

## ORTON PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> August 2015 in Orton Market Hall following a Public Meeting at 7.30pm

**Present** Cllr Kyle Blue (Chairman) Cllrs S Dunning, M Coates, Menna Lewis,  
M Mawson, E Potter and D Potter.  
Clerk, C J Elphick  
County Councillor Libby Barteman  
members of the public

**Apologies for absence** had been received from District Councillor, Adrian Todd.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interest on any item on the agenda.

**Minutes of the Meeting** held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Approaching 100 local residents attended a public meeting which had been held to gauge the opinion of Planning Application 15/0667, for the installation of a 25 acre Solar Farm (Photovoltaic Panels) on land between the northbound and southbound carriageways of the M6 motorway, starting between the two motorway service areas at Tebay and running northwards towards Shap.

Several speakers made valid and relevant points regarding the desirability of the proposed installation. These observations were noted by the Parish Council.

**Orton Parish Council, after due consideration and consultation with local residents, RESOLVED that Eden District Council be requested to REFUSE this application, Reference 15/0667.**

Reasons for refusal were given as:

**Visual Amenity** Significant adverse effect on the visual amenity in the Lune Gorge and Shap Fells together with one of the finest stretches of motorway in the country Situated between the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks, much of the area is scheduled, subject to confirmation by the Secretary of State, for inclusion into the respective parks this would bring the LDNP within 800m of the proposal.

**Design Award** When the M6 Motorway was constructed through the Lune Gorge in the 1970s the architects received Civic Trust Award for Design, Design award for successfully blending the motorway into the landscape with minimal impact thereby retaining the wilderness feel. Such consideration would be totally destroyed by the appearance of a Solar Farm.

**Construction** The photovoltaic panels would be erected on steel frameworks, angled at 45 degrees rising three to four metres in height. The ends of the structures would also be unsightly and give an industrial appearance to this large area. These would be visible both from the motorway and all raised elevations of the surrounding open countryside.

**Shell Pipeline** – When the Shell Pipeline was constructed through the Gorge a full Archaeological Survey was required plus and watching brief throughout the construction. No mention has been made of any comparable accommodation with this application.

**Glare** The amount of expected glare from the PV panels appears to vary throughout the report and would be distracting for passing traffic on the M6 motorway.

**Habitat.** The area is noted for the presence of ground-nesting birds including curlews, lapwings and oystercatchers. This would be destroyed by the Proposed Solar Farm.

**Effects on Tourism** The main industry in this unique countryside is that of Tourism. Visitors come from all over the world to enjoy the spectacular local scenery. Major installation of Solar panels would totally destroy this image and the reason for their visits.

**Employment** No permanent jobs would be created by this project. Existing employment would, potentially, suffer due to reduced visitor numbers. It is expected that specialist contractors from elsewhere would carry out the installation and future maintenance would be minimal. Manufacture of the PV panels is expected to be from outside the EU, so no benefit whatsoever.

**Lifespan** The land would be leased for a period of twenty-five years. No mention has been made of what will happen at the end of this period or how the land would be reinstated on discontinuance of the generation.

**Power Output** The maximum rated output of PV installations is achieved only at times of bright sunlight around midday. No power is generated during the hours of darkness. Output starts from dawn, rising to a maximum at midday then reducing towards dusk. Conventional generating plant is required to be running on standby at all times to compensate for this variation. Output is substantially reduced in overcast conditions. It is surmised that the net annual output in this northerly location would be only a small proportion of the rated capacity.

**Proliferation** It is noted that a significant number of applications for large Solar Farms have recently been made to Eden District Council. If approved this would represent a significant, totally unacceptable "Blot on the Eden Landscape". This flood of applications precedes the imminent severe reduction of "Feed-in" tariffs proposed by the Department for Energy and Climate Change, from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016

**Date of next meeting** Monday 21 September 2015

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman 21 September 2015

