

**Minutes of the Extraordinary Meetings of Husthwaite Parish Council held on  
Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October and Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023 in Husthwaite Village Hall**

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October**

**Present:** C. Fenwick (Chair), S. Aspinall, J. Hampshire, C. Nichols, E. Smith.

**In Attendance:** County Councillor A Baker, 14 parishioners.

1. **Apologies:** C. Colton (covid+). **Declarations of Interest:** NONE.

2. **Planning:**

2.1 **The following planning applications have been received:**

**23/01999/FUL** – The White House, Low Street, Husthwaite – Extension and alterations with associated external works.

**23/02000/LBC** – The White House, Low Street, Husthwaite – Listed Building Consent for Extension and alterations with associated external works.

Husthwaite Parish Council had NO OBJECTIONS to the proposed extension and alterations to the rear (south) of the White House as there will be no significant alteration to the street scene and no changes to the property access. Conditions requested were to insist that all building materials for the proposed works will be stored within the property boundary and that access to Public Right of Way 10.70/8/1, located immediately to the west of The White House, is maintained at all times with no obstruction from the proposed building works.

**23/02015/FUL** – OS Fields 7456 and 6163, Amplecarr, Husthwaite – Installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) array / solar farm with associated infrastructure on land at Woolpots. County Councillor Alyson Baker instructed the meeting that the deadline for comments was 30<sup>th</sup> October and that any objections to the proposed solar farm must be supported by relevant policies within the Hambleton Local Plan. Therefore, it was agreed to write to Ian Nesbitt requesting an extension to the consultation period to give parishioners time to study the 49-page planning support document and 25 appendices and submit their comments. Councillors then discussed the new application along with the correspondence received from Lightrock Power and agreed to request clarification on the following issues before submitting a formal response to the planning application:

- Comparisons on the proposed development within the PDS.
- Visual representations of the entire 'substation compound'.
- The total acreage of the entire substation compound including the Battery containers, etc.
- The battery storage capacity of 74MW (37MW for 2 hours) when the output of the scheme has reduced from 45MW to 32MW.
- The location of the proposed substation compound adjacent to the road.
- The addition of solar panels to the north of substation compound.
- The length and positioning of the security fencing around the site.
- The inclusion of mammal gates within the security fencing.
- The number of 4m CCTV posts to be included on site.
- The installation of tracker panels instead of fixed panels.
- The proposed cooling system for the Battery Energy Storage System and where the water for the Fire Suppression System will come from.
- The Outline Safety Management Plan

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**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November**

**Present:** C. Fenwick (Chair), S. Aspinall, C. Colton, J. Hampshire, C. Nichols, E. Smith.

**In Attendance:** 38 parishioners.

**3. Apologies:** County Councillor A Baker. **Declarations of Interest:** NONE.

**4. Planning:**

**4.1 The following planning applications have been received:**

**23/02015/FUL** – OS Fields 7456 and 6163, Amplecarr, Husthwaite - Installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) array / solar farm with associated infrastructure on land at Woolpots.

It was reported that Ian Nesbitt had confirmed that site notices had now been erected at various points in the local area and the Parish Council had been granted an extension to the consultation period until 22 November.

Councillors discussed the Lightrock Power responses to our queries (some of which were still outstanding) and heard representations from parishioners both for and against the proposed application.

Following consideration of all the information available, Husthwaite Parish Council agreed to object to the application on grounds of its scale and location, use of BMV soil and safety concerns. The following response was sent to the Planning Officer on 15 November:-

Husthwaite Parish Council always seeks to support applications by (or for the benefit of) parishioners if not clearly contrary to planning rules. The Council is also very conscious of the need of some farmers to diversify and for all property owners generally to be able to utilise their land to generate income. Furthermore, the Parish Council is committed to supporting and promoting green energy and sustainability more generally. However, it also has a duty to protect the wider interests of the community and the parish environment and take into account all representations made to it as well as seek to apply the policies of the Hambleton Local Plan. Therefore, the Parish Council does not feel able to support this application because of its size and nature and recommends that the application be **refused** for the following reasons.....

Husthwaite Parish Council consider that this proposal will have an adverse impact on the surrounding environment and landscape contrary to the Hambleton Local Plan, in particular Policies E2 (Amenity), E6 (Nationally Protected Landscapes), E7 (Hambleton's Landscapes) and RM6 (Adverse impacts of Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Installations). It will erode the natural beauty and special qualities of our conservation village and the wider rural landscape which includes the entrance to the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the North York Moors National Park. Furthermore, the cumulative impact of this much larger Woolpots south site, alongside the 220 acres already in situ at Boscar Grange and Peter Hill Solar Farms, will have a detrimental impact on the rural character of our village.

The Parish Council are extremely concerned by the proximity of the proposed extensive electricity sub-compound and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) adjacent to the entrance to our historic settlement which we believe will be visually intrusive and an industrialisation of our rural landscape. There continue to be serious fears about the safety of the BESS, which is situated immediately adjacent to the main access into our village and extremely near to the

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Ethylene Pipeline. Following reports of uncontrollable fires in other battery storage facilities, the Parish Council is concerned that there will be a potential risk posed to both human health and the environment contrary to policies RM4 (Air Quality) and RM5 (Ground Contamination and Groundwater Pollution). Therefore, should planning permission be granted, we would like assurances that procedures for maintaining safety and for dealing with incidents involving fires caused by the overheating of lithium batteries have been addressed and that a full fire safety plan has been expressly agreed by North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and then submitted to the LPA for approval. In addition, we would insist that a suitable water source has been identified in case of emergency and that a significantly sized drainage interceptor trap would be installed around the facility to prevent an environmental disaster should excesses of water be needed to control a fire.

We would also ask for the following conditions regarding the site design and maintenance to be applied:

- Prior to commencement of any development, full details of the site layout, design and finishes including details of buildings, security apparatus and infrastructure should be submitted to the LPA for approval.
- Prior to commencement of any development, full details of hard and soft landscaping works to include proposed finished levels and contours, legacy planting proposals, planting plans and implementation programme should be submitted to the LPA for approval.
- Prior to the development becoming operational, a full maintenance plan with details of funding, frequency and extent of planned maintenance activity should be submitted to the LPA for approval. Thereafter, annual maintenance logs should be completed and submitted to the LPA.

Contrary to policies S1 (Sustainable Development Principles) and S5 (Development in the Countryside) in the Hambleton Local Plan, 70% of the proposed solar farm intends will be installed on Grade 2 and 3a agricultural land. This substantial loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land, a finite resource, should be protected for the production of food for the security of the nation. However, should planning permission be approved we would like assurances that, in order to preserve the quality of the land, a detailed soil management plan, fully compliant with DEFRA's Construction Code of Practice for Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites, will be provided prior to any development.

The Parish Council is also extremely disappointed that no Environmental Impact Assessment was required prior to the submission of this application and would suggest that the applicant is required to complete one prior to this application being considered by the planning committee.

The Parish Council would also like to see consideration given to the effect of this solar array on long standing businesses. Husthwaite is a popular tourist village, and many local businesses depend on tourism, so the Parish Council is very concerned about both short-term and long-term impacts on the local economy (Policies EG7 - Businesses in Rural Areas and EG8 - The Visitor Economy). In particular, as the construction of this development is liable to cause considerable disruption on the extremely narrow road leading to our village, Husthwaite Parish Council would insist that a detailed Construction Management Plan containing the following conditions are applied and adhered to should any planning permission be approved:

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- Hours of operation are limited to 8am until 5pm Monday to Friday and 8am until 1pm on Saturdays. No Sunday or bank holiday working.
- Plant and materials must be stored within the site boundary, which should be secure.
- Parking for ALL construction traffic **MUST** be provided on site and no parking should be allowed on the sides of the highway.
- Deliveries should be restricted to avoid school drop off / pick up times to alleviate traffic congestion on the narrow lanes into the village.
- All unloading of materials should take place on site and vehicles must be able to access and leave the site in a forward gear.
- Clean access should be provided to the site and wheel cleaning facilities should be available to ensure no mud or grit is transferred onto the existing highway.
- Any road closures must be kept to an absolute minimum and agreed in advance, as the Amplecarr is the main access route into Husthwaite (and the only one included in the winter maintenance plan).

The Parish Council also ask that the following conditions are applied in relation to the restoration of the site:

- If the site ceases to generate electricity for a period of more than three months, notice should be given to the LPA.
- The site must cease to operate on or before the expiry of 40 years from the commencement of operations.
- A decommissioning scheme, including full proposals for site restoration and environmental clean-up, must be submitted to the LPA within three months of the site ceasing to generate electricity and decommissioning must be carried out in accordance with the scheme. The PC will be guided by the LPA as to whether the decommissioning can be secured by S106 agreement or by planning condition.

In addition, should planning permission be granted, the Parish Council would like assurances that, prior to commencement of the development, a binding planning obligation by way of S106 agreement or undertaking will be in place securing payment of the sum offered to the community in the application.

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