

Baydon Meadow Wind Turbine Proposal

Meeting of Lambourn Parish Council 18th December 2002

Lambourn Parish Council met to discuss the planning application from Matt Partridge for permission for a 1.3MW wind turbine that will stand on four acres of land 100m north of the M4 motorway in West Berkshire. The following account details questions and answers given at the meeting concerning this application.

Question: Would Matt Partridge gain financially?

Answer: Yes. Matt would derive an annual income from the sale of the electricity generated.

Question: How much energy would it produce?

Answer: Approximately enough for 800 homes, roughly half that used by Lambourn.

Question: Will the energy go into the National Grid and not therefore be used locally?

Answer: The energy will be fed into the national grid, although in reality the energy generated by the turbine will flow naturally to local homes as the nearest points of use. In countries such as Denmark community ownership of wind turbines is common, giving local people control over projects and financial rewards. In the UK however, such schemes have been limited. TV Energy is developing ways for local communities to benefit directly from renewable energy projects.

Question: Will there be more turbines after this one - a wind farm of 10 machines maybe?

Answer: There are further plots of land adjacent to the site currently for sale. Matt speculated that there might be room for 1 or 2 more turbines on this adjacent land, but that he was not interested in extending his own site. The Parish Council felt that one or two more turbines might be acceptable in the future.

Question: Will horses be frightened off by the turbine?

Answer: Matt will look into this issue further as there is some disagreement over Royal Horse Society recommendations and Secretary of State decisions – with the latter indicating that there is no issue to answer. The British Wind Energy Association reports that wind farming is popular with farmers, because their land can continue to be used for growing crops or grazing livestock and that sheep, cows and horses are not disturbed by wind turbines. The first wind farm built in the UK, Delabole, Cornwall has a stud farm and riding school, and the farmer, Peter Edwards often rides around the wind farm on his horse.

Question: Will there be any other buildings?

Answer: Yes. There will be a small building on site to house the meter and switchgear.

Question: Will there be road disruption as a result of cable laying to connect into the supply?

Answer: There are local worries following a great deal of recent road digging by BT. Matt reassured the Parish Council that there would be only minimal disruption as a result of the turbine construction.

Question: What happens if noise proves excessive after construction?

Answer: Well designed wind turbines are generally quiet in operation and compared to the noise from the M4 road traffic the noise from wind turbine will be very low and will be monitored.

Question: Will lights be needed on the turbine for low flying aircraft?

Answer: There is likely to be no requirement for lights.

Objections

Four letters of objection had been received against the scheme. Two people, one a resident from close to the site also objected and attended the meeting. A Lambourn Woodlands resident objected on visual grounds and also questioned access to the B4009 from the wind turbine site.

Two letters related to interference with the working and operation of the nearby Membury aerodrome and the possible impact on local jobs and activities. The possibility of this was tested and seen not to be a serious problem. The existing taller mast at Membury is much more of an issue. The objection was therefore not held and it was decided that it would be an issue for the MOD and CAA to comment upon.

The other objection that worried the Council related to the impact upon horses and it was agreed that this issue needed to be checked out thoroughly.

Support

There were a number of supportive contributions from local residents and from Councillors. One talked of climate change and the national need for local action and of local residents 'Doing their bit' for the environment.

Another felt that visual intrusion was not a problem. He argued that people get used to structures in the landscape, that birds fly around wind turbines and the site can be restored to original state after so many years, unlike nuclear or fossil fuel power stations.

Vote

Overall the Council was supportive and backed the project. The support is contingent on checking out the MOD/ CAA opinion for the Membury aerodrome and looking further into the British Horse Guidelines.