

CVCS SOLAR FARM APPLICATION Letter to Arne Swithenbank 6/7/15

A NEW APPLICATION FOR THE MONEYSTONE SOLAR FARM

Thursday 9th 2015 @ 2pm

A 'LATE SUBMISSION' OBJECTION TO Moneystone Solar Farm SMD/2015/0220

Email: arne.swithenbank@staffs Moorlands.co.uk

- Please note the following points
- I would like the contents of my previous objection to be carried forward into this one
- This 'new' application makes no material changes to the structures, the surface area covered, and the location.
- The photo montages supplied with this new application are not convincing as they will have been carefully angled in an attempt to minimise the impact of the development.

THE SCALE AND NATURE OF THE PROPOSAL IMPACTS NEGATIVELY ON THE LANDSCAPE:

While we support renewable energy developments, we oppose this on the following grounds:

SUMMARY: This will be visible from many surrounding areas, particularly now the Forestry Commission has cut down large areas of trees and can do so at any time again. The industrial nature of the development is out of keeping with the area of special landscape character in an area of outstanding natural beauty awaiting formal AONB designation. See CPRE website for criteria (Council for the Preservation of Rural England)

- **This development is not suitable for our environment.** . Its industrial nature is completely at odds with the natural features of the valley. The scale and nature if it is inappropriate and is contrary to the Core Strategy Policy SS7. *The geometric and continuous lines of uniformly finished high technology panels set at a height of between one and three metres above ground will be an alien feature in the landscape. The presence of substation cabins would further add to the incongruous nature of the proposal in the landscape. There would therefore be a clear and demonstrable harm to the landscape character. In turn the visible impacts of the development for users of nearby public footpaths numbers 49 (Kingsley) and 7 (Oakamoor); from Whiston Eaves Lane and certain more distant viewpoints compounds the harm through visual impact. In this case the degree of harm to landscape character and the identified adverse visual impacts are judged not to be outweighed by the benefits of renewable energy generation put forward in this scheme.*
- **It is Highly Visible:** Since the application was made the Forestry Commission has been, and continues to be, engaged in felling large parts of the adjacent woodland so reducing the

screening effect. These cleared areas will be left to natural regeneration, which means little or no screening effect over many years to come.

- **Moneystone is an area of outstanding natural beauty awaiting formal AONB designation.**
- **The number of solar farm application far exceeds national aims** and 100,000 football pitches worth of space is in the pipeline for this energy form. We are fully supportive of this form of energy development in general
- **CPRE (The Council for the Protection of Rural England) criteria supports our view:** it would like to see greater use made of commercial roofs and brownfield land unsuitable for housing for solar electricity — an area at least twice the size of London is available, representing a huge amount of untapped solar energy potential. This would increase solar generation whilst protecting the countryside. See CPRE website and criteria for solar farm development decisions: file:///C:/Users/Claire/Downloads/3708_solar-energy-practical-campaign-tools.pdf
- **The solar farm will also receive taxpayers finance, i.e. be paid for by us and their profits go to them.** They will not pay this back to the government or back to the tax payer.
- **Laver Leisure will through have the finance to develop an unsuitable Holiday Camp** development in Moneystone (the next planning application to be considered in August)

THE SITE SHOULD HAVE BEEN RESTORED TO IT'S ORIGINAL GREENFIELD STATUS:

SUMMARY: the site should be RESTORED under its GREENFIELD status. The grant of quarrying was temporary. This application would not have been considered had the RESTORATION contract been adhered to.

- This was agreed with between Sibelco and SCC in the original agreement for the temporary use of the land for quarrying purposes
- **Former quarries are not considered as "Brownfield sites"**, the UK Government requires them to be classed as "Greenfield sites" for the consideration of development.
- **The Moneystone Quarry is subject to a full restoration plan** which should have been implemented more than 1 year ago. Staffordshire County Council tells us that they will not enforce restoration while there are unresolved planning applications in the quarry area. The residents of the valley suffered the extraction and transport of the strategically important resource of Silica Sand on the express commitment that restoration would take place. It is time to call our County Council to account by refusing this application so they no longer have a pretext for inaction.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, BIODIVERSITY AND ECOLOGY

- **The people of the valley require their voices to be heard...this application is unsustainable, alien and undesirable.**

FROM Claire Skitt, South Lodge, Oakamoor, Staffordshire, ST10 3BD. Email:

skitt@oakamoor.co.uk

SUMMARY: The two developments of the Solar Farm and the Holiday Camp will have a long term impact disrupting the ecological system in this area of outstanding natural beauty.

- **The Core Strategy for the Churnet Valley, SS7 states:** "Any development should be of a scale and nature and of a high standard of design which conserves and enhances the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area and demonstrate strong sustainable development and environmental management principals".
- **Ecological impact is negative:** The division of the ecological habitats that will occur with the solar farm, the subsequent holiday camp developments with its buildings, car parks, roads etc will negatively impact on the current ecological survival of the area. Laver Leisure (with its subsidiary development groups) is couching its developments in terms of being ecological, including a few 'eco' houses in its plans and using 'green' sounding wording. However the only way to retain and sustain the ecology of this area of outstanding natural beauty is to adhere to the promise and original contract for RESTORATION.
- **The ecological impact assessment has not been properly made:** In addition the alleged means to improve the introduction of flora and fauna using "green hay" are unproven on such a base of inert silica sand. The inadequacy of this approach was highlighted by Councillor Josie Clowes in the meeting of 26th February using her long practical experience of such matters in the valley environment.

DEMOCRACY: LOCAL PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF PLANNING

SUMMARY: Under the NPPF the community view should be at the heart of the application. We are not being heard and repeated applications appear to be a cynical way to exhaust the local people by making them have to repeatedly send in objections to the same development. There is no benefit to the local communities; we lose both ways: we the taxpayers pay the developers in subsidies and the developers make money from it. Nothing about these proposals comes back to benefit the community.

- **The applicants claim that 25 years is "temporary",** to us it represents a third of a lifetime. Who will believe that restoration will take place whenever this installation might be life expired, which could be sooner than expected with equipment unreliability and redundancy.
- **The current application relies on a subsidy, paid by us taxpayers,** as an addition to our normal power bills. It is the developers who will be making money from this, not the local residents / population or councils. These subsidies in themselves are **unsustainable** and are progressively being reduced and will soon be phased out. Both Kingsley and Oakamoor Parish Councils have robustly rejected the inducements offered by the applicant as "bribes paid for with our own money".
- **The government are also moving rapidly to give people more say** in developments which affect their locality. See The National Policy Planning Framework and recent statements by Greg Clark the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and his predecessor Eric Pickles.