

## **BAUMBER PARISH COUNCIL**

Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer.

C/o Four Seasons  
Farmers Row Baumber  
Lincolnshire LN9 5NE.

East Lindsey District Council  
Planning & Development Control  
The Hub & Willow House  
Mareham Road  
Horncastle  
Lincolnshire  
LN9 6PH  
FOA: Ms Jane Baker

Forwarded by email 24th January 2023.

**Re: S/079/01078/22**

**APPLICANT:** Hatton Solar Farms Limited

**PROPOSAL:** Planning Permission - Installation of a temporary ground mounted 49.9MW solar farm with associated infrastructure, construction of vehicular accesses, CCTV cameras on (error 2.5m) 4m high poles a 15m high communications tower and security fencing to a maximum height of 2.2m.

**LOCATION:** LAND ADJACENT SOTBY WOODS, STURTON ROAD, HATTON.

### **Supplementary Note: Applicant's Canvassing Letters of Support by Cold Calling.**

Baumber Parish Council submit the following representation, following consideration of this matter at a Council meeting convened on 18th January 2023, whereby Members Resolved that a Supplementary Note be submitted to ELDC Planning, raising material concerns as detailed below.

Baumber PC Members are concerned that there is evidence that a representative of the Applicant has been Cold Calling, without prior notice or invitation, to addresses at West Lane Baumber, for the purpose of canvassing for letters of support for the Hatton Solar plant application, despite a No Cold Calling sign on open display at the entrance of West Lane Baumber LN9 5NG.

This matter was drawn to the attention of the Parish Council, by a resident who raised concerns that they consider they were misled by a cold caller canvassing on behalf of the Applicant SPD seeking support for the above application. This representative is reported to have called at an inconvenient time, which caught the resident unawares.

A statement from the resident is copied below:

*A man called and asked me to sign a "petition" concerning the future Solar Farm at Hatton - I signed it because it was my belief that I was signing the petition as "opposed to" rather than "In favour of". Kindest regards.*

Baumber PC submits the following photos of the relevant street signs at the entrance to West Lane.



Police Notice No Cold Calling sign at the entrance to West Lane Baumber LN9 5NG.



West Lane Entrance Sign No Through Road and Police No Cold Calling sign.



West Lane street sign on T Junction with A158.

Side view of Entrance Sign - No Through Road and Police Cold Calling sign.

Due to the concern raised by this type of unsolicited canvassing, BPC reviewed the content of the applicant's support letter presented to residents on the door step and published on ELDC's Planning portal. This review has raised further material concerns, that many of the claims made by the applicant's representative, are not factually correct and misleading and have therefore, unduly influenced residents to sign, under what could potentially be considered to be misrepresentation.

The letter states:

*I am writing to support the above planning application, for the following reasons:*

*The solar farm will contribute to energy security and help East Lindsey District Council and the UK to meet carbon saving targets, including the council's target of nett carbon zero by 2040.*

Baumber PC's response: The determination of this application is required to be considered on the merits and benefits derived from the proposal, weighed in the planning balance against any adverse environmental impacts. Whilst it may be considered the proposal has the potential to contribute towards energy security and targets, (even taking account the intermittency of solar generation and it's low efficiency in terms of the proposed installed capacity) a Planning decision is required in the round and not solely on the benefits. This statement provides no counter balance and is therefore, simplistically misleading.

*It will significantly improve biodiversity on the site, with almost a 100% increase in new hedgerow and includes wild flower meadows, tree planting, bird and bat boxes and beehives.*

This statement is extremely misleading, all of the biodiversity improvements stated are available to the landowner and are not dependant on this proposal. Baumber PC's submission at Section 9 and Para 10.2 copied below, responds to this claim in detail.

10.2 However, Section 9 Biodiversity enhancements above, considers that the proposed biodiversity improvements cited by the applicant are essentially of little merit, considering that the Government is already addressing this significant concern, with valuable support to arable food producers.

*The site can be used for grazing as part of traditional meadow management, which is designed to benefit both food production and biodiversity.*

This claim is both misleading and meaningless. It paints a false rosy picture of the proposed development. The space between each of the rows of solar panels, which are considered to be potentially suitable for grazing sheep cannot be considered as a traditional meadow. These strips are shown to result in poor quality grass and weeds. The water runoff from the panels and shade under the panels combined degrade the quality of the habitat.

There is no mention of the adverse impact of the hundreds of solar panels and the associated infrastructure, which includes details of the fencing or 4m high CCTV Poles etc: Extract from Figure 14 provided below:

*total number of 4m high CCTV Cameras and poles located around the perimeter is 132 x 50m, which is an overall approximate distance 6.6km of fencing around the site. For a comparison the distance from Hatton to Wragby is 5.6327 km.*

*The solar farm (actually it is an industrial site) is completely reversible; at the end of its life, all equipment will be removed.*

Again this statement is also simplistically misleading. The operational consent sought is for a period of 40 years which is considerable, there is also every possibility that this period will be extended by Variation applications and as in other cases, developers are now seeking consents for in perpetuity. The soil quality of this productive agricultural land, possibly will take time to recover after such a prolonged period of lack of cultivation and dormancy.

*The site already has planning permission for a gas power station: this proposal will instead produce clean green energy.*

This claim is a falsehood. There is no known existing development consent on the proposed site of the Hatton Solar Power Plant.

Baumber Parish Council's carefully considered position statement; is that due to the above information and misleading claims circulated by the applicant's representative in their support template letters should be disregarded when considering the determination of the proposed Hatton Solar Plant application on land south of Sotby Wood.

END.

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