Granborough Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Granborough Parish Council
held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 3rd September 2024

Attendees: Cllr Anderson, Cllr Ellerton, Cllr Fenwick (Chair), Cllr Oakland, Cllr Smedley, Cllr Watson, Buckinghamshire's Council Chilver, Clerk Tors Firth, and 81 members of the public.

85. Apologies; Cllr de Niese was absent.

86. Introductions; The chairman introduced members of the Parish Council and explained the purpose of this additional planning meeting.

87. Open Forum for Parishioners;

Note: The Chairman in consultation with the Parish Councillors, extend the Open Forum to provide more opportunity for residents to speak. A summary of concerns expressed follows;

- **a.** Demands were made by an individual, that the Parish Council abandon its lawful procedures and protocols, to allow resident(s) to control the Parish Council's response,
- **b.** This application should not be considered or commented on in isolation, given the existence of significant proposals from National Grid, Rosefield, and Statkraft. That since the National Grid will not be accepting new connections until 2030, that this should be an invalid application,
- **c.** That the amendments make matters worse as the same power output is condensed into less space causing significant fear of explosion, becoming a terrorist target, and the risk of death from toxic fumes in the event of a burn-out,
- **d.** That the fire, access, water and run off issues have not been addressed by the amendments. That a fire is a statistical certainty, and that contaminated water will get into the national watercourse and cause everlasting and far reaching damage,
- **e.** That the character of Hoghshaw Road will be permanently destroyed, that new pylons will be installed across remaining farmland. That promises to return the land to its original state at the end of the BESS life, will not be fulfilled,
- **f.** That wildlife studies undertaken are insufficient, and that an area of beautiful countryside will be industrialised. That the points raised by Buckinghamshire Council's Landscape Officer have not been addressed,
- **g.** That this project can't be considered green, since the energy used to manufacture a battery unit, far outweighs the gains from using it,
- **h.** There were also comments regarding the objectives of Statera and it was suggested that Statera and Statkraft and in partnership.

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88. Interests: Cllr Ellerton declared a non-pecuniary interest as a trustee and treasurer at the Butterfly Conservation, and a committee member of BBONT.

89. Planning:

a. Cllr Fenwick explained the amendments process including the relevance of material considerations.

b. The following summary of the proposed amendments to application 23/03875/APP were read out:

Layout Changes;

i. Removal of the compound containing BESS equipment from Field 3,
ii. Doubling the length of the inverter houses within Field 1,
iii. Field 4 ponds are all now small wildlife ponds, and the orchard has been replaced by woodland,
iv. Minor changes to Field 1 layout to accommodate the larger inverter houses,
v. Replacement of the biodiverse inverter house roofs with shallow pitched roofs,
vi. The inverter houses will be painted in three different shades of receive greens to create a disruptive colour pattern,
vii. Random distribution of trees within hedgerows for a more naturalistic effect,
viii. Proposed planting set back at least 10m from the tributary of Claydon Brook,
ix. Upgrade of footbridges across side ditches to allow crossing by maintenance vehicles to maintain the watercourse,
x. Implementation of a 9m easement of the drainage board,
xi. Archaeology: No disturbance of unknown buried archaeology within field 3,
xii. Land Use: Field 3 can be kept in productive agricultural use,
xiii. Traffic: Construction and operational vehicle routes do not change. A reduction in construction vehicle numbers is anticipated due to the removal of field 3,
xiv. Emergency Services and Fire Safety: A "Fire Safety at Planning Stage & National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Guidance Compliance Note" has been produced,
xv. Ecology: For protection of bats and overwintering birds, previous mitigation recommendations remain valid. The proposed masterplan has the potential to enhance the foraging value of the site. Biodiversity net gain (BNG) calculations have been adjusted for the layout changes and still represent a significant gain overall. It is proposed that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (biodiversity) for mitigation measures to avoid impact upon reptiles and black and brown hairstreak butterflies, should be a condition. A Buckinghamshire

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Council District license should be applied for amphibian protection. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has also been submitted.

c. Previous objections were reviewed against the amendments as follows:

i. Excessive scale of the development: The objection that this BESS project is not required to meeting national targets has not been addressed in this revised application. ***Resolved:*** The objection stands,

ii. Environmental impact: The amendments could result in a 47% gain in habitat units and a 41% gain in watercourse unit which is a significant improvement on the environmental impact. The realisation of these gains should be set out in a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), a critical document which is still missing. Statera propose that a CEMP should be a condition of any future planning consent, but this document should be in place before any decision can be made. The amendments represent no environmental impact change should there be a fire on the site. ***Resolved:*** This objection stands.

iii. Effect on the existing landscape including visual intrusion: The BESS is now only in one field and close to the substation, which is the dominant structure of many views, so it's suggested by Statera that the visual impact is reduced by its proximity to the much larger neighbour. The loss of sedum roofs and the increase in size of the inverter buildings now dominating the field, are adverse visual intrusions. ***Resolved:*** This will be revised to strengthen the objection.

iv. Fire safety: There is a great deal of literature on the testing of the units for fire safety, which looks comprehensive but is extremely technical and beyond the expertise of the Parish Council. We note that units shouldn't catch fire until they reach over 200°C, that should a fire occur a burn-out policy will be in place, that water will only be used to boundary cool, that any water used will be tested after use and tanked off site or released. That there will be 2 separate access points suitable for all vehicles in all weathers etc. But, the Emergency Response Plan is yet to be submitted and burn out will emit toxic fumes that will drift either over Granborough or the Claydons. Batteries are not 100% safe and an incident during the life of the BESS is a possibility. The ERP is another critical document which must be approved, before any permission is granted. ***Resolved:*** This will be revised to strengthen the objection.

v. Inappropriate location: This objection is not addressed in the proposed amendments. ***Resolved:*** This objection stands,

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vi. Cumulative impact: Statera conclude that the cumulative effect of the perceived character on the wider Claydon Valley and Hogshaw Claylands LCA will be negligible, however all three sites will be visible from the top of Quainton Hill until year 10. Buckinghamshire Council's Landscape and Urban design team state that the cumulative effect will be of significant adverse effect on all scales, and this was before the National Grid, Rosefield and Statkraft proposals came about. ***Resolved:*** This will be revised to strengthen the objection.

vii. Noise: There is nothing in the proposed amendments to address noise concerns. ***Resolved:*** This objection stands.

d. Consider if the amendments raise any new reasons for objection or support: ***Resolved:*** Stability of the bridge over the haul road to carry all vehicles including largest fire service vehicle, should be clarified as a condition. No further objections or reasons to support have been identified.

e. To vote on the Council's overall response to the amended application: ***Resolved:*** To object to the amended application.

f. Review of the relevance of the Council's previously requested conditions, which are listed below;

i. Highways and traffic: always using only the proposed haul route, except for the 4 abnormal indivisible loads (AILs) as referred to in the planning application. ***Resolved:*** This condition stands,

ii. No increase in height of the buildings/structures above that shown on the existing application. ***Resolved:*** This condition stands,

iii. Landscape improvement to be undertaken in advance of the development and to include mature planting. ***Resolved:*** This condition stands,

iv. Restriction on working hours and not to allow working on any weekends and bank holidays. ***Resolved:*** This condition stands,

v. Controls on lighting during construction and operation of the site. ***Resolved:*** This condition stands,

vi. Controls on noise levels from generators during construction and when the site is operational. ***Resolved:*** This condition stands,

vii. Vehicles to be able to turn within the site to allow forward movement and to avoid reversing. ***Resolved:*** This condition stands,

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viii. Wheel wash facilities to be provided before development commences and operated during the entire construction period.
Resolved: This condition stands,

ix. Independent verification of the Fire Controls. ***Resolved:*** This condition stands,

x. Details of the restoration of the site to be submitted, agreed and carried out in accordance with approved details. ***Resolved:*** This condition stands,

xi. Audited details for the maintenance/funding/management of green and planted areas to be submitted and approved. ***Resolved:*** This condition stands,
These last two should be covered by a binding legal agreement to ensure this is contained.

Note: *Standing orders were suspended to allow the meeting to continue after the 2 hrs cut-off.*

g. Decide on any new conditions needed:

i. The Construction Environmental Management Plan (biodiversity) must be supplied and approved,

ii. The ERP must be supplied and approved,

iii. The weight capacity of the Haul Road bridges must be clarified,

iv. A surface water drainage strategy must be submitted,

v. The quality of the water already on site and of the Brook, should be established prior to any development taking place,

vi. The yield of the lost fields should be established to accurately measure the loss of agricultural use,

vii. Public Benefit: Ministers have stated that the National interest will prevail over local veto, but there should be Public Benefit for those affected; this benefit should be established as a condition of this and other large applications going ahead,

viii. New Substation: we are told new connections won't be available until 2030. Clarity is required as to when Statera can secure any kind of connection and if it is not actually until 2030, then the Parish Council feel this application is premature,

ix. The Parish Council will request that the call-in of this application still stands.

h. ***Resolved:*** Cllr Fenwick, Cllr Oakland and the Clerk, will prepare a response from the findings of this meeting, for submission to the planners prior to 19th September 2024.

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90. To confirm the date of the next meeting; 10th September 2024

The meeting closed at 21:22.

Signed:_____ Date:_____

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