

**Minutes of the Milton Abbot Grouped Parish Council
10th June 2015**

APPLICATION 00484/2015 PROPOSED WIND TURBINE AT CARDWELL FARM, LONGCROSS

In determining its views on this particular proposal, the Parish Council considered not only the views of local residents, but those of relevant professionals made on behalf of various statutory bodies, as well as information provided by consultants engaged by the applicant.

Taking into account:

- i. The anticipated benefits of the proposed turbine, regarding the production of renewable energy.
- ii. The outcome of the pre-application consultation meeting at which all those present, who expressed a view, were opposed to the proposal.
- iii. That no material changes have been made to the proposed development, in response to the outcome of the pre-application consultation process.
- iv. The views expressed by members of the public present at a meeting to consider this application.
- v. The concerns expressed on behalf of various statutory bodies during the screening and scoping process.
- vi. The report submitted by the Acting Clerk.

The Parish Council objects to the development proposed in application 00484/2015, on the following grounds:

- i. The proposal represents a further extension of individual large turbines in the vicinity of Dartmoor National Park and, when the cumulative effect of all other existing or proposed large turbines in the area is properly assessed, goes beyond a level at which the landscape can reasonably be expected to absorb a proliferation of these structures, each with its large rotating element.
- ii. The proposed development would be very visible from Brent Tor Church and have a significant adverse impact on both its setting and views therefrom.
- iii. The proximity of the proposed turbine to Castle Park Camp Hilltop enclosure, an archaeological site of national importance, is harmful to both the current sympathetic rural context of this ancient agricultural site and views from it to Brent Tor.
- iv. There would be an adverse effect on the residential amenities of nearby properties, both from noise generated by the proposed turbine and, in some cases, its visual impact.
- v. Although the undulating landscape and vegetation screening would offset the visual impact of the proposed turbine to some degree, it would still be a dominant vertical structure, out of keeping with its surroundings and strikingly visible to anyone in the vicinity.

- vi. The separation distance between all parts of the turbine and some of the nearest hedgerows is inadequate, according to guidance provided by Natural England in its Technical Information Note TIN 051.

The Parish Council acknowledges that it does not have the ability to undertake a technical evaluation of the statements submitted by various consultants in support of this application. However, it does draw the attention of the Borough Council to the following issues that, from a lay perspective, have caused it some concern:

- i. Despite entering the planning process in February 2014 and August 2014 respectively, neither of the proposed turbines at Ridgecombe Farm, Lifton or at Wreys Barton, Stowford were included in the cumulative impact assessment contained in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment [LVIA] that was produced in October 2014. However, they are referred to in the Written Statement [which was not produced by the LVIA consultant] and dismissed as not contributing to the overall cumulative effect. No reference was made to any effect on views from Brent Tor.
- ii. Despite the publication of the third edition of Natural England's Technical Information Note on bats and onshore wind turbines in March 2014, the Ecological Appraisal and Bat Activity Survey that was completed in July 2014 used the second edition, published in 2012. In the latest version, a distance of 50m between the turbine blade sweep and a hedgerow is not an 'ideal' situation, as stated in the Appraisal. The Technical Advice Note states that '50m should be the minimum stand-off distance from blade tip to the nearest feature'.

However, that distance has to be calculated using a formula involving blade length, hub height and hedgerow height. In this case, that formula appears to produce a minimum distance requirement of at least 55m from blade sweep to the northern hedgerow. In fact, the available distance is 45m.

Natural England's Technical Information Note 051 on bats and onshore wind turbines states that '*Bats change their activity across the year. Survey effort needs to be spread across the season to reflect this.*' and '*As a rough guide, it may mean at least one visit per month, or using remote detectors during that period of time.*'

The Technical Information Note also suggests that researchers '*Investigate use of the site throughout the year at an early stage, with survey effort focussed principally on those periods when the highest concentrations of bats are likely (April-October in most situations).*'

However, the Appraisal submitted with this application relates to an automated survey carried out over one week and manual surveys on two days, all in July 2014, plus desk top studies.

- iii. Beechwood is a derelict property near to the proposed site, described as unfit for human habitation and therefore not included as a noise receptor. However, Council Tax is apparently still paid on this property and therefore its status as a dwelling is not clear to the Parish Council, although it is obviously not occupied.

The Parish Council recommends that before considering this application:

- i. The Borough Council should require revised photo-montages, wire-frame drawings and an assessment by the LVIA consultants, of the individual and cumulative impacts of the proposed turbines at Ridgecombe Farm and Wreys Barton.

- ii. Before considering the noise assessment submitted, the Borough Council should determine the status of Beechwood as a noise receptor.
- iii. The Borough Council should ensure that any Ecological Appraisal of the potential impact of this proposal on the local bat population, considered with this application, takes account of the guidance contained in Natural England's Technical Information Note 051, published in March 2014.