

AINSTABLE PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN: NIGEL VEAR,

AINSTABLE. TEL (01768) 896360 ~ chairman@ainstable.org.uk

Extraordinary meeting of Ainstable Parish Council held in Ainstable Church Institute at 7.30pm on 13th March, 2014.

PRESENT: Cllr Vear, Cllr Findlay, Cllr Thirwall, Cllr Guise, Cllr Miller, County & District Cllr Robinson

Members of the public present: 98

MINUTES

EXTRAORDINARY OPEN PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

1. **Declaration of interests-** All councillors live in the parish and own property within it
2. **To receive apologies for absence-** Mr Rory Stewart MP, Cllr Smith, Cllr Collinge and Cllr Bellis (all away)
3. **To discuss the proposed wind turbine near Ainstable village**

The Chair of the Parish Council, Nigel Vear welcomed everyone to the meeting. He gave a description of the parish area and mentioned the need for new councillors in Croglin & Newbiggin ward.

A balanced introduction to the scheme followed, showing photos of the proposed wind turbine and also comparative objects on the landscape. Cllr Vear gave the grid reference of the proposed mast and said that this is approximately 650m from Ainstable, 750m from Bascodyke and 850m from Ruckcroft.

Explanation of the timeline for the scheme to date- Cllr Vear said that he had received an initial phone call from Mr Russell Bowman (proposed applicant) just after Christmas during which he gave details of his proposals. Mr Bowman then addressed councillors during the open section of the Parish Council meeting in January. It was noted that Cllr Dennis Smith had offered Mr Bowman the use of a room at the Heather Glen for a consultation meeting. It was reported that Mr Bowman had said that he wouldn't take up this offer as there would be a lot of disagreement with the scheme and he felt that there would be sufficient time for consultation when the application is submitted. Cllr Vear advised that the two pieces of correspondence (a slip of paper and a letter) sent by Mr Bowman to parishioners within village were for him to comply with the consultation part of his proposed application. It was noted that Mr Bowman has been in contact with Eden District Council Planning Dept. and was following their advice.

Cllr Vear said that the Parish Council has received a lot of correspondence and emails on the proposals, all of which have been against it.

The presentation then went on to look at various bodies who are against proposals such as the one being made. Firstly it was noted that Ainstable is on the border of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and an area of county importance. As Spadadam Base is near, the Ministry of Defense have an interest in the scheme as the proposed site is on the approach run for low flying jets. Eden District Council is obviously an interested party and Rory Stewart MP and Cumbria Wind Watch are staunchly against the proposals. It was reported that Cumbria Wind Watch's website is a very useful resource as it contains a huge number of research documents on the subject. Many neighbouring parish councils are also very concerned. A turbine within Heskett (Southwaite) Parish Council area has just been refused but the applicants are now submitting an appeal with a second smaller turbine application being submitted as well. Cllr Vear said that in this geographical area we have a bit of countryside which is largely untouched by turbine at present. He said that a number are going up along the A6 and there may be a good case for small farm based ones, but not commercial money generating operations such as is being proposed by Mr Bowman.

Cllr Vear said that if people wish to fight an application should it be submitted, then the whole community needs to become involved and draw upon local expertise. He said that it will be necessary to involve others from outside the direct area as a huge number of communities will be able to see the turbine. Cllr Vear said to the full hall that the meeting had only been directly advertised to those living within the village (as well as on all parish noticeboards). It was noted that the Chair of Hesket Parish Council was in attendance and several individuals who are also members of Kirkoswald Parish Council had come along. It was noted that The Cumberland and Westmorland Herald has included an article on the matter. Cllr Vear encouraged as many people as possible to send comments (pro and against the proposed application to Mr Bowman) as these must be submitted by him to Eden District Council. Cllr Vear asked those writing ensure that their letters were polite.

Cllr Vear reiterated the fact that as it is only a proposed application at present there is nothing for the Parish Council to formally object to. All those sending correspondence on the matter were asked to please copy emails to the Parish Council (chair@ainstable.gov.uk) or to put a copy through Nigel Vear's door (Roadends, Ainstable) to keep councillors up to date.

Cllr Vear gave a slide show of installation of a 500kw wind turbine in another area. He then asked those present if they wanted a wind turbine on the proposed site.

- John Kirkby from Scales nr Renwick said that the proposed wind turbine's blades would be higher than Scales Hill. He said that people power is needed within the valley as there will be one application after the next if this one isn't stopped and we all need to support each other's Parish Councils. He noted that Lazonby village residents will be see this turbine very closely.
- Paul Hardon, Ainstable enquired about Mr Bowman's background and the benefits to the parish referred to in his letter. Cllr Vear explained that Mr Bowman is currently a tenant farmer whose family have owned land in the area for many generations. He said that he is looking to build up a family farm which he will be able to pass on through the generations. Mr Vear said that he is not sure what Mr Bowman intends to pass back to the parish (not through the parish council).
- **John Lynch? Daniel Carr** , Meadowstones, Ainstable said from research he understood that the costs of a project such as this is about £1.25m with annual returns of £300-400k being generated.
- There was a general agreement by those present that the proposed project was just about personal gain and not for the benefit of the area and those living within it.
- **Neil , West Garth Cottage, Ainstable** reported that it was his understanding that often landowners rent out their land to turbine companies and the turbine company deal with the finance.
- It was suggested that it might be useful to go out and have graphics made of what it will look like in the actual setting. These could then be used on posters etc.
- Mr Andy Wilson, Croglin noted that this turbine is about 220 ft tall. The average tree is only 40ft. He was also concerned that its positioning on the ridge will cause it to be seen from even further away.
- There was much concern that as well as the devaluation of property in the area, people will simply choose to buy elsewhere, making them unsaleable.
- Jenny Hill, Ruckcroft said that she had read about problems in other countries where the turbines go out of commission and are not then removed by owning companies.
- Patrick McGowen, Haggett House asked what are the grounds on which the public can complain? Mr Vear advised that these included things like visual impact, sound pollution, impact on bird life and flight

paths etc. Mr Mc Gowen then asked whether there is a standard approach for fighting this type of application. Mr Vear said that a lot of work has already been carried out so parishes faced by such applications are advised not to try to reinvent the wheel, so to speak. In such cases the RAF have concerns about the height of the structure as well as possible radar interruptions. It was noted that Police radio signals can also be interrupted by turbines.

- Rod McKenzie from Ruckcroft reported that he had spoken with someone who worked at a BT installation up on Hartside and they reported that the turbine could interfere with sending signals to London Road mast in Carlisle.
- A member of the public said that they recently spoke to someone about a mast in Allerdale. They had been advised that Cumbria Tourism were useful as they feel that tourists don't come to see turbines. It was noted that there are a number of tourist related businesses in the parish.
- **Neil, West Garth Cottage, Ainstable** asked where can you go and see one of this size. Mr Paul Hardon suggested that the recently installed turbine at Cardewlees near the new Cranstons shop may possibly be about the same size. Cllr Vear suggested that there a quite a number in north Lancashire, south west Scotland and West Cumbria.
- David Porter, Heskett Parish said that there is nothing of this height in the Eden area as yet. He said that the application at Southwaite was turned down by Eden District Council unanimously. People agreed that they had much sympathy for Eden District Council as appeals costs a huge amount of money (approximately £145000) which ultimately comes from public funds.
- Jean & John Sheffield, Broadfield Southwaite said that Heskett Parish Council needs everyone's help and asked for support from those present.
- Dudley Smith, Ruckcroft said that he had already contacted the district council on the matter. He said that he had emailed copies to the Chief Planning Officer and the Leader of the Council to say that he is very against the proposal. Mr Smith said that he had also emailed Mr Bowman directly.
- Jane Rigby from Southwaite advised everyone sending correspondence to ensure that they keep a copy of it as the submitted application must take into account any points made during the consultation proposal.
- Heskett Parish Council reported that the volume of replies plays a big part in the decision making process as the statistics must appear in the application documents.
- One resident of the parish said that she needs to sell her house as husband had died recently. She said that it is now impossible as no one wants to buy a house with the possibility of a wind turbine being built near it. She said that she felt nobody should have the power to do this to a community.

Cllr Vear said that the Parish Council needs to collect the names of those who object to the proposal and also those who would be prepared to be involved in an action group. Parish councillors then passed around clip boards and forms for those wishing to object and asked them to please indicate on it if they wishes to become involved in the action group. Mr Vear said that all members of a household can object.

A member of the public asked if Mr Bowman want to tell those present anything about the application? Mr Vear offered him the opportunity but said that he doesn't have to speak and asked everyone to ensure that they be polite towards him.

David Prosser, Beck Farm said that if this proposed application went ahead it would change the area from agriculture to industrial. He said that he was concerned that land will be bought up by speculators which would force land prices up for farmers.

County & District Cllr Mary Robinson then introduced herself to those present. She said that she hadn't intended to speak at the meeting but given the strength of public feeling amongst all those present she felt that she now had a clear mandate to represent the area with the Planning Dept.

It was suggested that those who can't come along to meetings be consulted as well e.g. perhaps housebound neighbours.

Mr Vear brought the meeting to a close by saying that this was only a starting point and the first of many meetings. He said that the Parish Council will begin to work with other parishes as well.

4. **Date of the next meeting: Next ordinary parish council meeting-** 7.30pm on Tuesday 18th March, 2014 in Ainstable Church Institute

Signed: *R.E. Lytollis*

Clerk to Ainstable Parish Council

13.03.14

Meeting closed at 8.34pm