

# Barnacre-with-Bonds Parish Council

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## Minutes Extraordinary meeting 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**Present:-** Councillors Commander (Chair), Fennell (Vice Chair), Howell, Ibison, Reilly, Webster & Harkins & 22 members of the public.

Richard Morison – Pegasus Group.

1. **Apologies-** None.
2. Minutes of the regular meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023 were resolved by the Council to be a true record and were signed by Councillor Commander.
3. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40pm for a period of public discussion. A presentation was given by Richard Morison of Pegasus Group outlining planning application 23/00902/FULMAJ @ Barnacre Solar Farm, Turners Lane. This presentation will be added to the Barnacre-with-Bonds Parish Council Website for public viewing under the news section by Cllr Reilly. The planning application was discussed, and several members of the public spoke expressing numerous concerns.

Many reasons for objections were discussed including the lack of provision for community benefit within the planning application and there being no evidence of any wider society benefit including but not limited to financial benefit. It was suggested there could be a share buy in scheme for residents.

It was also discussed that there are other areas where solar panels would be better placed with less impact such as brownfield land and adding solar panels to the many new residential developments that are being built in and around the area. Richard Morison advised that government targets were set at 70 GW of green energy by 2035. This would equate to granting four solar farm projects planning permission every week in order to meet this target. He stated that brownfield land was often allocated for other use e.g. Commercial.

Discussions around the access points into the site included the unsuitability of the roads and a prohibition that was already in place for HGV vehicles on Ray Lane. There were concerns raised about the potential for increased dangers to pedestrians and cyclists using these lanes and that problems around Bruna Hill that already exist when two HGV meet at certain points and are unable to pass each other. Residents raised concerns for the school buses using these routes

everyday and one resident raised the issue of a previous fatality when a school bus collided with a concrete mixer near Lees Farm on Sandholme Lane. Other concerns regarding construction traffic included the use of Calder House Lane Junction and the Garstang Community Academy pupils crossing the road. It is already a busy junction with poor visibility – residents asked if there had been any consultations with the school governors. Discussions followed around the introduction of a traffic regulation order to incorporate conditions around traffic management.

Flooding was brought into the discussions with some parts of the planned development being on land with a flood risk. There was concern over the solar farm exacerbating the existing flooding situation at the Southern end of the planned site. The use of an attenuation pond for flood management were raised and the hazards involved with such methods and the maintenance and planned location of the pond. The effects that the loss of marshland would have on biodiversity and wildlife habitat. Recent wet weather has caused localised flooding on roads all around the planned site rendering many roads unpassable.

Residents were concerned about the maintenance and development of public footpaths during and after the development was completed if planning was agreed. The aesthetics of the solar farms and how this would affect the public rights of way were all discussed.

Residents raised concerns that the Parish Council had not done enough to inform them of the Planning application, they wanted to know what had been done to make the residents aware. It was advised by Cllr Commander (Chair) and Cllr Webster that the Parish Council provide information of how to make a comment on the Wyre Planning portal including a link on the website to the portal. The Parish Council held a community Catchup event on the 07.10.23 with a chance to meet and speak to the Parish Councillors, Noventum Power were invited but were not at the event. The Parish Council are holding this extraordinary meeting to collect comment on the application, the meeting was advertised on social media and the Parish Council website, and a local journalist had written a front page article about the planned solar farm. All of this was circulating in the community.

A resident suggested that it would be essential for road improvement to take place, provision of footpaths and enrichment for the community to be evident with a suggestion that there could be investment in the canal paths to make them walkable. The materials used for the site should be made in the UK with predominately local labour being used. The community investment must be substantial.

Right to privacy was discussed with the use of extensive CCTV.

The meeting reconvened at 8:45pm

4. Planning application - 23/00902/FUL –

Erection of a Solar Farm together with associated infrastructure @Barnacre Solar Farm, PR3 1GB.

The application was discussed by the Parish Council, incorporating the concerns raised at the meeting by members of the public present and the information presented by Richard Morison of Pegasus Group. **It was resolved that the Parish Council would submit an objection with the following reasons:**

- 1. The solar farm would be a large and visually intrusive development in a natural countryside setting. The Parish Council cannot see any direct benefit to the local community. The planning application offers no proposal for a community fund or any other initiatives that would benefit residents. We cannot see any enrichment to the community.**
- 2. The site for the proposed solar farm is currently used for agricultural land that is important for food production. The planned site is significant in size at over 100 acres and the loss of this land would be of significant detriment to the local economy and the environment.**
- 3. The Parish Council do not feel that the planned access routes are workable and that the whole access proposal to the solar farm is inappropriate. The construction and operation of the solar farm would require substantial use of heavy goods vehicles. This would increase traffic on local rural roads. The roads planned for access are narrow, of minor road construction and are in general in poor condition and as a consequence are not suitable to accommodate the proposed significant increase in HGV and large construction vehicles. In particular the Parish Council would like to bring to your attention the following specific concerns for both access routes:**
  - a. Southern Route Calder House Lane to Bruna Hill to Ray Lane:**
    - i. Bruna Hill is of particular concern as HGV vehicles cannot pass with ease, if at all at certain points. This is already an area of concern causing traffic delays and altercations between drivers. Furthermore, at the junction of Bruna Hill and Ray Lane there is a new children's home. The increase in traffic, particularly large vehicles and with the proximity of passing vehicles to the home, The Parish Council consider this is not a suitable situation and poses a danger to the residents.**
    - ii. The access route to the southern access incorporates the junction of Garstang Road (the B6430) and Calder House Lane. This is a particularly busy and dangerous junction in Bowgreave and is used by not only the public but a large contingent of children who live in Catterall and attend Garstang Community Academy who all need to**

cross this junction. Visibility is poor and an increase in large vehicles along with construction traffic at this junction will make this even more hazardous for our local children and residents.

**b. Northern Route New Lane to Turners Lane:**

- i. On this route there are two old narrow stone bridges on New Lane and Sandholme Lane and a number of tight junctions on these narrow roads which will be difficult for heavy goods vehicles to manoeuvre through safely. This will again pose a danger to motorists, cyclists and walkers as well as the potential to cause damage to the local road infrastructure.

**c. General Access Route Comments:**

- i. The Parish Council are concerned for public safety as there are generally no footpaths the roads proposed for access to the site. The access routes are popular with cyclists and walkers alike and The Parish Council feel the safety of residents, visitors to the area and local wildlife will be compromised.
- ii. The Parish Council is also concerned about the impact this increase in traffic will have on the local community. Both access routes are main access routes for residents who live in the rural area of our parish and Calder Vale. The use of these routes will inevitably cause disruption and delays to our local community.

**4. Flooding - The Parish Council notes that although the applicant's Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy document, which accompanies this application, recognises that:**

- a. areas of the development site are liable to flooding and have standing water for considerable periods of the year and
- b. sections of the site are included within EA Flood Zones 2 and 3, it is concerned with the proposals for the management of surface water from the site.

The report concentrates on management of surface water to avoid flooding on the development site and does not address potential flooding risks to the surrounding area and in particular the residential area around Pasture Drive/Chepstow Drive, Bonds.

The applicant's consultant identifies the Rivers Calder and Little Calder as the only main rivers in the area which are located to the south of the site, but the topography of the site slopes to the north west so currently all surface water conduits drain in this direction (as confirmed within the report). They feed into the Greenhalgh Castle Brook (which is classified by the EA as a main river) and subsequently into the River Wyre.

The area of Bonds adjacent to Greenhalgh Castle Brook is already subject

**to flooding during high rainfall events and the Parish Council is concerned that this proposed development will change the nature of the surface water runoff and further exasperate this problem.**

**The Parish Council considers that the applicant's surface water strategy does not give adequate provision for surface water drainage on the site particularly at the southern end of the planned development which lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3. It further considers that Wyre Planning should request that the applicant reviews the potential impact on the surface water drainage to the area surrounding this major development. The Applicant is proposing to use an attenuation pond to control surface water discharge, the Parish Council is concerned that the use of this type of structure may pose a danger to the general public and particularly children. The Parish Council requests that adequate safety and security measures are used to mitigate any danger to our community.**

- 5. The Parish Council considers that the aesthetic aspect of the project and the impact of walking through fields of solar panels and the aesthetic defacement of our natural countryside on our public right of way network needs to be recognised. We are fortunate to have many public rights of way and beautiful countryside walks around Barnacre-with-Bonds Parish and large sections of this will be taken up by solar panels.**
- 6. The Parish Council considers that the proposed screening and landscaping is not adequate for the size of the planned development. The investment in trees and hedgerows should be reflective of the size of the solar farm. The Parish Council do not consider this is adequate to screen resident's properties particularly those situated on Dimples Lane.**
- 7. The Parish Council consider this development will have a detrimental impact on wildlife within the area and the natural habitat of many species will be lost because of the project. Although the developers have had various surveys completed these are not year-round, seasonal assessments and in some cases take place over only a few days. Biodiversity loss has detrimental effects on the environment. Our community has had heavy development from residential building and large numbers of our green spaces have been built upon with the loss of wildlife along with them.**
- 8. The Parish Council are concerned that there will be an increase in background noise pollution from this large solar farm will bring will impact on the residents. The area is a quiet rural area and will be significantly affected by the noise pollution caused by the solar farm.**
- 9. The Parish Council consider that the use of CCTV to protect the site may lead to infringement of privacy rights for people using our public right of ways.**

Meeting closed at 9.30pm

Prepared 18.10.23 by Mrs H Adair