

LOWER WINTERBORNE PARISH COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING HELD ON 27 AUGUST 2014 TO DISCUSS LWPC'S RESPONSE TO THE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR BLANDFORD HILL WIND FARM (ref 2/2014/0768/PAEIA)

Present: Di Lewis - LWPC Chairman
Laurence Burgess - Deputy Chairman
Roy Allcock - Councillor
Helen Andrews - Councillor
Paul Humphry - Councillor
Jocelyn Jenkins - Councillor
Graham Nash - Councillor
Lesley Wilcox - Clerk

plus 10 members of the public.

The members of the Council introduced themselves. DL asked that members of the public identified themselves before speaking.

The following points were made.

1. The proposed turbines are 125m to the blade tip; about twice the height of Salisbury Cathedral. The developer had produced a 'line of sight' map showing the extent of their visibility in the surrounding area. DART (Dorset Against Rural Turbines) were very concerned at both the height of the turbines and the distance at which they would be seen. As a comparator, the single turbine at Bere Regis is approx 60m high.
2. The MoD have objected to the proposal and will demand warning lights on the blades if the scheme is approved.
3. The Dorset branch of CPRE (Campaign for the Protection of Rural England) strongly oppose the plans due to:
 - i. The size, scale and industrial nature of the proposed development which would cause an adverse visual impact on the small-scale, high value landscape of the area and from viewpoints, both inside and outside the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which is about 400 yards away.
 - ii. Adverse cumulative impacts are likely to arise as a result of the proximity of other approved or proposed turbines at the Roger's Hill, Alaska, Slyer's Lane and West Dorset wind farms.
 - iii. Social amenity would be adversely affected through reduced enjoyment of the footpath running through the site and others nearby.

iv. The settings and visual appreciation of heritage assets would be adversely affected. The Winterborne Whitechurch Conservation Area and Grade 1 listed church are just two, but there are seven other Grade 1 listed buildings within three miles, including several in this parish, notably St Andrew's Winterborne Tomson.

3. In addition the Dorset branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) has also recently calculated that North Dorset DC has already exceeded its 2020 Renewable Energy target by 15% due to the number of solar farms approved or where a decision is pending, and this does not include other renewables, such as biomass. There is therefore no need for a hugely damaging wind farm to be approved at all.

4. Local experience is that the one turbine at Bere Regis produces an intrusive level of noise when it is working. It was thought that this was measured as 20dBA. The developer has estimated that the noise level of the proposed 4 turbines would be 40 - 42 dBA.

5. One member of the public said that she drove regularly through an area in France where a number of turbines were sited close to the road and reported that she experienced a strong strobe effect when the turbines were turning.

6. It was estimated that the foundations of each turbine would require some 2000 tonnes of concrete and given recent experience there was concern about the effect that this might have on the flow of the River Winterborne.

7. The efficiency of the turbines was discussed but would not be grounds for objection.

8. Concerns were expressed about the effect on property values and difficulty in selling nearby properties.

A show of hands showed 8 members of the public opposed to the proposal and 2 abstentions.

For LWPC RA proposed that the Council opposed the application, seconded by JJ. DL and LW will draft a letter for approval at the next Council meeting on 2 September. The deadline for response to NDDC is 5 September.

LW

28 August 2014

