**Brent Pelham and Meesden Parish Council**

**MINUTE OF**

**BRENT PELHAM & MEESDEN PARISH COUNCIL**

**Extraordinary Meeting 2 pm Tuesday 22nd June 2021**

**VENUE: Virtual Video and Phone**

**PRESENT:**

Trevor Hughes (**TH**) Councillor and Chairman

Ted Barclay (**TB**) Councillor and Vice Chairman

Kate Hinch (**KH**) Councillor

Wild Dimsdale (**WD**) Councillor

Ian Bettles & Ed Perin Renewable Connections

**In Attendance:** Ken Newstead (**KN**) - Clerk

 **Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

The chair explained this meeting was arranged by Ian Bettles on behalf of Renewable Connections to provide the Parish Council with background information relating to the possible location of a Solar Farm in the Stocking Pelham area. Apologies were received from Steve Murphy and Sarah Wotton-Ramsay

 **Meeting Subject: Possible location of a Solar Farm in the Stocking Pelham area.**

This proposal is still in draft and has not yet been submitted for planning permission.

Residents of the Parish were not invited to this meeting as the project is not yet in public consultation and Renewable Connections are planning to hold meetings for residents once they have feedback from all Parish Councils.

A map showing the outline for this potential development was mailed to all parish Councillors ahead of this meeting

 **Content of Presentation by Renewable Connections**

Ian Bettles who requested this meeting introduced his colleague Ed Perin who explained that Stocking Pelham is one of 12 sites that his company had identified in the East Herts DC region that looked suitable for a Solar Farm.

Renewable Connections operate free of any Government subsidy.

Subject to suitable feedback from Parish Councils it is proposed that a Planning Application will be submitted in the Autumn.

The primary reason for selecting this site was its close location to Stocking Pelham sub-station.

Renewable Connections started looking at this site 12 months ago as it is in a natural valley and is of low-grade agricultural land.

Of the site plan sent to our Councillors Ed Perin explained that in line with previous project the majority of the land would not be for the solar panels or associated equipment but would be landscaped or made into a wildlife area.

 **Questions and Answers**

Q: Why build on Farmland and not close to highways?

A: Large areas of land are needed to make Solar Panel Farms viable

Q: How is suitable land found?

A: By using national land grading maps

Q: If a solar farm is no longer used, how quickly would it be removed?

A: Solar panels have a limited life. If panels are not being used or renewed at any site, they can and will be easily removed. Generally speaking, the land will be in a better condition than before once the panels are removed.

Q: How are the panels fenced off?

A: Normally wooden post and 2-metre-high wire fencing, sufficient to keep large wildlife animals off the site. There will be CCTV cameras around the perimeter, mostly for Health & Safety reasons.

Q: What percentage of the land will the panels occupy?

A: Normally around 50to 60% depending on public footpaths that need to be retained.

Q: What is done to obscure the panels from view?

A: The boundary will be landscaped, often with trees. Any Listed building that has views of the site must by law not be able to see the panels.

Q: Where have Renewable Connections recently developed?

A: In Wales, Gloucestershire, and Lincolnshire, not in any of the sites around Hertfordshire that have had very poor reviews.

Q: What is the cost of connecting to the grid?

A: Extremely high due mostly to the very high voltages needed for connection, hence the site needs to be of a significant size to make the proposals viable.

Q: What is the CO2 saving of a Solar Farm?

A: It typically costs around 9 months of operation to pay-off the CO2 of installation. This farm is expected to save 20,000 tons of CO2 each year and produce sufficient electricity to power 13,000 homes.

Q: Will there be more in East Herts?

A: There may be more, but currently there is no further grid capacity in the Brent Pelham area, and this is the controlling factor.

**The meeting concluded at 2:45 pm**

Minutes approved by: .............................................................

PC Title: .....................................................................................

Signed: .......................................................................................

Date: ...........................................