

BRAUNTON PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Braunton Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 13 August 2024 at 7pm in the Parish Hall, Chaloners Road, Braunton.

Present Cllrs: M Shapland in the Chair, R Shapland, E Blackmore, R Byrom, L Childs, A Bryant, T Kirby and D Relph.

In attendance Officers: T Lovell, Parish Clerk & RFO

County and District Cllr Pru Maskell
District Cllr Simon Maddocks

80+ members of the public.

086/2024/25 **Apologies** Received from
Cllr G Bell away on holiday.
Cllr V Cann away on holiday
Cllr M Cann away on holiday
Cllr L Spear personal reasons
Cllr D Spear personal reasons

087/2024/25 **Items not on the agenda, which in the opinion of the Chairman should be brought to the attention of the Council** The Chairman welcomed members of the public to the meeting. She explained that there will be an opportunity for public participation. Those that have requested to speak will be asked to address the Council if anyone else present wishes to speak this will be done by a show of hands. The 15 minute public participation period will be extended to ensure adequate time for all who wish to speak.

The Council had invited the applicant Whitecross Offshore Windfarm Limited to attend the meeting but they had sent their apologies. An invitation had also been extended to the Case Officer but it was felt that it would not be appropriate for an officer of North Devon Council to attend and make comment on the application in advance of its determination due to the risk that anything said might be construed as soliciting for either objection or support for the application.

BPC are only a statutory consultee and not the determining authority. There will be an opportunity for the public to address North Devon Council Planning Committee when they meet later this year to determine application 77576.

The proposed and it was unanimously agreed to consider agenda item 6 – White Cross OWF consultation on application for a Marine Licence and agenda item 6(a) planning application 77576 together.

Following agenda item 6(a). The Council will adjourn the meeting for a short period of time to allow members of the public to leave, if they wish to.

088/2024/25 **Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

089/2024/25 **Public Participation**

36 members of the public wished to speak at the meeting in relation to planning application 77576. Public participation is attached as – **appendix one**.

090/2024/25 **Request for Dispensation**

None received.

091/2024/25 **White Cross OWF Marine Licence**

This item was considered together with planning application 77576. The Council's resolution can be found under Minute Reference 092/2024/25

092/2024/25 **Planning**

(a) 77576

Proposed: Full planning permission for the construction and installation of onshore electrical infrastructure required to export electricity from the White Cross Offshore Wind Farm to the national distribution network; including installation of 132kV underground electricity transmission cable(s) from landfall at Saunton Sands Car park to a new substation at East Yelland. Construction of temporary facilities required during construction to include haul road, vehicular access, compounds, associated works areas and a permanent substation access road. Construction of a new substation under the Rochdale Envelope Approach with additional information regarding architectural form and silhouette, design code, scale and layout, landscaping, lighting, and appearance and materials.

Location: White Cross Offshore Windfarm (Onshore Project)

Applicant: White Cross Offshore Windfarm Ltd

Cllr M Shapland wished to comment on the MMOs consultation for a Marine Licence. She explained that Lundy is Marine Conservation Zone celebrating 50 years. There are many protections around Lundy Island, the floating turbines and the offshore cable during construction and its lifespan will have an adverse detrimental impact on the sea life.

Cllr D Relph felt that the Council should continue to object to this proposal. He proposed that the Council strengthen its previous objections by

requesting that the ecological assessments should be considered in the wider context of the area. He also felt that the Council should emphasise the importance of the relevant Braunton Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Cllr A Bryant expressed his concerns regarding the proposed landfall for the onshore cable as it will come ashore at the main peak that everyone likes to surf. The company has not done any research regarding the impact on the contours of the seabed. They are seeking permission to put a concrete mattress on the seabed which could negatively impact the surf at Saunton. Our main economy is tourism and surfing the applicants have not done sufficient research to be confident that there will be no impact on the surf.

Cllr R Shapland raised concerns regarding the increased traffic levels on our road network if this application is approved. Braunton already suffers with traffic congestion a recent obstruction at Saunton resulted in traffic queueing from Saunton back to Lobb. Many motorists were forced to use inadequate back roads which impacted on surrounding communities including Georgeham and Croyde. No consideration has been given regarding what impact this will have on emergency vehicles trying to get through the traffic in Braunton.

Cllr T Kirby was unconvinced by the cable route and the unacceptable lasting damage to the natural environment, designated landscape, tourism and economy. He proposed that the Council reiterates its previous reasons for refusal

Cllr A Bryant could not understand why White Cross had not considered working with the Xlinks project as they are bringing a cable ashore at Cornborough. Central government need to insist upon a strategic approach for renewable energy companies to work together. It is not logical or cost effective to bring two cables ashore at different landfall sites and cause disruption to more communities than necessary. We need a national infrastructure plan to prevent these opportunistic planning applications.

Cllr M Shapland raised concerns regarding damage to the inner bank at Horse Island. The outer bank was breached several years ago the inner bank is now the only thing protecting the fresh water Marshes from the sea. If the inner bank is damaged this would be a flood risk which would have severe consequences for the local area and Marshes.

Cllr L Childs commented regarding Appendix Z – Onshore Cable Route Assessment Summary, as the

applicant had stated that no one had objected to the cable corridor route. This was incorrect as there had been many objections lodged regarding the onshore cable corridor route.

Moved by Cllr D Relph, seconded by Cllr T Kirby that the Council reiterates its previously reasons for refusal due to adverse impacts on

- onshore cable route and landfall location
- habitat and biodiversity
- landscape character and visual amenity
- watercourses and drainage ditches
- flood risk and surface water flooding
- traffic and air quality
- the economy and tourism

In addition to the Council's previous reasons for refusal it would like to include the comments made by Cllr D Relph and Cllr A Bryant, as follows:

- The ecological assessment should be considered in the wider context of the area.
- Concerns regarding the ground water levels and the impact that dewatering and water management regimes will have on the Braunton Marshes and habitats that rely on them.
- The applications is contrary to the a number of Braunton Neighbourhood Plan policies, including:
 - NE1 Locally Valued Sites of Biodiversity and Habitat
 - NE2 Protection of the Caen Valley Bats SSSI and the Parish Bat Population
 - NE3 Protecting and Increasing the Parish's Biodiversity
 - NE4 Protecting Devon Banks, Hedgerows and Trees
 - NE5 Protecting the Footpath, Bridlepath & Cycle Path Networks
 - NE6 Protection of Landscape Character
 - NE7 Protection of Parish's Strategic Nature Areas
 - NE8 Water Courses and Drainage
 - BE4 Adoption of Appropriately Scaled Renewable Energy
 - BE9 Vehicle Movement Assessments
 - BE10 Improving Transport Accessibility and Connectivity
 - BE11 Protecting Existing Car Parking Capacity for Public Use
 - BE12 Protection and Improvement of Air Quality
 - BE13 Protect and Promote Dark Skies
- Concerns regarding the adverse impact that the export cable will have on the World Surf Reserve

status. The applicant has only considered the impact on the World Surf Reserve out to sea where the floating turbines will be located. There has been no consideration regarding the impact the cabling will have on the seabed contours and disruption to the sandbars as it comes ashore. Surfing is one of the areas main tourism assets and any adverse impact on the World Surf Reserve would result in a negative impact on the local economy.

- The application is not sustainable and not compliant with the NPPF paras. 11 and 12. The benefit does not outweigh the economic and environmental harm that this development will have on the local area. It should be refused.

The Council's full response to planning application 77576 is attaches as – **appendix two**.

Proposed by Cllr M Shapland and unanimously agreed to respond to the MMO consultation for a Marine Licence, as follows:

Braunton Parish Council wishes to express its concerns regarding the adverse impacts due to noise disturbance that the White Cross floating wind turbines and the offshore cable will have on protected sea life within the Marine Conservation Zone around Lundy Island.

The Chairman proposed and it was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8.50pm to enable members of the public to leave the meeting.

The meeting readjourned at 9.02pm.

093/2024/25

Finance Matters

- (a) RESOLVED: That the supplier payments on the schedule from 10 July to 13 August were approved and drawn in the total sum of £8973.62. (NC)
- (b) RESOLVED: That the Council's July 2024 direct debits and standing orders for the sum of £6,776.34 be retrospectively approved.
- (c) RESOLVED: That the PAYE, NI and pension contributions for August 2024 were approved and drawn in the total sum of £18,205.47. (NC)

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.

Signed by the Chair:
(Cllr M Shapland)

Date: