

# SEBERGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Veronica Stockdale, Holly House, Sebergham, Carlisle, CA5 7HS. Tel: 016974 76035. Email: [clerk@seberghamwelton.org.uk](mailto:clerk@seberghamwelton.org.uk)

## Minutes of an Extra Ordinary Meeting of Sebergham Parish Council held on Wednesday 4 February 2015 in Welton Village Hall

### Present:

Chairman Alan Rule  
Vice Chairman Peter Pearson  
Councillors Andrew Bell, Maria Chesters-Bouma, Ken Graham, Michael Stockdale,  
Christine Tinnion.

Also in attendance: Councillor Duncan Fairbairn.

## Agenda Items

### Procedural Items

**1. Apologies** No apologies for absence

### 2. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Rule, Tinnion, Pearson and Chesters-Bouma declared an interest in item 4. As the turbine would be visible from their properties.

### 3. Public Participation

The chairman adjourned the meeting to allow members of the public an opportunity to ask questions or raise matters of interest.

Residents attending the meeting expressed concern that this would be a large structure visible from much of the surrounding area. There is also the possibility of a necessity for it to have flashing red lights which residents feel would completely change this quiet countryside on the edge of the Lake District National Park. Local businesses are concerned about the negative impact this could have on tourism. There was also concern that erection of a turbine of this size could set a precedent for further turbines across the surrounding area.

The Chairman then reconvened the meeting.

### Business

### 4. Planning Application

**2/2015/0026** Erection of 1no. turbine 48.9m to hub 74m to tip. Roundhill Farm, Welton, Carlisle.

Councillors were asked to resolve on an appropriate response to this planning application. Taking in to account the views expressed by parishioners and councillors, it was unanimously **resolved** to **object** to this planning application.

The Parish Council response to planning is attached to these minutes. Anyone wishing to submit comment on this application can do so through Allerdale Planning website: [allerdale.gov.uk](http://allerdale.gov.uk) or Email: [planning@allerdale.gov.uk](mailto:planning@allerdale.gov.uk)

**Date of next Meeting: 18 March 2015**

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## Objection to planning application 2/2015/0026 - Roundhill Farm

Sebergham Parish Council has considered this application and, taking into account the views of many local residents who have made representations resolved to **OBJECT** to the proposal on the following grounds.

NOTE: The roles of the applicant, agent & property owner appear to be conflicted within the application documents. It is not clear whether this is intentional, but for avoidance of doubt this response refers to 'the applicants' as including the applicant & agent, and 'the owner' as the owner/occupier of the property.

### **Location of Turbine & Adjacent Properties**

Although Para 6.12 of the Design & Access Statement (D&AS) refers to the turbine being located 'as close as possible to Sanderson's (sic) factory so that it would be visually associated with it', this is contradicted by Para. 2.2 which says it will be sited "approximately 420m west of Steadman's factory complex". Para.9.21 then demonstrates this to be false when it refers to the 'shadow flicker' boundary being 480m from the turbine and displays this with a circle on Location Plan JH10-PO1 which only just abuts Steadman's factory. A further serious discrepancy occurs between Figures 1 and 3 in the D&AS which shows the location for the turbine as being in two different fields.

Two separately rated, council tax paying, dwellings are recorded by the Valuation Office Agency as existing at this location, one addressed as 'Roundhill Farm' and the other as 'Roundhill'. It is noted that the LPA is aware of this as the occupants of both properties have been consulted on this application. Although in location plan JH10-PO1 and elsewhere it is specified that Roundhill Farm is 'financially involved', no mention is made of either the existence of the other dwelling, or whether the occupier of that property is also 'financially involved'. As the second property is a separate household, unless the occupier/council tax payer has a financial interest in the development, then consideration must be given to the impact on this dwelling as it is only approximately **620m** from the turbine site. If, however, the occupant is confirmed as having a financial interest, this must be clarified as it may, of course, have other implications.

The Parish Council has also been informed of the existence of two residential caravans on the property, and that one, if not both, are permanently occupied. If this is the case, unless the occupant(s) are also claiming to be 'financially involved', they are also well within 800m of the turbine site and these dwellings should be taken into account.

It is noted that the Electoral Register records four occupants (including the owner) living at 'Roundhill' and none at 'Roundhill Farm', although this application is made using Roundhill Farm as the owner's base. As the Valuation Office Agency records show the two properties to be separately occupied, and it has no record of caravans being used for residential purposes, there are clearly discrepancies in the information provided by the applicants/owner which requires correction before the LPA can be sure which properties are 'involved' in this application and which must be included for consideration as being within the 800m set-back distance.

**Given these serious discrepancies & omissions, the LPA is urged to examine these issues, including the accuracy of the distances provided and which properties/occupants are financially involved, and require the applicant to make a re-submission giving accurate details and identifying all 'financially involved' properties. In view of the importance of these matters, the LPA is requested to re-consult when this information is provided in order that consultees can base their judgements on accurate facts.**

## **Visual Impact**

The set-back distance of 800m required by Policy S19 was established to provide guidance rather than as an inflexible benchmark, and local residents welcome the discretion exercised by the LPA when considering recent applications. Location Plan JH10-PO1 shows that this turbine has cynically been sited **810m** north of the nearest residence at Hazel Gill, the occupiers of which, interestingly, have not been included in the LPA's consultation on this application. No sensible person could suggest that a marginal additional difference of only **10m** would reduce the adverse & overbearing visual impact the turbine would have on the residential amenity of occupiers, and the Parish Council & local residents urge the LPA not to be influenced by such a small distance. The visual impact on the additional dwellings on-site (referred to above) will also require consideration.

Contrary to the applicant's claim that the turbine will have only moderate impact on the landscape, there can be no doubt that it will be located on open rolling fellside with no screening to prevent it being visible for many miles around, thus desecrating the landscape enjoyed by so many local people & visitors. The applicant's description of the landscape quality is not recognised or shared by local people. As a matter of clarification, the Parish Council has not objected to developments at the adjacent Steadman's factory because it is relatively low in height, is well screened by woodland, and provides many jobs for local people. This would clearly not be the case with this turbine.

The requirement by the MoD to have omni-directional red lighting or infrared lighting installed with an optimised flash pattern of 60 flashes per minute at the highest practicable point in the interests of air safety will create an additional adverse visual impact to exacerbate the effect of the constantly rotating blades. The existence of the National Park (2.5 km away) and the rolling & largely unspoiled countryside, warrants protection from the imposition of high, constantly moving & illuminated structures of this nature.

Para 9.11 of the D&AS wrongly describes the location & occupancy of Sebergham Castle (a Grade II Listed building). It appears that the applicant may have measured the distance to a nearby property, because Sebergham Castle is in fact only 900m from the proposed site and includes three properties, all of which will have a direct view of the turbine. The applicant's claim that woodland screening will prevent the turbine having an impact is therefore mis-informed.

The extremely selective nature of the photomontages is unhelpful as they exclude a significant arc to the north of the site where the view of the proposed turbine would be most intrusive. **The LPA is requested to require further views to be produced demonstrating the potential visual impact from ALL surrounding locations.**

At least 14 properties in Sebergham parish provide tourist accommodation, with very many others close by in bordering parishes, and all of which will be adversely impacted by this turbine. Although there is ample evidence to demonstrate both locally and nationally that the imposition of wind turbines on the landscape is a serious deterrent to visitors, the applicant fails to provide any justification for dismissing the known effect on tourism.

## **Relevant previous decisions**

The decision on planning application 2/2012/0706 is particularly relevant when considering the visual impact this turbine will have on the landscape. That application for a **45m** high turbine on the same elevated landscape to the west of Roundhill was refused by the LPA on grounds which included adverse visual impact on the landscape. A subsequent appeal to the Planning Inspectorate was also dismissed on these grounds when the Inspector recorded "*The overall conclusion is that the proposal would have a significant adverse impact on a sensitive rolling landscape. The harm to the landscape is not outweighed by the acknowledged environmental and economic benefits.*"

Similarly, the LPA refused application 2/2014/0419 for a **45m** turbine about 2kms to the west on this same elevated ridge on the grounds that it would have a significantly harmful impact on the landscape & visual amenity and on the visual amenity of the occupiers of properties in the area. The Parish Council believes these earlier LPA decisions on proposals for turbines in this elevated locality, and the Inspector's judgement, should carry considerable weight when assessing this application for a much larger (**74m**) turbine.

### **Site specific issues**

The Parish Council challenges the applicant's claims that this wind turbine '*is an essential part of the owner's business plan to 'modernise and diversify' Roundhill Farm to ensure it remains viable*', or that there is a '*need to produce a certain level of income to help support and diversify the farm business*', or that '*Roundhill Farm is a small mixed use farm producing beef and sheep*', because it is well known locally that the land has not been farmed by the owner for a number of years and that it has long been rented out to an adjacent farmer. The claim that income from the turbine is necessary to support the farming business is therefore clearly misleading.

Importantly, the applicant confirms that the owner operates an on-site vehicle repair workshop building and restoring vintage & classic cars, and local people are aware that for some years he has advertised 'Warnell Motor Engineers' and 'Graham Gash Plant Hire' as businesses operating from these premises (this advertising continues in local publications & on websites today).

The application also states that the income from this turbine will be used by the owner to '*expand and diversify these businesses*', and to purchase new equipment to modernise the vehicle workshops. The Parish Council is unclear about the current extent of these businesses, and is concerned at any intention to continue or expand them as it appears that planning permission has neither been sought, nor granted, for such business activities on site, and these businesses have not been registered for, nor pay, any business rates.

**This appears to be a potentially serious breach of development control which the LPA is requested to examine as it may have implications undermining the justification provided for this development.**

### **Community Benefit**

The applicant proposes the establishment of a 'community fund' of £2,500 p.a. from the turbine income to support 'local environmental and community projects in the Parish'. The Parish Council strongly **opposes** this application and believes this to be an inappropriate attempt to influence consideration of the application, and it should play no part in reaching a decision.

### **Public consultation**

The 'Response to Public Representations' provided by the applicant is misleading as some adjacent properties with potential to be directly affected were not consulted, the summary does not include all objections registered, and in particular makes no mention of the very strong opposition registered by the Parish Council on behalf of many local people who attended and spoke at council meetings. The summary does not therefore reflect accurately the level of local opposition, and even provides a falsely modified copy of the letter received by the Parish Council.

### **Conclusion**

The ministerial statement made by the Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP in June 2013 gives local people the opportunity to influence decisions that affect their lives, especially relating to on-shore turbine development. Having consulted local residents, and taking due account of the issues raised above, the Parish Council **OBJECTS** most strongly to this proposal and urges the LPA to **REFUSE** planning permission.