum would have less effect due to inflation.

Mi-Grid responded that the commitment to £5,000 per annum would be index linked via legal agreement.

Public (Winkleigh): Queried the precise acceptable noise levels from turbines and would it be shut down if it was beyond said level?

Mi-Grid responded that the standard acceptable noise level is 35 decibels and that TDC have the power to ensure that should this be exceeded there is a process in place that formal noise assessment at the developers expense would take place following a noise complaint and that yes the turbine could be shut down if actions to remedy any excessive noise issues were not taken.

Public (Winkleigh): Asked that it be noted that the elevation of the land at the proposed turbine location (Bryony Hill) was elevated and therefore the heights given in the application could be misleading as the height of the tip will be seen from a greater distance than suggested.

Public (Winkleigh): Queried the current baseline(or background) noise level for Winkleigh

Mi-Grid responded that they did not know this figure as assessments not completed.

Public (Winkleigh): Queried if Mi-Grid had constructed any large turbines before and what experience did they have in this ?

Mi-Grid responded that they had not but that they had two in construction at his time adding that contractor who Mi-Grid will use to build the turbine will also be responsible for on-site construction.

Public (Iddesleigh): Concerned about access to the land for the turbine construction.

Mi-Grid stated that they were aware of potential access issues on existing routes and that this was the reasoning behind constructing the track through fields to facilitate the construction of the turbine.

Public (Winkleigh): Queried if any action had been taken to establish the effect of the turbines on the local geese population which are commonplace in the locality.

Mi-Grid said that there had not been any investigation into this issue and suggested that it be brought to the attention of TDC.

Public (Winkleigh): Felt that wind turbines have not proved to be efficient and queried measures in place to address fluctuation of energy to the grid.

Mi-Grid responded that there is a system in place to deal with fluctuations in feed in energy to the grid and that these are in place for any type of peak in fluctuation not just for wind turbines.

Public (Dowland): Queried information that in Germany numerous wind turbines are being taken down and what confidence should we have the turbines are the best way to provide alternative energy.

Mi-Grid responded that he believed that a number of turbines in Germany were being taken down as they were at the end of their life.

Public (Monkokehampton): Queried point already made regarding the MOD's recommended light on the top of the turbine stating that the application documentation indicates red or infra-red.

Mi-Grid responded that they would definitely be using an infra-red light but that if people were concerned they should mention this in writing to TDC.

Public (Nymet Rowland): Referred to Mi-Grid photo-montages claiming they were misleading as taken with a 35mm lens whereas 'Best Practice' recommends 75mm.

Public (Winkleigh): Stated that some of the maps that Mi-grid have used in their application are out of date and therefore not representative and also that any scales used need to be correct.

Public (Iddesleigh): Stated that Mi-Grid appeared unprepared , ill informed and lacking in detail resulting in a misrepresentation of the development to the community who will be living with the turbine.

There being no further questions from the public to the applicant the Chairman asked for any questions from anyone in attendance.

Parishioner (Winkleigh): Queried what happens should the Planning Officer recommend approval of the application.

CPRE responded that should this be the case the application would be sent to the Plans Committee for determination (along with the officer's recommendations). For each application the Plans Committee will accept representatives to speak at the meeting as follows: 2 in support, 2 objectors , 1 Parish Councillor , 1 x District Councillor.

Parishioner (Iddesleigh): As a number of the residents affected by this proposal are by location covered by a different District Council than TDC what can be done about ensuring that a site visit to their location can be secured.

District Cllr Lausen : responded that site visits need to be requested and then the Plans Committee would complete on block properties for all those who had made a request prior to any Plans Committee meeting.

Penny Mills (CPRE) addressed the meeting again and said that a lot of interesting points had been raised at the meeting and that these all need to be sent in writing to TDC.

The Chairman addressed the meeting , thanked Mi-Grid and the CPRE for attending as speakers, the neighbouring Parish Council representatives and the large number of the public for taking the time to attend the meeting and share their concerns and issues with Winkleigh Parish Councillors. **The Chairman again**

reminded all those in attendance that Winkleigh Parish Council will meet on Wednesday 22nd January 2014, 7.30pm in Winkleigh Community Centre.

Mr Ted Sweet Chairman of Iddesleigh Parish Council thanked the Winkleigh Parish Councillors for hosting the meeting .

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting was declared closed at 9.21pm