

LOWER PENN PARISH COUNCIL

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EXTRAORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on THURSDAY 5 AUGUST 2021

At THE VICTORY HALL, LOWER PENN

PRESENT:

Cllr N Cox – Chairman
Cllr Mrs B Southall – Vice Chair
Cllr Ms H Fuller
Cllr Mrs K Preece
Cllr D Williams

Mr Duncan Howie – Director Anglo Renewables Ltd
Mr Patrick Downes – Harris Lamb Planning Consultancy

Members of the public

| | | Action |
|--------|---|--------|
| 129/21 | APOLOGIES Received from Cllr S Bradley, Cllr Mrs C Taylor, Cllr Mrs K Brazenell and District Cllr Kinsey | |
| 130/21 | MINUTES Proposed by Cllr Mrs Southall and seconded by Cllr Ms Fuller and carried that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 1 July 2021 be approved and signed as a true and correct record. | |
| 131/21 | DECLARATION OF INTERESTS None recorded. | |
| 132/21 | Proposed Development of 2 new 49 9MW Battery Storage Facilities – land off Penstone Lane/Blackpit Lane Lower Penn The Chairman welcomed Mr Howie and Mr Downes to the meeting and invited them to deliver their presentation via a slide pack to the meeting. Following the presentation, the Chairman opened the meeting for public participation and the following issues were raised and discussed. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The choice of site for this facility is due to the existing substation sited off Penstone Lane, which has capacity availability and a connection from the electricity grid to the proposed system – close siting between substation and the facility is a requirement.▪ The construction of the site will take approximately 3-5 months covering a 5 acre area. There will be two applications submitted as the substation reports for this proposal were given as two separate sites, although they are one overall project, using the same access road.▪ A planning application will be submitted within the next few weeks, and if approved, construction is likely start next year. | |

- In response to a resident, Mr Howie advised that the applicant cannot be Western Power as they are only licenced for distribution and not generation.
- The proposed facility is planned to use lithium-ion technology. The batteries connect to the grid via the substation using cables and transformers. However, it is not possible to say what source the stored energy (fossil fuel or renewable) will come from. A resident questioned the use of lithium-ion, which is not a new technology and which has a history of explosive incidents recorded, as opposed to more up to date non-flammable and non-explosive alternatives. Mr Howie responded by stating that lithium-ion battery storage is a proven technology and has been cost-evaluated for this proposal.
- A question was put forward as to whether the facility could be stored underground for safety and visual impact reasons. Mr Howie replied by saying that he suspected the cost and technology of protecting batteries from the water table are the likely limiting factor with this suggestion. He stated that the system has built-in self-monitoring technology and would be examined by routine maintenance visits, likely to occur twice a week and monitored through its self-reporting technology.
- Mr Howie advised that access via the existing substation road owned by Western Power had been denied but that he would make further enquiries into this.
- Noise levels – there would be continuous low level noise from the facility’s cooling system and screening will be deployed to mitigate this impact.
- The meeting expressed grave concerns regarding the impact of the facility on the narrow lanes surrounding the site, both with regard to traffic impact and damage to the roads caused by heavy container structures and large construction vehicles. In addition, residents were concerned regarding the protection of habitat and wildlife in this very rural area. Mr Downes replied by saying that recent traffic surveys have not identified any issues and that traffic management schemes will be introduced to alleviate any traffic problems. He also said that existing wildlife and habitat will be protected and that levels of biodiversity would be enhanced.
- In response to a number of residents’ concerns, Mr Howie stated that Anglo Renewables Ltd has no direct connection to other proposed developments in Lower Penn and Mr Downes said that although Harris Lamb are working with other developers in the area, this battery facility is not linked to any potential housing development.
- The meeting asked for an explanation of the very special circumstances for this development in the green belt and Mr Downes replied by stating that the existing infrastructure fits the criteria, the substation has capacity and South Staffordshire Council has declared a climate emergency and that battery storage facilities are part of the solution. The benefit to the community is wider than Lower Penn and these facilities and other energy schemes will provide renewable energy and economic benefits.
- Mr Downes confirmed to the meeting that there was no evidence to suggest that the facility would release harmful emissions that would result in human health issues.
- Mr Howie said that he was unaware of how many facilities in the country are built on green belt land.

It was agreed that the Parish Council will co-ordinate any further communication with Harris Lamb and Anglo Renewables Ltd and as there were a number of issues that required further clarification, both Mr Howie and Mr Downes agreed to contact the Parish Council with their responses as soon as possible.

The Chairman thanked Mr Howie and Mr Downes for their attendance and presentation at the Council Meeting.

133/21

ACCOUNTS

The meeting approved the payment of the following account:

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| BG Ground Maintenance | July Ground Works | £405.00 |
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Clerk

134/21

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 2 September 2021 at the Victory Hall commencing at 7.15pm

Signed:.....Chairman

Date:

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