

STOGUMBER PARISH COUNCIL

Draft minutes of the site meeting held at 19:00 on Monday 22nd July 2013 at Capton Farm, Capton

Present:

Cliff Matravers (Acting Chair)
Viv Sellick
Julian Spicer (late arrival)
Jan Leeming (Clerk)

Jan Swan, Chair of Sampford Brett Parish Council
David Drubble, Councillor of Sampford Brett Parish Council
The Applicants, Mr & Mrs White and Son
6 members of the public

Capton Farm Application

1. The meeting was called to consider planning applications: 03/31/13/010, Erection of ground mounted solar array.
2. VS declared a personal interest.
3. Mr White showed those present the site and explained the panels would span 40m in two rows, 8m apart with a maximum height of 3m. The site would be dug out to reduce the height and make it a gentle slope. The site is a brownfield site not used to grow crops. No trees would be affected. The electricity generated would be used to supply power to the farm and farm buildings.
4. There was one objection to the plans from neighbours who could see the site from their property. They felt that it was difficult to judge how visible the panels would be without knowing the levels. There was a question regarding the colour of the frames as it was felt these could be visible from a distance. Other members of the public felt it would be better tucked away, one felt that it was a good idea subject to levels being such that visibility would be at a minimum.
5. Mr White agreed to investigate the possibility of siting the panels farther back to reduce visibility and to plant a hedge behind the panels so the frames would not be visible. He would report back to his neighbours to ascertain if that would satisfy their concerns regarding visibility.
6. Julian Spicer arrived and was briefed on the points raised. It was agreed that Stogumber Parish Council would support the application if the resident's concerns were satisfied.
7. Mr White to contact the neighbour after discussions with his architect. The neighbour to report back to JL within the next week.

Aller Farm Application

8. The meeting also considered the impact on Stogumber Parish of application 3/28/13/005, proposed solar PV development at Aller Farm.
9. This application is within Sampford Brett parish and J Swan chair of Sampford Brett Parish Council outlined the application and the reasons why they were objecting to it. JS explained that although SPC has not been directly consulted it can still express a view because it can be seen from the parish, and that members of the public could write individually to WSC to record their views if they wished. JL said the closing date for registering views was 2nd August 2013.
10. There was concern expressed among residents of Capton about heavy vehicles using the village roads as access to the site, this was allayed as plans have been altered to take traffic along Wyndham Estate roads / tracks. There were concerns expressed among Capton residents regarding the visibility of the scheme and whether it would look industrial. It was explained that there would be security fencing but a new hedge would be planted between that and the bridleway. There would be security CCTV but no security lighting, and a small building on site.
11. It was explained it would appear that the site had been chosen because
 - a) It had an electricity line running across it; that line has no capacity for any new connections so an underground line will be needed.
 - b) It was Grade 3B agricultural land; there was a healthy wheat crop growing on it.

- c) HMRC would not permit the development on less visible 'heritage land' on the estate to be used and it was not in Exmoor National Park.
- 13. JS outlined the areas in West Somerset where the scheme would be visible. After a discussion it was agreed that SPC would write a letter of objection on the grounds of unacceptable visual impact and loss of valuable agricultural land. JL to write to WSC.
- 14. There was no other business. The meeting closed at 8pm.