

# WICKHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIR: IVOR FRENCH

## PLANNING COMMITTEE

CHAIR: CLLR DICK JENKINSON



**MINUTES** of the meeting of Wickham Market Parish Council Planning Committee held on Wednesday 2 February 2022

**Present from the Council:** Cllr Jenkinson  
Cllr French  
Cllr Gray  
A. Besly (Clerk)

**Present from the Public:** 5

- 1 Open Public Forum session** The public were asked if they would like to comment  
One member of the public listed her credentials and outlined a letter of objection she was writing  
Another member of the public, who has not yet objected, wanted to see what local councils thought. He outlined the following comments:
  - The land is poor quality farmland
  - Concerns over rights of access as he owns the agricultural access to the area, but it is not for commercial use
  - The development is planned to be within 13m of his house so he suggests there should be a buffer zone between his dwelling and the PV array
- 2 Apologies for Absence:** None  
Cllr Nobbs was absent but offered no apology
- 3 Declarations of Interest:** None
- 4 Approve the draft minutes.** The minutes of the Planning Committee meetings on 5 January and 24 January were approved for signature as correct records  
**Cllr Jenkinson outlined the process** including the following comments:
  - As the application is not within Wickham Market, the response will be treated by East Suffolk (ESC) Planning in the same way as a member of the public
  - Cllr Poulter ESC will support Wickham Market decision
  - The decision is normally left to the ESC desk officer unless the local ESC councillor and the parish council in which the development is taking place both objectHe gave guidance on which aspects Wickham Market Parish Council can comment on
- 5 Review of Planning Application DC/21/5550/FUL. Proposal:** Erection of a solar photovoltaic (PV) array, with a total export capacity of up to 21 MW.  
**Cllr Jenkinson introduced** the documents associated with this application and said that Pettistree Parish Council, whose parish the application is within, had offered no objections. He then highlighted the following:
  - Some documents were added to the ESC website on 1 February but dated 26 January
  - Wickham Market was not consulted until a request was made
  - Design and Access statement described the application with a map showing footpaths. The PV array is expected to produce sufficient power for up to 5,251 homes
  - There is a Landscape and Visual appraisal
  - A statement by the planning officer says visual impact is the only real concern, followed by ecological impact
  - Item 5.2 is a landscape mitigation plan including hedging
  - The PV arrays will be in 4 blocks, individually fenced**Cllr Jenkinson highlighted** elements from the Local Plan where the development is contrary to the policy:
  - 9.1 Low Carbon and Renewable Energy item c) should be complementary to landscape and visual impact
  - 10.1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity paras 1 & 2: should maintain, support and enhance biodiversity and wildlife corridors. Does not support applications with an adverse impact

- 10.4 Sympathetic Features, Protect and enhance landscape. Must cause no significant impact on rural river valleys
- Landscape Character Assessment, B7: Deben River Valley. Strategy objectives include; Protect drainage patterns and manage land use on the flood plain

**Cllr Jenkinson closed the meeting** to allow a member of the public to confirm he owned the access. There is a new access planned for construction but not for ongoing maintenance. Cllr Jenkinson reopened the meeting **Cllr Jenkinson showed some slides** that described access, badger sets, public rights of way and some photographs showing different views of the PV array area. He confirmed that the PV panels were antiglare. **Cllr Jenkinson asked councillors** for their thoughts:

Cllr French commented that the application delivered sustainable energy, the site already had electricity pylons running through it. He had concerns regarding power connection to the grid and other unknown disturbances. The transformer is in the Southwest corner and there is another PV array 500m to the south.

Cllr Gray commented on the visual impact on Wickham Market, the landscape character and the impact on the river valley. He highlighted that the badger survey recommended a 10cm gap below the fence, but the application does not show this.

**Cllr Jenkinson closed the meeting** to allow the members of the public to comment:

One member of the public commented that this was sustainable energy but had concerns over the impact and the 40 year lifetime

Another member of the public also had concerns over the lifespan, the fact that Loudham Hall Rd is well used and the floodplain is water meadow and unsuitable for development

Another member of the public highlighted that there was no decommissioning plan and that the PV array would be visible from Chapel Lane, Campsea Ash and Wickham Gate. She said that landscape character should be balanced with overriding need. Cllr Jenkinson reopened the meeting

**Cllr Jenkinson then asked for a decision from councillors.** He felt the application was against policy and mitigation was insufficient. Cllr French had no objections to the application.

Cllr Gray said mitigations do not enhance biodiversity and the application had an adverse impact on badgers and deer. Cllr Jenkinson agreed.

There was a vote and it was **CARRIED** that Wickham Market Parish Council would object to the application based on the reasons councillors provided

Signed.

Cllr Dick Jenkinson, Chair.

Date.

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