**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF INGESTRE WITH TIXALL PARISH COUNCIL**

**on Wednesday, 19 July 2023, at 7.30pm in Tixall Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllrs: Mr Malcolm Sindrey (Chairman), Dr Tric Parrott, Mrs Jane Tinniswood and Mr Keith Palmer representing Tixall. Mrs Sue Haenelt, Mr David Lees and Mrs Judy Eccleshall representing Ingestre.

SCC Cllr John Francis and SBC Cllr Mrs Frances Beatty attended.

**76/23 Apologies:** No apologies were received.

**77/23 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

6 members of the Public attended:

**78/23 PLANNING APPLICATION 23/37621/FUL – Installation of a 49.5MW Solar Energy Scheme at the location of Land North of Lower Hanyards Farm, Hanyards Lane, Tixall**

Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees. The Chairman presented the following comments:

**a.** It is important to note that prime farm land is graded 1 and 2, however, most of the farming land within Tixall and Ingestre is grade 3a and 3b and is considered to be good quality grazing and arable land. 75% of land within the country is grade 3a and 3b and crops /grazing is successful on this grade of land.

Chairman invited comments from the public, as follows:

SCC Cllr Francis commented that numerous large sheds/warehouses have been erected in the area recently (Stone and Redhill), why have these not been built with solar panels? Panels are built in China, not efficient.

Given the proposed size of the area in the Application and the amount of energy it will produce, will it not be a blight on the landscape? It was noted that this could form part of an objection to the proposal.

2 Applications that have been submitted for Stowe by Chartley will completely envelope the hamlet of Drointon and there is a campaign group established to oppose these applications.

Solar companies are very devious, all are limited companies and will give very positive messages to landowners, to encourage them to give up their land. However, the technology is not adequate and unproven: wind turbines – 1 off shore wind turbine will power 15,000 homes, 1 49.5MW solar farm, over 140 acres, will power 9,600 homes.

Solar works in the day time, not at night. Noise from generators needs to be considered, as these will be in the open countryside. Also, glare from panels needs to be acknowledged, as this can be significant and there is no evidence to say this has been improved.

Solar farms may render land redundant; as only very small numbers of sheep can be grazed on land to help control the vegetation between panels. Panels will leach harmful chemicals into the ground.

Solar farms require batteries, which tend to be housed in shipping containers. Batteries are noisy, may explode. Panels are subject to lighting strikes, which also affects the batteries. The application at Tixall will require 10/12 containers to store the energy for release into the grid, which has to be managed slowly. Direct access to the grid will be required, so may need a substation, which may encourage other solar farms to be built.

Application for Hanyards is on the north side, if approved, then an application for the south side, is likely.

Use of suitable brownfield sites has not been fully explored.

Over the country, there are currently 600,000 acres utilised by solar panels. Solar companies promote ‘save the planet’ – this is not true. The panels cannot be recycled, so will end up in landfull; lithium is mined; they are the technology of today, not tomorrow; aim to gain net zero by 2050, but applications have to be reasonable and proportionate – use of brownfield sites, panels on roofs, electric vehicles, e.g. alternative sources have to be fully explored before solar panels.

Land should be retained for food production; we cannot rely on importing our food from Europe. Ukraine situation has highlighted the need for food production in this country.

If Parish Council wish to object to the application, support from the community will be needed.

Access to the site will be via Hanyards Lane, from the crossroads at the Crematorium. HS2 have realised this and created their own access routes, traffic during construction will be horrendous. However, this will only be temporary and once the site has been built there will only be the odd maintenance trucks visiting the site.

What is worthy of exploration here is the number of HGV’s included in the application details – at Drointon the numbers are 2,800 yet in Tixall its 1,000, however, both sites are of the same size, are the figures in the Tixall application correct?

Size of farm determines who will approve planning application: for sites under 50MW, i.e. 49.5MW the local planning authority deals with the application, for any site 50MW + the application is determined by the Secretary of State.

Potential for increase in rural crime: theft of cables; panels; farm equipment; impact upon residents – comments made by Police.

Visibility – application states that site will not be visible by residents and will not impact many properties in the area. However, it was felt that properties at St Thomas’ Mill will see the farm. SBC Cllr Mrs Beatty commented that AONB Officers are assessing visibility from the Chase in respect of this application, they are the Technical Officers and their evidence is needed. All arguments need to be tested by the Planning Authority and need to weigh these against the need to meet Government targets.

Cllr Mrs Beatty agreed to call the application in.

Concern that SBC Planning Officers are not sufficiently knowledgeable to successfully challenge the applications.

Why are the Government or companies not looking at other sites/other alternatives?

Is there any data available on how much agricultural land has been lost to HS2? Aware of the need to present facts to support arguments, can this data be obtained?

Cllr Mrs Beatty commented that arguments need to meet planning requirements and suggested we monitor how the Stowe by Chartley application progresses.

Cllr Mrs Beatty left the meeting at 8.20pm.

Objections need to adhere to the National Planning Framework, in particular paragraphs 174 – 188. Can focus on impact upon community; use of alternative options/sites; concerns for cumulative approach; future speculative applications; precedent setting.

Have there been any successful objections to applications?

It was noted that an application in Tean was refused, went to Appeal, succeeded with a smaller footprint. Application details to be explored.

Other factors to consider:

* Loss of hedgerows
* Situation in 40 yrs time
* Sustainability of company for future
* Effect from chemicals leaking into water courses
* Loss of agricultural land for feeding country, dependency on Europe

Each site needs to be considered individually.

Chairman closed open meeting at 8.45pm and thanked the public for their comments and input. All public left the meeting, along with SCC Cllr Francis.

Chairman requested a vote from Parish Cllrs to oppose or support the application. All Cllrs unanimously voted to oppose the application.

The following actions were agreed:

1. Clerk to request an extension to the time frame for comments from 2.8.23 to end of September.
2. Clerk to summarise comments for residents and incorporate into a Special edition of the Parish Newsheet, which Clerk will email to Newsheet email distribution list. Cllrs to share details to residents separately.
3. Residents to be directed to submit comments directly to SBC Planning Authority.

Meeting closed at 9.10pm