



Stonestreet Green Solar – Community Liaison Panel

Meeting: Fraser Room, Aldington Village Hall, 6.30pm-8.30pm, Thursday 15 June 2023

MEETING NOTES

Attendance: Karen Byrne (Chair), Cllr Paul Bartlett (Ashford Borough Council/Kent County Council), Cllr Linda Harman (Ashford Borough Council/Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council), Ray Boulding (Aldington Parish Council), Andrew Swarbrick, Nigel Spencer, Sara Emmerson, Conor McNally (EPL 001 Limited), Michael Taylor (Quantum Public Relations), Charlie Vavasour (Quantum Public Relations), Philip Hannabuss (Wheatfields Resident Association), Stephen Wagstaff (Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council), Cllr Simon Betty (ABC), Cllr Elaine Martin (FHDC)

Apologies: Linda Arthur (Village Alliance), Clair Bell (Kent County Council), Tracy Rpmann (British Horse Society), Giles Frampton (EPL 001 Limited)

Observer: Colleen Loader (SSSS)

1. Introduction by the Chair

Karen Byrne welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Confirm notes of previous meeting

CLP members approved the notes of the previous meeting (held 07/02/2023). No matters arising.

3. Project Update from the Applicant

CMcN provided an update on the project including details of the consultation timeline, the consultation documents and plans, and outlined the key changes that have been made to the project since the last consultation.

CL asked if all the hedgerows on the plans were new ones. CMcN confirmed that the plan shows both new and existing hedges.

CL asked if the plan showed hedgerows rather than trees. CMcN replied it was both.

CL asked what the optimum height of hedges and trees would be to avoid shade on the panels. CMcN replied that generally hedges would be kept to 3 metres and that the project design includes a set back for the panels to allow for shading impacts.

CL asked what size of tree and hedge plants would be used. CMcN replied it would be a combination of small, medium and large.

LH stated that she felt a 3 metre hedge height would be uncharacteristic of the area and this will impact on views along surrounding lanes. CMcN stated that he is not sure it is correct, citing a number of surrounding lanes that already had hedgerows significantly in excess of 3 metres. LH commented that this was only because landowners had allowed hedges to grow.

SW asked how EPL001 can ensure that new planting will survive. CMcN replied that there a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) will be agreed as part of the DCO.

NS noted that the plans detailing that changes to the PRoW network were significantly better than those used in the Autumn 2022 Statutory Consultation and requested an in-person session with EPL (likely at the Sellindge event) to go through the PRoW changes. CMcN confirmed that he will be at the event and can go through the changes. CMcN also made the CLP aware that a separate document had been included in the Consultation Material specifically relating to this matter that explained in detail the approach to the PRoW network.

CL asked whether the servicing and maintenance plan carries over to any new owners of the project and how long it lasts for. CMcN confirmed that it is in place for the term of the project and any new owner will be legally obliged to deliver the plan.

RB asked whether the plan will be in the public domain. CMcN confirmed that a draft of the plan would be part of the DCO and the final plan would be agreed with ABC/KCC.

SB asked for confirmation that the requirements in the plan will be binding to any successors in title. CMcN confirmed that would be the case.

LH requested that the colours be changed on the Public Access Network Plan to make it more legible. CMcN said the team would check if it was possible.

PB asked whether the proposed new cycleway from Mersham to Aldington was progressing with the Church Commissioners. CMcN explained that as the proposed route is outside the Order Limits/red line of EPL's proposal they were unable to act unilaterally but have had good initial conversations with the Church Commissioners and will look to develop these conversations once the DCO is submitted. PB said that Mersham PC has lots of contact with the Church Commissioners so could help to facilitate conversations.

CL asked if all footpaths were 10metre wide and whether they would be hardcore or as they are now. CMcN confirmed that all footpaths on the plan were a minimum of 10 metres and that they would remain as they are now. He also confirmed that EPL would be talking to KCC regarding measures to prevent access for off road vehicles as a number of local consultees had raised this as a concern.

PH asked what the view would be like on a walk to Evegate. CMcN stated that fencing on one side would be deer fencing and that there are cross sections in the Book of Plans that illustrate the distances between hedges, fencing and panels.

CL asked for further information on the alarm system used and the security fencing. CMcN confirmed that EPL would provide further details on the alarm system to CLP members.

LH enquired regarding the access to the fields on Goldwell Lane and that EPL had been asked to take Goldwell lane out of the access road. CMcN stated that alternative access to those fields is not feasible.

PH asked EPL to check the language used regarding transport impact on the village, as Goldwell Lane is part of the village. CMcN confirmed he was aware that this point had been raised in the Autumn 2022 Statutory Consultation and he understood this point had been addressed but he would check the language and change where required prior to submission.

PB asked whether there was a crossing missing from the Indicative Proposed Layout Plan across Laws Lane. CMcN agreed that it appeared it was missing and will be amended in the final version submitted.

CL asked if there was any more detail on the temporary haul road in addition to the information already provided to the CLP. CMcN confirmed that no further detail was available at this time and that specification details will be agreed in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

4. Next Steps and Timeline

CMcN went through the project timeline, with a likely date for DCO submission in September/October.

5. Any other business

PB stated that Kent Community Energy would like to contact EPL and that he had given them CMcN's details. CMcN thanked PB for the introduction.

6. Date of Next Meeting

KB stated that the date of the next meeting would be confirmed but is likely to be early/mid September.

It was agreed that in any case EPL would provide a written update for CLP members at the end of July.

-Ends-

Acronyms:

CLP – Community Liaison Panel

EPL – EPL 001 Limited

ABC – Ashford Borough Council

ABPC – Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council

FHDC – Folkestone and Hythe District Council

KCC – Kent County Council

PROW – Public Rights of Way

SGS – Stonestreet Green Solar