

Meeting of THORNEY PARISH COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Tank Yard,
Thorney on Wednesday 17 April 2013 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Chair: Councillor: J E G Bartlett

Councillors: R Bevington, Mrs. L Sheldrake, Mrs. M Long, J Brooks, P Rands, J Rowe,
E. Gee, B A Ogden

234/13-14 To receive and approve apologies for absence

Mrs. D Halfhide, Mrs. S Selby, D. J Buddle,

235/13-14 To receive Disclosable Pecuniary Interests Declarations

To receive Disclosable Pecuniary Interests Declarations in any items on the agenda
– Councillor Gee on wind farm application took part in discussion but did not vote

236/13-14 Planning Applications and other matters

1. Planning applications

13/00431/FUL For Construction of eight wind turbines to a maximum height of 126.5 metres (to vertical blade tip) with ancillary infrastructure including substation, anemometry mast up to 60 metres in height, access tracks and crane hardstandings, temporary storage compound and access improvement onto A47 at Gores Farm Whittlesey Road

THORNEY PARISH COUNCIL OBJECTS TO THE APPLICATION FOR 8 NO. WIND TURBINES AT GORES FARM, THORNEY REF 13/00431/FUL

1. We are opposed to the change of use from agricultural land to an industrial use.
2. We agree with the National Trust who oppose wind farms as they believe they are 'destroying the countryside'.
3. The finest approach to the village and the one that shows it most favourably in a rural setting is the approach from the direction of Whittlesey along the B 1040. This historic route in its splendid and ancient rural setting will be completely spoilt by the intrusive presence of the Gores Farm wind turbines.
4. There are dwellings, including a number in the Conservation Area of the village, whose habitable rooms will have clear, uninterrupted views of the turbines and we consider this an unacceptable impairment of their amenities.
5. We are alarmed by how visible the wind turbines will be from the village as shown in the developer's visuals. We are equally alarmed by their high visibility from the A47 when moving in either an easterly or westerly direction. We consider that the high visibility of the turbines from both within and without the village demonstrates how inappropriately located they are. We find it difficult to believe that in pre-application discussions the Planning Department could in anyway have considered this a suitable location for a wind farm.
6. In respect of the visuals we note that they take advantage of a summertime setting. At times when the trees are without foliage the turbines will be even more visible and unacceptable. There is some feeling that the visuals are not accurate in depicting the true height of the turbines. They are already unacceptably visible and this would mean they would be even more visible and obtrusive. We assume, but would like confirmation, that the City Council will check the accuracy of this important part of the application.
7. We do not consider this to be an appropriate location for a wind farm because this is an outstanding area of fenland countryside which should not be blighted by this intrusion on the landscape or skyline.

8. The turbines are totally out of proportion to any existing natural feature or development in the area.
9. There is no way the visual impact of wind turbines can be reduced or screened by the planting which is often a planning requirement of other developments in a rural landscape. For example, the City Council's own proposals for a solar farm on Morris Fen in this Parish.
10. There are listed buildings within a few hundred metres of this proposal, not least amongst them being Thorney Abbey. We believe the proposed development undermines the historic rural setting of these buildings and their status as heritage assets. We absolutely reject the statement made in the application documents (Volume 1 – Cultural Heritage, page 5-23) that the effect these turbines will have on these assets is "negligible". We trust, but would like confirmation, that the Planning Department will consult with Jim Daley of the Conservation Department in their deliberations over this application.
11. English Heritage guidance documents are referred to in the application (Volume 1 – Cultural Heritage, page 5-5) regarding the settings for wind farms. We feel that only English Heritage can determine whether or not their guidance has been correctly interpreted and we therefore assume, but again would like confirmation, that English Heritage will be consulted by the Planning Department in their deliberations over this application. We are of the opinion that this development leads to 'substantial' harm to heritage assets and that as this harm is not outweighed by any public benefit from the development it should, therefore, be refused consent.
12. One of the only, and certainly the most popular, public walks in the Parish is alongside Thorney River. The walk starts at the Causeway, takes you alongside the river to Toneham and from there across the old Cricket Field to the Whittlesey Road and back into the village. This walk will be spoilt entirely by the wind turbines which will be visible for the greater part of this walk. We therefore oppose this application as it undermines the quality and pleasure of this important public amenity.
13. We consider that the Environmental Assessment which forms part of the application can at best only be predictive. Can we be assured that this assessment will be reviewed by a team of experts rather than just regular planning officers?
14. In respect of birds the RSPB in their letter dated 16 April 2012 to the City Council "strongly recommended" that options to mitigate the impact of the scheme be considered including "amending its location" This recommendation appears to have been ignored and we question how this is justified.
15. We would like to report that there is some concern amongst some Parishioners about vibration. They feel that vibration transferred into the turbines massive concrete foundations could, due to the make-up of the land in this area, be transferred to the Conservation Area of the village and put historic buildings such as the Abbey at risk. In any assessment of the suitability of this project we would like assurances that this risk does not in fact exist.
16. We note that site access from the A47 has been agreed with Highways. We assume that right hand turns when leaving the site will not be permitted for reasons of safety and question how this will be monitored and controlled?
17. At our invitation the developer attended the Thorney Parish Council Meeting (8 April 2013) to present his proposals. Upward of 120 villagers were present at the meeting and it would be fair to say that the majority were opposed to this development.
18. We do not feel this application can simply be judged on its own. It has to be considered in respect of the cumulative impact with other potential wind farms in the

Parish. There is genuine concern that the village may eventually become surrounded by wind farms especially if they are dealt with on a piecemeal basis. What policy do the planners have in place to ensure that this does not happen?

19. We believe that the City Council's desire for residential growth in the village would be jeopardised if this wind farm is approved. It is known that wind farms can have an adverse effect on the value of property and the village would, therefore, be less attractive to potential developers.

20. As the site and surrounding areas are very important regionally and nationally as an Archaeological site we are of the opinion that it is not a suitable location for any form of development and that this application should be refused.

21. Whatever other objections there may be to this project we believe the unacceptable visual impact of these turbines is more than sufficient reason for this application to be rejected by the City Council

22. In the event that planning officers recommend approval of this application, Thorney Parish Council request that it is referred to, and goes before, the Planning and Environmental Protection Committee.

23. We understand that noise, light flicker, output inefficiency, absence of compensation for de-valued properties, MOD navigational concerns etc. are not planning grounds for objecting to the Gores Farm application. We are not, therefore, including them in the above list of our objections to this development. We are, however, of the opinion that they should be taken into account as valid reasons for wind farms not being given approval.

These notes raise a number of queries (nos.6, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15 and 18) to which the Parish Council would be grateful for your early response from the Planning Department of Peterborough City Council.

The idea was floated that an application should be made to Natural England for this area of Fens to be made an area of outstanding natural beauty. It was thought that an organisation like the Thorney Society would be better placed and have more influence for such an application rather than Thorney Parish Council.

Partnership in Wind Farm Community Fund

Some limitations on what fund can be used for. Must be a shared partnership. Long discussion concerning the management of such a fund and fund managers responsibilities.

Mr. Shuster's letter discussed and Councillor Bartlett to contact him.

Councillor Rowe was very sceptical that any money from the wind farms would come to village organisations.

Priority for Fund money

It was agreed that discussion on the Fund money should be discussed after the planning application decision.

Station Road development (Harlocks)

New developer in discussion with Environment Agency concerning flood risk

Causeway Lodge

Thorney Parish Council welcomed the refurbishment of the cottage, the rebuilding of the existing bungalow and the scale of the three new dwellings (4 bedrooms). It was

felt that this amount of accommodation was appropriate for this site as it allows the retention of all the trees and shrubs to the frontage with the new buildings set back in the location of the original property. In principle Thorney Parish Council had no objections to the proposals.

13/00268/ADV. advertisement display boards for East of England Society
Adverts such as the one proposed can be displayed under the Permitted Development for 28 day in each calendar year, without the requirement for planning permission.

It is proposed that that the adverts are there for certain periods of time throughout the year, with the advert and board being removed between these periods.

The proposal from the applicant is that an advert be displayed for 3 periods of 28 days throughout the year to advertise up and coming events at the showground, removing all evidence of the advert between these periods.

Providing the restrictions are enforced than Thorney Parish Council has no objections

237/13-14 Local Government Boundary Commission

Review will decide the pattern of wards for the entire city— not just wards where there are levels of electoral inequality. Will decide: Total number of councillors (council size) — Number of wards — Names of wards — Boundaries of wards - Electoral cycles

As the council elects by thirds, there is a presumption (stated within the LDEDC Act 2009) that there will be a uniform pattern of three-member wards.

The Statutory Criteria for Electoral equality circulates around — Optimum number of electors per councillor — Five year forecast — In time for next election

There should be: Community identity — Parishes as building blocks — Strong boundaries — Public facilities — Focus on community interaction

Effective and convenient local government — Coherent wards with good internal transport links

The criteria for starting an electoral review is where: — 30% of wards have an electoral variance of more than 10% from the average and / or — one ward has an electoral variance more than 30% from the average

The aim is to try to ensure that each councillor represents approximately the same number of electors

Councillor Bartlett to prepare a paper for the next meeting

238/13-14 Any other business

Councillor Bartlett outlined the meeting with Lee Moore

Fly-tipping areas addressed

Willow Hall lane 28 April 2013 surface dressing between A47 and Bar Pasture cottages

Bukehorn road 27 April 2013 surface dressing between Crowland road and Powder Blue farm

New Cut recycling and resurfacing 24th June 2013 - Place to place between French Drove and English Drove

Crowland road B1040 8th July 2013 recycling and patching between Singlecote farm and Single sole farm

All date are approx and maybe liable to slip if weather conditions are not favourable.

Also intended to undertake some works to Archers drove, Wallace's drove and Scolding drove during the summer but as yet have not got a programmed date.

Start date for Church Street resurfacing delayed because of material shortage
Councillor Bartlett has spoken to Dr. Knights and is to apply to the Charity
Commission for the winding up of the 2 village charities.

Pode Hole Liaison Committee – report given by Councillor Bartlett

239/13-14 Date of next meeting

Meeting of the Parish Council 13th May 2013.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm