



Public Document Pack

Melksham Town Council

Town Hall, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 6ES

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Town Clerk and RFO Linda Roberts BA(Hons) PGCAP, FHEA,
FLSCC

To: Councillor S Rabey (Chair)
Councillor J Oatley (Vice-Chair)
Councillor P Alford
Councillor P Aves
Councillor G Cooke
Councillor G Ellis
Councillor A Griffin
Councillor C Stokes
Councillor J Westbrook

7 May 2024

Dear Councillors

In accordance with the Local Government Act (LGA) 1972, Sch 12, paras 10 (2)(b) you are invited to attend the **Economic Development and Planning Committee** meeting of Melksham Town Council. The meeting will be held at the Town Hall on **Tuesday 14th May 2024** commencing at **7.00 pm**.

A period of public participation will take place in accordance with Standing Order 3(e) prior to the formal opening of the meeting. The Press and Public are welcome to attend this meeting in person, alternatively the public and press may join the meeting via Zoom.

In accordance with the Council's commitment to being open and transparent; all Town Council meetings are recorded and broadcast live. The right to do so was established under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L A Roberts BA(Hons), PGCAP, FHEA, FSLCC
Town Clerk and RFO

Melksham Town Council
Economic Development and Planning Committee
Tuesday 14 May 2024
At 7.00 pm at the Town Hall

Public Participation – To receive questions from members of the public.

In the exercise of Council functions. Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider Crime & Disorder, Health & Safety, Human Rights and the need to conserve biodiversity. The Council also has a duty to tackle discrimination, provide equality of opportunity for all and foster good relations in the course of developing policies and delivery services under the public sector Equality Duty and Equality 2010.

Virtual Meeting Access:

Please follow the joining instructions below for the virtual Zoom meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83669876198?pwd=WlAvY1ZsYVNyUIM3VktgajFzOHhtdz09>

Join Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 836 6987 6198 **Passcode:** 481965

Participants will be directly let in the meeting by clicking on the above link. There is no waiting room

AGENDA

1. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Declarations of Interest in respect of items on this agenda as required by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.

Members are reminded that, in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, they are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest or other registrable interests which have not already been declared in the Council's Register of Interests. Members may however, also decide, in the interests of clarity and transparency, to declare at this point in the meeting, any such disclosable pecuniary interests which they have already declared on the Register, as well as any other registrable or other interests.

3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 4)

To approve the Minutes of the Economic Development and Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday 23 April 2024.

4. Planning Considerations

Members to note that when responding to planning applications consideration should be given to the Melksham Joint Neighbourhood Plan, the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

5. Planning Applications

To comment on the following planning applications

5.1 PL/2024/03424

[PL/2024/03424](#) - Removal or Variation of a Condition

Address: 3 Lowbourne, Melksham, SN12 7DZ

Proposal: Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) on PL/2023/05617 to remove GRP chimneys from the terraces and changes to block plan.

Respond By 24-05-2024

5.2 PL/2024/03376

[PL/2024/03376](#) - Householder Application

Address: 14, Sherwood avenue, Melksham, SN12 7HJ.

Proposal: Single storey side extension

Respond By 20-05-2024

5.3 PL/2024/03868

[PL/2024/03868](#) - Full planning permission

Address: McDonalds, Beanacre Road, Melksham, SN12 8RP

Proposal: Refurbishment of patio area to include new block paving and furniture. Minor changes to elevations with the introduction of new aluminium cladding and associated works.

Respond by: 30-05-2024

6. Planning Decisions

To note the following planning decisions

6.1 PL/2024/01704

[PL/2024/01704](#) - Householder Application

Address: 35 Brecon Close, Melksham, Wilts, SN12 7RZ

Proposal: Proposed single storey rear extension and front porch extension.

Decision Date: 22-04-2024 Decision: Approve with Conditions

7. Lime Down Battery Storage (Pages 5 - 56)

Email from Clerk of Melksham Without Parish Council to Locum Clerk of Melksham Town Council.

Melksham Without Parish Council resolved on Monday evening that they request that the Town Council do please submit comments on the proposal for a large battery storage site north of Whitley (size of 200 shipping containers plus associated infrastructure).

The deadline for comments was last Friday, 26th April but we are aware that Corsham Town Council have been granted an extension.

Melksham Without Parish Council strongly object (comments attached again- I have attached the minutes as there is a pre app Q&A notes too) as are the comments of the local action group CAWS; and Corsham Town Council.

The parish council have also resolved to send their comments to the landowner who has made the site available, Sir James Fuller/Neston Estate.

There is a choice of two sites for the battery storage, Whitley being one of them, and the decision on which site is being put forward to the Secretary of State for this national infrastructure project is to be decided in the coming months, before September.

The town council will not be consulted, only Wiltshire Council as part of that process, so Melksham Without Parish Council feel strongly that all the local stakeholders should be having their say now, before the site decision is taken. There is a small window to get Whitley "deselected" and the town council's support would be helpful.

We do hope that this is something that the Town Council will consider.

8. Neighbourhood Plan

To note. The next meeting of the Melksham Joint Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is on Wednesday 15th May 2024.

9. Parish Steward

To consider jobs to be undertaken by the Parish Steward.

Melksham Town Council

Minutes of the Economic Development and Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday 23rd April 2024

PRESENT: Councillor S Rabey (Chair)
Councillor J Oatley (Vice-Chair)
Councillor P Aves
Councillor G Cooke
Councillor G Ellis
Councillor A Griffin
Councillor C Stokes
Councillor J Westbrook

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Pafford on behalf of Melksham Without Parish Council

OFFICERS: Hugh Davies Head of Operations
Tracy Predeth Locum Clerk

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Three members of the public were present virtually.

705/23 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Alford.

706/23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

707/23 Minutes

The minutes of 2 April 2024, having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by Councillor Rabey.

708/23 Planning Applications

709/23 PL/2024/03180

It was proposed by Councillor Westbrook, seconded by Councillor Cooke and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to support the application.

710/23 PL/2024/03318

It was proposed by Councillor Griffin, seconded by Councillor Stokes and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to support the application.

711/23 PL/2024/03055

It was proposed by Councillor Westbrook, seconded by Councillor Griffin and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to support the application.

712/23 PL/2024/02352

It was proposed by Councillor Rabey, seconded by Councillor Cooke and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to support the application.

713/23 PL/2024/03366

It was proposed by Councillor Westbrook, seconded by Councillor Stokes and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to support the application.

714/23 Planning Decisions

715/23 PL/2024/00685

The decision was noted.

716/23 PL/2024/01555

The decision was noted.

717/23 PL/2024/00867

The decision was noted.

718/23 PL/2024/00785

The decision was noted.

719/23 PL/2024/01263

The decision was noted.

720/23 PL/2024/01688

The decision was noted.

721/23 PL/2024/01934

The decision was noted.

722/23 Avon War Memorial

It was proposed by Councillor Rabey, seconded by Councillor Oatley and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to enter into a licence agreement with Wiltshire Council to relocate the Avon War Memorial to be stored in Queen Mary Garden until such time as a permanent site is identified.

723/23 Issues raised at last meeting

The report was noted and discussed.

Councillor Westbrook advised that she had asked for the Underpass to come before Community Development in May. Councillor Oatley advised that he and Councillor Hubbard had spoken to Richard Rogers and he would ask him to attend the Community Development meeting.

724/23 Parish Steward

Councillor Oatley asked for graffiti on the bus shelter opposite Savers to be removed.

Councillor Aves mentioned weeds. Councillor Westbrook asked about weed spraying.

725/23 Confidential Session

It was proposed by Councillor Oatley, seconded by Councillor Cooke and

RESOLVED to go into confidential session for items 11 and 12.

726/23 Neighbourhood Plan

Members were given an update on the last Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting.

727/23 MELK 40 Footpath

It was agreed that Councillor Ellis would formulate a response on behalf of Melksham Town Council.

Meeting Closed at: 7.56 pm

Signed:

Dated:

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**MINUTES of the Planning Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council
held on Monday, 8 April 2024 at Melksham Without Parish Council Offices
(First Floor), Melksham Community Campus, Market Place,
Melksham, SN12 6ES at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors Richard Wood (Chair of Planning); Alan Baines (Vice Chair of Planning); Mark Harris and Peter Richardson

Officer: Teresa Strange, Clerk

In attendance: Wiltshire Councillor Phil Alford (Melksham Without North & Shurnhold) & 36 members of public

In attendance via zoom: 7 members of the public

474/23 Welcome, Announcements & Housekeeping

Councillor Wood welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through the fire evacuation procedures for the building. He informed everyone that the meeting was being recorded to aid the production of the minutes and would be uploaded to YouTube, then deleted once the minutes had been approved.

475/23 To receive Apologies and approval of reasons given

Apologies were received from Councillor Pafford who was at a funeral out of County, Councillor Glover who was undertaking work at Guides HQ and Councillor Chivers who was in hospital.

Resolved: To accept and approve the reasons for absence.

476/23 Declarations of Interest

a) To receive Declarations of Interest

As Community Action Whitley & Shaw (CAWS) were coordinating a campaign against proposals for a battery storage facility north of Whitley, Councillor Richardson as Chair of CAWS declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8 on the proposals by Lime Down Solar.

b) To consider for approval any Dispensation Requests received by the Clerk and not previously considered

None received.

c) To note standing Dispensations relating to planning applications

To note the Parish Council has a dispensation lodged with Wiltshire

Council dealing with S106 agreements relating to planning applications within the parish.

- 477/23 To consider holding items in Closed Session due to confidential nature** *Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during consideration of business where publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.*

Councillor Wood advised item 12(a)(ii) regarding an update on the Neighbourhood Plan (NHP#2) and 13(c) Contact with Developers be held in closed session.

Resolved: To hold item 12(a)(ii) and 13(c) in closed session.

478/23 Public Participation

Standing Orders were suspended to allow members of the public to speak to the Planning Committee.

178a Woodrow Road

A representative from Vardent Developments was in attendance to update the Planning Committee on proposals for 178a Woodrow Road following submission of their recent application for 4 dwellings on the site (PL/2024/01559). Following receipt of feedback on proposals, they now proposed to reduce the number of dwellings on the site to two. They were also in receipt, via their solicitors, of the pre-planning advice received for a previous application for two dwellings. An extension request had been given and a revised application would be submitted shortly.

The developers were informed the Planning Committee would be making their observations to the revised proposal in due course, once in receipt of the new plans.

Lime Down Solar – battery storage facility north of Top Lane, Whitley

34 members of public (and 7 via zoom) from Whitley and Shaw were in attendance to voice their concerns at proposals for a battery storage facility north of Top Lane. (These comments have been included in the Council's response to the Lime Down consultation Min 481(e)/23) to avoid duplication in the minutes as all the comments were taken on board for the council's own response to the consultation).

Wiltshire Councillor Phil Alford informed the meeting the planning application would be considered by the Secretary of State and not Wiltshire Council as it was a national infrastructure project. Wiltshire

Council would be a formal consultee though and will be able to comment on proposals once the application had been submitted.

Discussion is still ongoing on how Wiltshire Council would provide feedback on the proposals, but would be focused on planning policy reasons. Councillor Alford confirmed Wiltshire Council had pre-application discussions with Lime Down Solar in January.

Confirmation was sought that specialist officers at Wiltshire Council, such as drainage, heritage etc would be called upon to help inform Wiltshire Council's response. Wiltshire Councillor Alford confirmed this would be the case.

He also confirmed that Wiltshire Council would not be responding to the current public consultation.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

479/23 To consider the following new Planning Applications:

No new planning applications had been received for consideration.

480/23 Revised Plans: To comment on any revised plans on planning applications received within the required **timeframe (14 days):**

**[PL/2024/00631](#): Mavern House, Corsham Road, Shaw.
Proposed 1 and a half storey 4-bedroom dwelling (resubmission of PL/2022/09196)**

Comments: Whilst having no objections, the parish council do have reservations regarding pedestrian access onto School Lane from the site, as well as the manoeuvrability of vehicles onto School Lane from the property.

The parish council also reiterated their previous comment with regard to querying where the bins for the property will be emptied.

Attention is drawn to comments made by residents with regard to the drainage of the site.

481/23 Lime Down Solar Farm Public Consultation:

a) To note comments of residents to proposals

Members noted the various comments received from members of public to the consultation that had been copied to the parish council.

b) To note Wiltshire Council's reasoning for refusing a battery storage facility at Somerford Farm, Brinkworth PL/2022/02824

Members noted the reasons for Wiltshire Council refusing a battery storage facility at Somerford Farm, Brinkworth in March 2024 and felt that the comments were entirely attributable to the proposal for battery storage north of Whitley and should be quoted in the response to the consultation. See Min 481(e)/23.

c) To note Melksham Neighbourhood Plan policies (adopted and draft revised) for Renewable Energy installation (Policy 2).

Members noted policy 2 in the current NHP#1 and Policy 2 in the reviewed draft neighbourhood plan (NHP#2) regarding Local Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation proposals. It also noted the relevant Renewable Energy policies in the adopted Wiltshire Council Core Strategy (Policy 42) and in the draft Local Plan (Policy 86).

d) To approve notes of meeting held on 18 March regarding proposed battery storage facility north of Whitley with Lime Down Solar

As per the Parish Council policy, the notes from the meeting held on 18 March are included in the minutes below:

Those present at the meeting included Councillors Richard Wood, Chair of Planning; Alan Baines, Vice Chair of Planning; David Pafford, Vice Chair of Council; Mark Harris; Peter Richardson; Wiltshire Councillor Phil Alford (Melksham Without North & Shurnhold); Teresa Strange, Clerk Melksham Without (via Zoom); Lorraine McRandle, Parish Officer, Melksham Without; Natasha Worrall, Project Development Manager, Island Green Power and Beth Motley, Director of Energy & Utilities, Counter Context

Overview of Project

The proposed solar park could provide around 500 megawatts of solar energy and provide enough clean affordable electricity to power around 115,000 homes.

Proposals comprise the installation of solar photovoltaic panels (pv) north of the M4, Hullavington and South West of Malmesbury, as well as an onsite energy storage system, plus infrastructure to connect the scheme with underground cabling into the national grid at Melksham (Beanacre) sub-station and covers approximately 2000 ha of land.

Land north of Whitley is proposed to house the battery storage facility for the site and is one of two sites currently being considered, with the other site being considered co-located with the proposed site for the

solar panels north of the M4 (Hullavington). Technical surveys are still to be undertaken, such as environment surveys, as well as further consultation work. They are awaiting feedback from various stakeholders before a decision is made on the location of the battery storage facility.

There will be a cable corridor to the sub-station in Melksham, however, the exact location has yet to be established, as survey work is still taking place. If the battery storage site at Whitley was not chosen, the cable corridor would run from the solar/battery storage site north of the M4.

Wiltshire Councillor Alford explained at the meeting with Wiltshire Council he had raised concerns about the visual impact and flooding and raised a concern at the impact on ecology and wildlife around the site, noting the proximity of a badger set, great crested newts, bats and otters, as well as other wildlife.

Councillor Richardson as a representative for the Beanacre, Shaw, Whitley & Blackmore Ward, noted the concerns of residents of Whitley/Shaw were as follows:

- Impact on heritage, particularly the Roman Road to the north of the site and course of Wansdyke.
- Impact on listed buildings in the vicinity, particularly those on the north side Top Lane.
- Impact on the setting and vista of the landscape.
- Impact on the medieval farming land at Northey Farm.
- Loss of greenfield/agricultural land and whether there is a more suitable brownfield site for the facility in the area.
- Potential to exacerbate existing flooding issues in the village.
- The impact of noise/vibrations for those living nearby.
- Is there a need for another solar farm/battery storage facility, given the proliferation already of such facilities in Wiltshire.
- Impact on wildlife, it was noted there was significant bat populations at Park Lane Quarry which are protected species.

The following questions were raised:

Q: Will you respond to each individual response and do investigative work and do you do this prior to choosing a site or after?

A: An Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report will shortly be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, which sets out the methodology of the environmental assessment and will include what investigative work/surveys are intended to be undertaken.

The location for the battery storage facility will not be chosen at this stage, but before the preliminary environmental information report is

submitted, which is not intended until August. However, need feedback from the parish council and other stakeholders, feedback from the consultation and the various outstanding reports. Once this information is received and reviewed a decision will be made on the most appropriate location for the battery storage site.

Q: Will the final decision on the location of the battery storage facility be based on a commercial basis?

A: No this would not be what decides the most appropriate location for the battery storage facility. Other factors need to be considered, such as willingness of landlords, environmental constraints and proximity to grid connection, for example, and will need to be evidenced as to why a certain site is chosen over another.

Q: How many acres is the site, as it appears to be the same size as Whitley village itself?

A: Will need to get back to you on the exact number of acres of the site.

Q: If this is the chosen site, how many battery storage units will be stored on it?

A: About 200.

Q: What is the battery storage capacity for each unit?

A: 250mw (4-hour battery system).

Q: What is the noise outage from each container?

A: Will have to investigate this, as the exact specification of the units has not been chosen as yet. The design team will get a specification sheet and will be able to find what the noise is cumulatively.

Q: The proposed site is on a slope down to Whitley; will the site have to be terraced?

A: Will either be levelled but a lot of groundworks would be required; or terraced, however, will need to understand the level of groundworks required for both.

Q: Where is access proposed from?

A: From the B3353. There is no other access proposed. There is a proposed access off of Littleworth Lane, which will be emergency access only.

Q: What will be the voltage of the AC connection from Hullavington to Melksham be?

A: It will be 400kv underground cabling, with smaller 33kv cabling in the site itself.

Q: If the site at Whitley is chosen for the battery storage, does this mean the cabling will go from there to the sub-station at Beanacre. If into the battery compound a transformer rectifier will be required to charge the batteries, which is substantial.

A: Correct and if there are no batteries on this sub-station the cabling will go direct from Hullavington to the sub-station and a transformer rectifier will be required to charge the batteries.

Q: Will there be security fencing and lighting?

A: There will be metal palisade fencing around the compound. There will be temporary lighting during construction and once constructed sensor/led lighting will be in operation.

Q: Feed from battery storage into Melksham sub-station will this be an AC connection and at high voltage or will the voltage change be in the sub-station?

A: Yes, feed from the battery storage into Melksham will be an AC connection. The batteries will be 33kv and there will be a transformer on site with a spec up to 400kv as connecting to the Melksham sub-station at 400kv.

Q: To connect to the battery storage to the sub-station will this require inverters, therefore more equipment to be installed on site?

A: Yes, an inverter will be required.

Q: How much of the hatched area shown on the plan of the site will have equipment installed on it and will there be planting to mitigate against the visual impact of the site?

A: Equipment will only be on part of the site to the North, with no intention of expanding the size of the site for the equipment. Yes, there will be planting, but what type this has yet to be agreed upon, as this needs to be appropriate for the landscape it sits in.

Q: If the batteries and equipment are to be located to the north of the site, this is higher and therefore would be more prominent in the landscape and therefore require more screening.

Q: There is potential for those north of Wiltshire and Whitley to have polarising views ie neither of them wanting a battery storage

facility in their area and suggesting it goes to the other area instead and therefore how will the wants and needs of both communities be reconciled and how will you come to a decision on the most appropriate site?

A: The consultation is being held to find the best design possible and feedback will play a role in informing the site taken forward, along with the findings of the various surveys taking place ie environmental assessment, it will not be a case of the site with the most objections is not put forward, but looking at trying to develop the best design which is as sensitive to the environment and communities as possible.

The idea of consultation is to get as much constructive feedback as possible from those who live in the vicinity to try and get the best design possible.

Q: What will happen if both communities say neither location is suitable what is the process of going ahead with the project?

A: The sites currently being proposed for the scheme have been selected following a site selection review process. However, more detailed work is required to understand if both sites remain suitable and once consultation feedback is received and technical reports completed, they will review which site is best for the battery storage facility and provide as sensitive a design as possible for the facility in whichever location.

The secondary location at Whitley came about following conversations as to the suitability of the site at Hullavington and whether alternative more suitable sites had been looked at.

Q: If this site at Whitley is not taken forward for battery storage, will it be used for solar panels instead?

A: No.

Q: There are several large quarries in the area, have these been looked at for storing batteries etc.

A: Aware of the various quarries in the area and will need to look at these from a structural engineering point of view regarding cable laying and structural loading.

Q: What will the colour of the batteries be in order they blend in with their surroundings? What improvements will there be regarding biodiversity, in line with Neighbourhood Plan Policy. What will the longevity of the facility be and will there be a bond in place to convert the site back to what it was? What flood mitigation will there be and what flood risk assessments will be undertaken.

A: With regard to appearance this will be like the ones located close to the sub-station therefore, shipping containers in appearance. The outward treatment can be any colour and can look at the most appropriate colour to fit in with the landscape and this can be secured as part of a planning condition.

In terms of biodiversity, they are only in the early stages at present and still undertaking ecology surveys. Therefore, they need to understand what is on the site already to consider what biodiversity improvements are appropriate and welcome feedback on suggestions on what this could be.

There will be a bond in place, meaning there would be no scenario where the site would be left and no mechanism or money in place to remove it at the end of its life.

Flood mitigation will be as stated previously, the hardstanding will not be entirely impermeable and will be more gravel sub base, with batteries on a hardstanding plinth with no continuous concrete block.

Q: The roofs will be hard surfaces and not impermeable?

A: The flood risk and drainage team will consider including surface water run-off.

Q: Will there be a community benefit from the site and will it be a one off or an annual payment for the duration of the scheme?

A: Yes, there will be a community benefit fund as part of the scheme, which could contribute towards projects in the area, they are open to discussing the most appropriate project/s to assist. Whether it will be a one-off payment or annual payment has not yet been decided but could be either, depending on the market at the time a planning application is submitted.

It was highlighted drainage at Whitley is a problem as it experiences a lot of surface water flooding, including quite recently, with internal property flooding experienced in the village earlier this year. There is an active group of flood wardens on call when there is a storm and generally called upon to deploy pumps and barriers to certain properties close to the Southbrook which is close to the village. This brook does not just cause problems in the village but in other areas as well, further downstream in Melksham. There is a problem with the outflow from the brook into the main river. Therefore, additional run off from the site will cause flooding problems and capacity problems within the watercourse and is something which needs careful management. The Environment Agency is constantly monitoring the water course flows, as it is a very flashy catchment and increases significantly during heavy rain.

There is an opportunity to improve the situation by using the south part of the site to slow the flow of water into the village and discussions with Wiltshire Council's Drainage Team would be useful in understanding the drainage issues in this area and appropriate mitigation.

Q: Do we need another solar farm, given the proliferation of solar panels in Wiltshire, particularly to the north, and why Wiltshire?

A: The Government has a target to deploy 30gw of solar by 2025 and 70gw by 2050. However, solar is not the only answer to the energy crisis and is part of the renewable energy mix and part of the solution. There are several applications across the country for solar farms of similar scale and tend to follow the National Grid network all over the country.

Q: As part of any planning application, given previous experience of traffic chaos during construction of a local solar farm, can a detailed construction management plan be put in place.

A: Discussions have taken place with Wiltshire Council and they have said they would like to see details of construction traffic management with any application.

Q: When will the next stage of consultation take place.

A: It is anticipated the next stage of consultation will be in the Autumn.

Stage One consultation will take place between 14 March and 26 April with various Community Events taking place in both Malmesbury, Chippenham, Corsham area and one at Shaw Village Hall on Thursday, 11 April 2pm-6pm. There will also be 2 webinar events taking place on Wednesday, 27 March 5.30pm-7pm and Wednesday, 17 April 5.30pm to 7pm, which has been extensively advertised. A postcard drop has taken place and delivered to 11,480 houses in those areas affected.

There is a dedicated website and would encourage people to leave their details so they can receive updates on proposals and next steps following initial consultation:

A 20-page project booklet has also been produced on the project and consultation information there will also be printed feedback forms available for people to use.

Throughout the consultation there will be a project freephone line available and a dedicated email address and online feedback form available.

Keen to brief any community groups on proposals moving forward, if requested.

At this early stage need to understand issues and take all feedback issues raised and together with findings from assessments/surveys this will be fed back into the preliminary environment impact report, the core document which will be published to support the next stage of consultation.

As part of the process must account for all the feedback received and provide a summary of issues raised and show regard to those issues in developing the final proposal, if issues raised have not been taken on board and clarify why not.

The Clerk informed the meeting the council was using social media to inform people of proposals and printing posters. However, asked if some feedback forms and booklets could be made available for places such as Whitley Reading Rooms and Sprockets Café, Top Lane for those who might not be online, noting it would also be useful to publish the consultation in the local Connect Magazine.

- e) **To consider a formal response to the public consultation:**
www.limedownsolar.co.uk/

Unanimously Resolved: To submit the following comments to the public consultation:

Melksham Without Parish Council **strongly object** to the proposals for the battery storage at the proposed site north of Whitley.

Planning policy and planning decision precedent

As per the precedent of the planning application very recently refused (21/3/24) for a battery storage facility at Land at Somerford Farm, Brinkworth (Planning application PL/2022/02824) by Wiltshire Council. The proposed battery storage facility and ancillary development will result in uncharacteristic and harmful landscape and visual effects. The loss of existing agricultural land and replacement with a new urban industrial use is considered to have an unacceptable adverse landscape effect on the quiet rural tranquillity and character of the surrounding fields and more importantly, on the very close existing residential development.

The proposal is thereby objected to by reason of its size, scale, design, appearance as it would have a harmful impact on the landscape character and appearance of the area in conflict with Core Policy 51 ii, iv, vi v11 and Core Policy 57 I, iii of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Paragraphs 135 and 180 of the NPPF.

The parish council considers that this proposal conflicts with Policy 86 in the Wiltshire Council draft Local Plan (Reg 19 version, Sept 2023) as above.

In addition, the parish council considers that this proposal conflicts with Policy 2: Renewable Energy in both the adopted Melksham Neighbourhood Plan and the emerging draft Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (Regulation 14 version October 2023) as proposals are only supported if it can be demonstrated that:

- a. the siting and scale of the proposal is appropriate to its setting;
- b. the proposal will not result in adverse impacts on the local environment which cannot be satisfactorily mitigated;
- c. the proposal does not create an unacceptable impact on local amenity and safety;
- d. the proposal does not have an unacceptable degree of impact on a feature of heritage, natural or biodiversity importance.
- e. there are direct benefits to the local community.

Proposals for **energy storage** will be supported, where it meets one or more of the following:

- a. it is located on or near, existing or proposed renewable energy generation sites;
- b. it alleviates grid constraints; and
- c. it enables the delivery of further renewable developments.

In addition, for clarity, there are lots of planning policies supporting green energy if they meet the policy criteria, but they relate to solar panels. Battery installations are not “green energy”.

Flood Risk

The villages of Shaw and Whitley suffer from surface water flooding regularly; with regular instances of internal flooding of properties that are well documented. The volunteer flood wardens are regularly deployed to protect properties with sandbags and pump out water to prevent property flooding. There is telemetry installed in the watercourse opposite Shaw School to inform the Environment Agency and the flood wardens. The catchment area is “flashy”, it comes very quickly, and leaves quickly but with devastation often left in its place. There are concerted efforts to install flood mitigation measures as part of community benefits in planning obligations as well as new Environment Agency funding to help with flooding of properties further downstream at Dunch Lane. BART (Bristol & River Avon Trust) have installed natural flood management measures north of Whitley. Wiltshire Council’s drainage team have installed a drainage scheme on Corsham Road and First Lane in the last ten years.

The community and stakeholders are working hard, and together, to minimize the risk of further flooding in the two villages and it is felt that

the hard surfaces of the battery storage units, and the hardstanding concrete slabs that they will sit on will dramatically raise the risk of flooding to properties in Shaw and Whitley and further downstream.

Size

The proposed battery storage site is huge, and we understand it will be the largest in Europe and will completely alter the feel of the village and surrounding countryside. From the indicative plan it looks as though is the same size as the village itself. The size of any flood attenuation would also have to be very large scale and give an industrial feel; with some 50 acres of hard landscaping.

Fire Safety

There are several concerns about fire risk. That the batteries will ignite, and then be very difficult to extinguish. They are very close together, and the fire could easily spread, with no means of fire engines to gain access between the batteries. Anecdotal evidence to date is that the fires need water on them for days, not hours, to put them out (as evidenced by fires in electric cars which are not allowed to be unattended for 2/3 days). This will have a huge impact on the community, with the toxic fumes, but also the impact of the water used then running off to heavily increase the surface water flooding potential. The water runoff will be contaminated by the lithium and will flow into the water course and saturate the ground. There are also anecdotal concerns raised at the risk of explosion from these type of electric storage batteries; these are physically much larger in scale compared to the fires in electric cars and scooters that are reported in the press with regularity. The parish council are keen to see any comments submitted by the Fire Service, and hope that they have been contacted for their submission to the current consultation.

Concerns are also raised about the widescale use of lithium on the site, with no research into possible long term harm of the lithium as it's a new technology.

Please provide more details of the risk management of the site, who will maintain the installation and what processes will be put in place? Will the batteries be monitored and tested for any change in temperatures, moisture content in the batteries for example? And if so, what is the plan to address any increased risks?

Noise pollution

There will be 200no. unit operating at 65Db each, which we understand will give a combined noise level of 88Db in a flat area. For comparison, the noise level coming from the M4 is 85Db, and this will be the noise inflicted on residents of Top Lane. Due to all the hard surfaces and sharp edges the noise will bend and defract and will be quieter for

some residents but noisier for others, and will feel like a Chinook helicopter overhead with the “pulsing/beating ” sound/feeling that brings. The noise will be very different in character to the noise of the natural environment currently experienced.

Operation/Future Use

More clarity is required on the future use and operation of the battery storage site. What security measure will it have? Will it be storing energy created from solar farms some 12 miles away, with what seems to be inefficient ways of transferring/transforming the energy before it finally reaches the Beanacre substation? Can you explain the potential need for a substation in Whitley, please? And if there will still be a requirement for one if the battery storage is to be located elsewhere in Wiltshire?

There are concerns that the site will be used to download cheaper electricity during off-peak times to feed into the grid during busier times. This means that there would be noise in the middle of the night and not during the daylight hours – can you confirm that is not the case?

Can you confirm the details of the planned longevity of the site, and that a bond will be put in place to remove all signs of the battery storage at the end of its operation? What safeguards are in place if the ownership changes during the lifetime of the project? Pretty much all of the solar farms in the parish have changed ownership, and some more than once, so this seems to be a common occurrence.

Heritage

The Roman road, the Wansdyke, the Grade II listed buildings and their setting, evidence of medieval farming and the other items of historic interest in the villages will all be impacted by the proposals. Archaeological investigations will need to be undertaken as part of evidence gathering to inform the decision-making.

Biodiversity & Wildlife

There will be an inevitable impact on the wildlife and biodiversity of the site. This is not fields of solar panels with compatible uses of agriculture, wildlife and biodiversity; this is fields of metal boxes full of live electrical equipment, sitting on concrete pads and gravel. The requirement for biodiversity net gain, which came into force in February 2024, cannot surely find a realistic way to be put in place for an increase of 10% on what is already a site rich in biodiversity.

Wellbeing

The well-being of residents in the village of Whitley and the surrounding villages has already been impacted. The prospect of this proposed battery storage site is already making residents feel anxious and spoiling their quiet enjoyment of where they live. The thoughts of the impact of the delivery and construction period; the impact of any final installation on the daily life of residents – on their daily dog walk on the adjacent Right of Way, the view out the window, the feel of the village - are already being keenly felt.

Detailed plans

The community and parish council are keen to understand more of the detailed plans, information is very scant at the moment. Will the land be terraced as it's a sloping site? Will there be sluices and drains to deal with the surface water across the land? Will there be screening? What scale of planting and will it be mature planting from the onset? What colour will the batteries be?

Loss of greenfield

There are concerns that the industrial feel of the installation will mean that it will always be treated as such, with the potential for more industrial use at the end of life of the battery site, and not a return to agricultural land. There has been no industrial history on this site.

The parish council, through its joint Neighbourhood Plan review with the neighbouring town council, and the support of the community through its recent neighbourhood plan consultations have a long-held ambition and policy of “brownfield first” – as do Wiltshire Council through their planning policy. Can you please confirm that you have thoroughly investigated brownfield sites as reasonable alternatives? There are lots of old quarry sites, old military sites and ex-RAF bases in the areas that you are looking at, have these been examined and if so, why have they been discounted in favour of greenfield sites, including this one in Whitley?

Agricultural land

The land is currently farmed and is in active use for food production with new protections being brought in for food production with the recent Levelling Up & Regeneration legislation. Promoting a solar energy project as a green solution whilst increasing food miles in the locality seems counterproductive.

This land has been farmed for generations and for many years by the current tenant farmer.

Light pollution

There are concerns relating to the light pollution at the site. For both the neighbouring residents and the established wildlife. Presumably, the security lighting will be triggered by motion sensors. And by the local wildlife, including the badgers, rabbits, and deer that are regularly seen on the fields? This is very impactful on nocturnal wildlife, and is known to affect migrating wildlife, affect pollinators (butterflies and bees) as well as impact on the amenity of the neighbouring residents. .

Impact on local facilities

Concerns have been raised about the impact on the local facilities and businesses. The Pear Tree Inn and Spindles bike shop/Sprockets Café both on Top Lane attract visitors from all over the locality and further afield for the accommodation at the Pear Tree and holiday rentals in the village. Visitors come for the views from these venues, and the surrounding countryside, and these will be impacted by the countryside and landscape being altered beyond recognition as so widescale. The local estate agent has already reported two house sales in the village that have fallen through since the start of the consultation, as a direct result of the proposals and others on hold. Residents have chosen to live in the village for the views and neighbouring countryside amenities and are upset at the prospect of that changing, and the lowering of their house prices as a result, if they then decide to relocate. Some of the existing residential development is only 100m from the proposed site; this is wholly inappropriate and not justifiable to be in such proximity.

National Infrastructure & Process of Application

More information is sought on the whole process of a national infrastructure project with a decision by the Secretary of State. Can you please provide more details of the process, how the community and local stakeholders can engage with the process etc?

An explanation of how this proposed national infrastructure project is provided and funded by a private overseas investment company is something that residents have raised as a query. Is the landscape being altered forever for national infrastructure needs or the benefit of overseas shareholders?

Landscape

As mentioned at the beginning of the comments under the policy heading, the harmful impact on the landscape is detrimental, and because of its raised elevation, and assumed terracing on site, will be very prominent in the surrounding area. This is highly inappropriate.

Cumulative effect

Concerns are raised about the cumulative effect of the sheer amount of battery storage facility installations in the surrounding area. Residents feel that at every turn on walks on Rights of Way, they see a sea of solar panels or battery storage already. Please see below a snapshot from the Wiltshire Council online mapping with the current battery storage installations surrounding Whitley.



Likewise for the cumulative effect of the amount of solar farms in the area.



Delivery and construction

A very detailed delivery and construction method programme and plan will presumably be required as part of any application but the parish council and

residents are clear that any agreed plan must be adhered to, with a suitable penalty clause arrangement in place if the construction is not to plan to act as a strong deterrent. Unfortunately, the delivery of the solar farm at neighbouring Norrington (W/12/02072/FUL) brought the area to a standstill for days, with it regularly reported on the national traffic bulletins on the radio. Due to a short timescale for a deadline to be connected to the grid with financial implications for the developers, the construction and delivery plan was ignored. Deliveries were continuous through the night, with foreign drivers knocking on residents' doors in the small hours of the night seeking directions. This is unacceptable and there seemed to be no recourse to halt this impact on the residents and the major highway delays in the area. There is currently a battery site being installed southwest of the Beanacre substation, which has raised numerous issues and visits to the site and residents' gardens due to the impact the installation is making on the residents; particularly noise from machinery which is currently being investigated by Wiltshire Council's public protection environmental health team to establish if its still construction noise or the finished installed equipment noise (17/04116 & PL/22/02615 refers).

The parish council are seeking more than reassurance, but tangible measures to ensure that this type of impact on the local community cannot happen in the future for any proposed installations.

It is understood that the access to the site will only be via Goodes Hill, with only emergency access via Littleworth Lane which is used constantly for access to the Right of Ways MELW65 & MELW72 with many visitors to the area parking in Littleworth Lane to access the RoW as it's a popular dog walking area.

Vibration & Weight

Concerns have been raised about the weight of the battery storage units on site and any potential vibration, especially as the area is littered with historic underground quarries and a network of tunnels.

Community Benefit

Proposals for any proposed community benefit, if the Secretary of State is minded to approve the application, will be considered by the Full Council at their next meeting, as out of the remit of the Planning Committee.

- 482/23** **Current planning applications:** Standing item for issues/queries arising during period of applications awaiting decision.
- a) **Blackmore Farm (Planning Application PL/2023/01949).**
Outline permission with some matters reserved for demolition of agricultural outbuildings and development of up to 650 dwellings; land for primary school; land for mixed use.

To note this application has been refused by Wiltshire Council.

- b) **Blackmore Farm (Planning Application PL/2023/11188): Outline permission for demolition of agricultural outbuildings and development of up to 500 dwellings; up to 5,000m² of employment (class E(g)(i)) & class E(g)(ii)); land for primary school (class F1); land for mixed use hub (class E/class F); open space; provision of access infrastructure from Sandridge Common; and provision of all associated infrastructure necessary to facilitate the development of the site.**

No update to report.

- c) **Snarlton Farm (Planning Application PL/2023/07107); Outline planning application with all matters reserved except for two pedestrian and vehicle accesses (excluding internal estates roads) from Eastern Way for the erection of up to 300 dwellings (Class C3); land for local community use or building (incorporating classes E(b), E(g) and F2(b) and (c)); open space and dedicated play space and service infrastructure and associated works.**

Members noted the applicant, Catesby Estates had withdrawn the application to enable them to carry out further technical work.

- d) **Land at Pathfinder Way, Bowerhill. Reserved Matters application (PL/2023/08046) pursuant to outline permission 16/01123/OUT relating to the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of the proposed primary school (including Nursery and SEN provision).**

No update to report, however, landscaping work to the north of the proposed school site, as part of the Pathfinder Place development was currently taking place following its omission being raised via Planning Enforcement.

- e) **Land rear of 52e Chapel Lane, Beanacre (PL/2023/05883). Erection of 3 dwellings, with access, parking and associated works, including landscaping (outlie application with all matters reserved – Resubmission of PL/2022/06389)**

No update to report.

- f) **Land rear of Townsend Farm for 53 dwellings (PL/2022/08155).**

Members noted this application had been refused at a Strategic Planning Committee meeting on 6 March 2024.

- g) **178a Woodrow Road, Forest, Melksham (PL/2024/01559).**

The Clerk explained this was on the agenda in case there was

anything to report, with an update received from the developers earlier in the meeting.

- h) Westlands Farm, Westlands Lane, Whitley (PL/2024/01377 & PL/2024/01378. Variation of conditions 1 (approved plans), 2 (soft landscaping) and 7 (Construction Traffic Management Plan) on PL/2022/02615.**

Again, this was on the agenda in case there was anything to report, but nothing at present.

483/23 Planning Enforcement: To note any new planning enforcement queries raised and updates on previous enforcement queries.

- a) Buckley Gardens, Semington Road (PL/2022/02749)**

With regard to construction vehicles using Shails Lane, Planning Enforcement have investigated and informed the parish council the estate roads had now been installed, along with contractor parking and a semi-permanent compound and welfare establishment and since in place there had been no access from the development land onto the access track leading to Shails Lane and hopefully this resolved the issue.

With regard to work starting early on site, Planning Enforcement confirmed whilst operators may come on to site prior to 8.00am they did not actually start working until 8.00am as per the planning conditions.

With regard to mud on the road from the development, a Highways Technician had been in touch to say he was aware of the issue and had liaised on several occasions with the site manager, who in turn has made sure there was a sweeper present all day every day, if the need was warranted.

Planning Enforcement had also investigated and having visited the site on several occasions in recent weeks felt the situation was satisfactory and therefore had closed the file on this matter.

Whilst it was appreciated recent weather conditions had not helped the situation, it was felt the method of cleaning the road had not helped the situation and resulted in mud being spread across the road.

The parish council were pleased that a swift response had been made following the complaint by residents of the watercourse running a dirty colour, and the simple solution of hay bales in the watercourse to filter the water.

484/23 Planning Appeal

a) 489a Semington Road (Annex).

Members noted the Planning Inspector had upheld the decision of Wiltshire Council to refuse a Certificate of Lawful Use or Development (PL/2023/02893) with regard to the use of the annex at 489 Semington Road as a separate dwelling.

Planning Enforcement were also aware of the outcome of the decision of the Planning Inspectorate particularly as the dwelling was being advertised for rent and they were in touch with the applicant's agent to see what their intentions were.

b) 89 Corsham Road, Whitley (PL/2023/03257).

Members noted the Planning Inspector had upheld the decision of Wiltshire Council to refuse planning permission for a proposed side extension to the property.

c) 16 Halifax Road, Bowerhill.

Members noted the Planning Inspector had allowed the appeal by the applicant against Wiltshire Council's decision to refuse planning permission for the erection of fencing to the side and front of the property and granted planning permission.

485/23 Planning Policy

a) Neighbourhood Planning

i) To note the draft Steering Group minutes of 28 February 2024.

Members noted the minutes of the Steering Group meeting held on 28 February 2024.

ii)C To receive update on NHP#2 and consider additional budget requirements to get plan to Examination.

THIS ITEM WAS HELD IN CLOSED SESSION.

ii) To reflect on responses to planning applications for monitoring of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Clerk explained this was a standing item, as a 'catch all' in case something was highlighted as needed raising as part of the Neighbourhood Plan review whilst responding to planning applications.

b) Biodiversity

- i) To note planning practice guidance on biodiversity net gain.**
www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain

Members noted planning practice relating to biodiversity net gain on new developments came into force on 12 February 2024.

- ii) To note actions contained in the Council's Biodiversity Policy in relation to the consideration of planning applications.**

Noted.

c) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) changes.

Members noted the correspondence to Michelle Donelan MP from Michael Gove MP, Secretary for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities. This was in response to a specific query raised when the parish council met Michelle Donelan on how planning applications that were approved at Committee pending approval under delegated powers when the s106 was signed, and those that had not been legally engrossed should be treated if in the "limbo" period when the changes to the NPPF were made. Decisions in this matter had already taken place since the advice was requested.

d) To consider a response to the Government consultation on proposed changes to Permitted Development Rights (closes 9 April):

The Clerk informed the meeting various changes to permitted development rights were proposed, including householders being able to extend their properties even further without having to seek planning permission and to install EV charging points and ground source heat pumps without planning permission.

Recommendation: Not to submit a response to the consultation.

e) To consider a response to the Government proposals on a series of measures aimed at 'accelerating' the planning service (closes 1 May). www.slcc.co.uk/an-accelerated-planning-system-consultation/

It was agreed to defer this item to a future Planning Committee meeting to allow more time to consider a response.

f) To note Wiltshire Council has formally adopted the Wiltshire Design Guide www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/6110/Wiltshire-Design-Guide

Noted.

486/23 S106 Agreements and Developer meetings: (Standing Item)

a) Updates on ongoing and new S106 Agreements

i) Pathfinder Place:

The committee were reminded it had been agreed to remove the left turn only arrow on the Pathfinder roundabout (coming from Bowerhill).

The Clerk informed the meeting she had reminded Taylor Wimpey they had agreed to plant a replacement memorial tree and install a plaque in commemoration of a Bowerhill resident.

ii) Buckley Gardens, Semington Road (PL/2022/02749: 144 dwellings)

Members noted the correspondence from a resident adjacent to the site concerned building seemed to be close to his property.

iii) Land to rear of Townsend Farm for 50 dwellings (PL/2023/00808)

No update to report.

iv) Land South of Western Way for 210 dwellings and 70 bed care home (PL/2022/08504).

Members noted the update earlier in the meeting with regard to this as part of the update on the neighbourhood plan review (NHP#2).

b) To note any S106 decisions made under delegated powers

None to note.

c) Contact with developers

Members accepted the confidential notes of the meeting held with BBA Architects on 18 March 2024.

Meeting closed at 20.38pm

Signed:.....
Chair, Full Council, 22 April 2024

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CAWS
c/o Lagard Farm
First Lane
Whitley
Melksham
Wiltshire
SN12 8RL

25 April 2024

To: Lime Down Solar (Freepost and email)

Dear Sir

**Lime Down Battery Storage at Whitley – CAWS Submission to the Stage 1 Consultation -
“Whitley is the Wrong Location for a Battery Storage Facility”**

About CAWS

Community Action: Whitley and Shaw (CAWS) is a community group set up in 2015 to represent local residents and businesses, seeking to achieve changes and improvements to the quality of life and wellbeing of local people. It promotes community cohesion, coordinates community action, increases awareness and consults on future developments, and provides a vital link between residents, businesses and the local authorities. CAWS campaigns and projects are wide ranging, from trying to improve road safety for drivers and pedestrians, to providing input to the Neighbourhood and Local Plans. CAWS is run entirely by volunteers with a commitment to recycle any funds raised through local events etc. back into the community.

Our Mandate

CAWS represents approx. 1,600 residents in Shaw and Whitley and many local businesses. Our engagement with the local community during this Consultation has been highly significant with extraordinary high levels of engagement. Our contact with residents has been multi-faceted, including community meetings, press and media coverage, and literally hundreds of one to one meetings. Some of our events have attracted hundreds of attendees.

We have also consulted with residents of nearby communities including Atworth, Neston, Leafield and Beanacre. These villages have a combined population of approx. 4,500 and many have attended our events. The feedback we have received from those communities, and from local businesses, organisations, stakeholder groups, local authorities, councillors, sitting MPs, and prospective parliamentary candidates, also supports our position.

In summary, the voice of the community is very loud and very clear: Whitley is the wrong location for a battery storage facility.

Our Objections

The 25 material objections set out in this submission at Annex A have been developed by the community. They should be read alongside the individual comments of residents and any other submissions including that of the Melksham Without Parish Council Planning Committee which resolved at its 8 April 2024 Planning Committee to “strongly object”. Melksham Without Parish Council (which includes Whitley), is the largest Parish Council in Wiltshire and represents a population of around 10,000.

These objections cover matters associated with planning policy, flooding, safety, heritage, landscape, topography, loss of greenfield, noise, vibration, light pollution, weight, wildlife and biodiversity, wellbeing, high carbon, site size, house prices, scheme efficiency, proportionality, lack of community benefit, security and proposed alternative sites. We can support these objections with evidence and all the topics are capable of expansion. We submit that each individual objection is of sufficient importance and weight to render the scheme redundant. We further submit that the cumulative effect of these compelling individual objections is of monumental proportions.

In summary we strongly object to the scheme based on the objections set out at Annex A and the supporting information set out further in this letter.

The Developers Pre-Application Engagement

The community have been extremely disappointed with the quality of the events and the information provided during Stage 1 of the Consultation Process. Hardly any additional information above that contained in the Consultation Information Leaflet has been provided. The team fielding the events seem to have been more interested in extracting information from residents than providing answers to questions. Promised ancillary information has not been provided. Many residents have been confused about the identity of IGP team members supporting the events: the name and role of the company providing consultants for the events; their relationship to IGP; and some team members had no name badges on at all which made some residents feel uncomfortable.

The developer has been largely unable to answer any substantive questions posed by the community. We note that where some answers have been provided, the answers have not been consistent across the various events, and in some cases the answers have been contradictory. Promises by the developer to respond to questions outside of the consultation events have not been followed up by the developer.

The maps you have used to describe the Whitley area are out of date. For example, the maps describe two local quarries as disused whereas one is in daily operation (Park Lane Quarry) and the other is the home of Octavian. The closest quarry of all, which is disused, is not shown at all. New build houses on Top Lane, Whitley, are not shown. The maps we have seen did not have a scale on them and many residents therefore found it difficult to assimilate the information presented.

We are also concerned about the unethical behaviour of one consultancy firm in your consortium in acquiring background information in 2023. Whilst we are entirely content for the consultancy in question to have that information, we find the circumstances surrounding its acquisition to be of significant concern. We are concerned about what such an approach might mean for future engagements where a level of trust might be paramount. We will follow this up with the consultancy company directly.

In summary we feel the pre-application process so far has been ineffective and we note that paras 39 - 46 of the National Planning Policy Framework have not been materially met. We feel it would have been reasonable to expect the developer to demonstrate a level of honesty, openness, and professional knowledge about the proposed scheme but, regrettably, that was not the impression many residents were left with.

Community Questions

As stated above, the community is extremely disappointed in the way the developer has handled questions. Very few questions have been answered, and where they have been, we have found that some answers have been inconsistent across the various engagement events. Some answers have been deeply troubling as they reveal a significant lack of understanding of our local area and the proposed site. In some cases the answers appear to reveal the views of your individual team members, which are pleased to note in some cases align with our own position.

In order to take this matter forward we have compiled a list of questions that we would now like you to answer, in full and in writing, and this is set out at Annex C. We discussed this approach with several of your team at your events on 10 April 2024 and 11 April 2024 who encouraged us to take this approach.

Where we have already received an answer, we ask you to confirm the position. Where we have received a contradictory answer, or it is of otherwise of note, we have highlighted the exchange in blue and again ask you to confirm the position.

We recognise that in some cases you may not be in a position to provide an answer, for example because this depends on the completion of detailed design work, so please answer using your experience from the other 34 schemes you have already delivered around the world. We would also be grateful if you would commit to updating the answers to these questions as more detailed information becomes available. In turn, we will continue to feed through additional questions as they arise from the community.

Community Benefit

Given our very strong objection to the scheme, that the overwhelming evidence against the scheme set out in this letter should have a material bearing on a deselection decision, and that any material community benefit proposal should be immaterial to a planning decision, we do not wish to engage on this matter.

And Finally...

Whilst this response is deliberately focussed on the option to place a battery facility at Whitley, most of our objections also apply to the proposed cable runs.

Next Steps

CAWS will remain closely engaged in this process as it develops. We reserve the right to issue additional questions and objections as the process continues and our various working groups will remain active throughout.

Summary

CAWS strongly objects to the proposed scheme. We have a long list of major and substantive objections. In addition, we have major concerns about the engagement process and the exchange of information. The strength of feeling against this scheme in the local community and wider afield based on facts and professional knowledge and experience is immense.

We note from para 3 of Island Green Powers evidence submitted (we assume) to the Winsor Review (GR10080 dated August 2023) that you are committed to responsible land use, bringing forward developments that are in harmony with their surroundings, using brownfield sites in preference to agricultural land, and to find ways to allow on-going agricultural use. The proposed scheme will not address any of these factors.

In summary, Whitley is the wrong location for a battery storage facility, and we will continue to be engaged in the process for as long as it takes for the developer and any others to reach the same conclusion.

Yours Sincerely

Peter Richardson
CAWS Chair

cc: Rt Hon Michelle Donelan MP, Cllr Phil Alford, Cllr Martin Franks, Cllr John Doel, Cllr Terry Chivers, Cllr Tina Ellis, Melksham Without Parish Council, Atworth Parish Council, Corsham Town Council, Wiltshire Council.

Annex A

CAWS Objections to Lime Down Battery Storage at Whitley

(NB. Additional Supporting Evidence at Annex C)

1. Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (2020 to 2038)

The scheme does not align with Policy 2 of the emerging plan as: its siting and scale is inappropriate to the proposed setting; the scheme will result in adverse impacts on the local environment that cannot be satisfactorily mitigated; the scheme creates an unacceptable impact on local amenity and safety; the scheme has an adverse impact on heritage, nature and biodiversity; there are no direct benefits to the local community; and the proposed site is not located on or near existing or proposed renewable energy generation sites. These issues are explained further below.

We therefore strongly object to the scheme on the basis that it is non-compliant with the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

2. Wiltshire Local Plan Draft (2020-2038)

There is no evidence that the scheme will address criteria set out in Policy 86 of the emerging plan including: the need to balance the wider environment, social and economic benefits of renewable storage; the landscape; the need to conserve and where possible enhance biodiversity including species and habitats; the historic environment; the cumulative environmental effects of proposals with other renewable energy installations; agricultural land; the proper functioning of the local highway network, recognising the value and function of the designated rights of way network; the amenity of local residents, including noise, odour, visual amenity and safety. In addition, the scheme does not meet criteria set out in Policy 91. These issues are explained further below.

We therefore strongly object to the scheme on the basis that it is non-compliant with the emerging Local Plan.

3. Wiltshire Council Core Strategy (adopted January 2015)

We submit that the scheme is incompatible with Core Policy 41 in that it will have a negative impact on historic land and buildings and that the scheme will not guarantee that appropriate sensitive approaches and materials are used. We also submit that the battery equipment is not, in any event, low carbon or green. We also submit that the scheme is not a standalone renewable energy installation of the type envisaged by Core Policy 42 as it does not in itself generate renewable energy. If Core Policy 42 were to apply we submit that the scheme does not demonstrate how impacts on the following factors have either been suitably assessed or taken into account, including the cumulative effects: landscape; biodiversity; the historic environment; the use of the local transport network; residential amenity including noise, odour, visual amenity and safety; and the use of versatile agricultural land. Whilst we note the developer proposes to use the facility, if built, to balance demand, we see no evidence that justifies the facility on either a national or local context.

We therefore strongly object to the scheme on the basis that it is non-compliant with Wiltshire's Core Strategy.

4. Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 1 2020–2026 Referendum Version

Whilst we submit that the scheme is neither renewable or low carbon, we note that in any event the scheme is incompatible with Policy 2 as its siting and scale is inappropriate to its setting, it would create

an unacceptable impact on the amenity of local residents and visitors, and create an unacceptable negative impact on a feature of natural and biodiversity importance.

We therefore strongly object to the scheme on the basis that it is non-compliant with Neighbourhood Plan 1.

5. Water

Whitley is well known for issues associated with water drainage from this area, and beyond, and the impact that has on the local villages and further afield. Water is often seen pouring off this land or adjoining land. The frequency of flooding is increasing; in this part of Wiltshire it has been an exceptionally wet autumn and winter being the second wettest October to February period since records began in 1871.

Southbrook is known to be “flashy”. There have been 17 flooding incidents in Whitley since 2012. In 2023 the sewer storm overflow where Southbrook crosses Corsham Road spilled 68 times for a total of 591 hours, or about 25 days non-stop, and any increase in run-off will exacerbate this. The January 2024 incident included floods at First Lane (2 places), Middle Lane, Top Lane/Eden Grove, and Corsham Road/Shaw School. Hard standings will increase surface run-off as will the units themselves. If this project goes ahead flood risk in Shaw and Whitley will increase. We also refer you to the submissions made by our Community Emergency Group which we endorse.

We therefore strongly object to the scheme on the basis that flood risk is high and this scheme would exacerbate that - electricity and water do not mix.

6. Fire/Explosion Risk

We note from the EPRI BESS Failure Event Database that battery fires are a significant risk. We also note that battery fires are typically related to thermal runaway, failure of control systems, manufacturing defects, battery damage and improper installation. Such fires are likely to release flammable toxic gases, are extremely difficult to extinguish, and can easily re-ignite. To extinguish (or cool) a fire requires huge amount of water - based on public domain data associated with Battery Sites at Basing Fen and Cleve Hill, we estimate it would be necessary to store or deliver 50 million litres of cooling water – and any run-off from an incident would be contaminated.

Fire crews would therefore face an impossible choice between protecting the community from a potential toxic or explosive gas plume or applying water that would pollute local waterways for years. The geology and topography of the site, along with the well-known water course and flooding issues explained elsewhere, mean that contaminated water would likely follow the natural drainage pattern of the site, entering Whitley on Top Lane and cascading throughout the village through the various gullies and water courses into South Brook and beyond. If such an event coincided with period of heavy rain, then any floodwater would also be contaminated. We also note that if multiple battery fires were to occur at the same time, the environmental impact would be of monumental proportions. Some commentators indicate that a mitigant is to site batteries in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight, and this supports one of our suggestions to utilise a brownfield underground site.

In summary, the risk of a safety incident, exacerbated by the local topography, geology, and water course risks, means that the site is totally unsuitable for a battery storage system and we strongly object on that basis.

7. Heritage

The area is mentioned in the Domesday Book. The northern boundary of the site is adjacent to the Roman Road and Wansdyke. The southern boundary is above a number of Grade II Listed buildings and

other properties of heritage interest. In-between is evidence of medieval farming (ridge and furrow) as identified in aerial photographs from around 1946. There is also evidence of a medieval settlement which may occupy the site of a Roman settlement. There are historic quarries in close proximity and ancient water courses run throughout. Please note that the CAWS Book, “A Short History of Whitley and Shaw” which was published in 2023 (which you have confirmed you have seen) will be reissued as a 2nd Edition later in the year and that this will contain highly significant additional content on many of the heritage assets in this immediate area.

The site is therefore totally unsuitable from a heritage point of view, any mitigations are likely to be ineffective, and we strongly object on that basis.

8. Landscape and Vistas

The vistas to and from the Roman Road are important as is the setting of the listed buildings and other heritage assets in this landscape. Note the site slopes up from the Village to the north which will impact any visual mitigation. As the site is about the same size as Whitley it will dominate the local landscape, even if screened. Whitley’s unique distinctiveness and character is informed by its position in the local landscape and therefore that distinctiveness is at high risk of impact by this scheme. In addition, the site is highly visible in the wider landscape being able to be seen from various parts of the world famous National Trust Village of Lacock (3.5km away) including Bowden Hill (6km), parts of Shaw Hill (2km), Berryfield (4.5km), Woodrow (5km), Sandridge (5km), Seend Cleave (8 km) and the Salisbury Plain escarpment et al. It would be impossible to screen the site to protect these long-range, well-loved, vistas. Please also note that the site is also extremely close to the border of the Cotswolds AONB with boundary markers at Five Ways (4km) and Corsham (4km); some residents say they have seen some old maps that show Whitley as part of this area.

We also note that the site is incompatible with Policy 91 of the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan (see above) as it will not conserve or enhance a Wiltshire landscape. In summary the scheme fails a number of key landscape tests in the emerging Local Plan:

- the proposed battery site is not being located and designed to respect landscape character and maintain the areas distinctive sense of place and will not reinforce local distinctiveness;
- the scheme will not conserve, enhance, and restore the characteristics and views of landscapes along with valued attributes and existing site features such as trees, hedgerows, dry stone walls and waterbodies that contribute to the character and quality of the area;
- the scheme will not conserve and enhance the locally distinctive character of the Whitley settlement and its landscape setting;
- the scheme will not be located and designed to prevent erosion of relative tranquillity (light pollution and noise) and intrinsically dark landscapes;
- the scheme will not protect geology and soils that underpin the landscape character of the area enhancing healthy ‘living’ soils as the foundation for successful plant growth, natural carbon sequestration, groundwater storage and filtration, as well as all eco-system services.

The scheme is therefore totally unacceptable from a local and regional landscape and vista perspective and we strongly object on that basis.

9. Topography

The site slopes north to south towards the properties in Whitley. As the units need to be on flat land some, potentially significant, terracing will be necessary.

The topography of the site is therefore not conducive to the project and any ground works will exacerbate heritage, vista, landscape, water and noise risks and we strongly object on that basis.

10. Loss of Greenfield v Available Brownfield

The land has been used for agricultural purposes for hundreds of years. From a formal perspective the land is categorised as “good to moderate” and adjoins “very good” and “excellent land”. However local knowledge and farming experience supports the view that this land is actually “very good” given the range of crops cultivated including potatoes and is, quite definitely, “Best and Most Versatile” land. This prime agricultural land would be lost.

It is not clear to what extent the use of alternative brownfield sites has been considered. We understand there are likely to be suitable brownfield sites close to the point of proposed generation, along the M4 and in other areas. Could the units go underground in one of the many local disused quarries? Are there other brownfield sites that could become available? Within the projected lifespan of the Battery Storage Site, we submit that the area under and around the units could be designated as a brownfield site and that if that were to happen the site would never return to agricultural use, and that it would eventually disappear for ever, either for housing or industrial use.

In summary, as the scheme will utilise productive farmland when other brownfield sites are available, we strongly object.

11. Noise

The cumulative effect from 200 units could be considerable. Based on 200 units x 65dBA the current working assumption is that this would be roughly the same as heavy motorway traffic. We are also keen to understand the impact of the frequency of the sound as well as the sound level, particularly as a large number of residents suffer from medical hearing issues such as Tinnitus. If additional equipment is installed at the site, such as diesel generators or heavy-duty switchgear/transformers, the noise level/frequency will almost certainly rise. Construction noise is likely to be considerable also. Wind blowing from the north will carry any noise towards the village. Any noise screening is unlikely to be in keeping with heritage and landscape/vista factors. The noise from the site will be 24/7.

We therefore submit that the noise from this site is likely to be above the Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level and that it will have an impact on good health and quality of life and therefore is counter to the principles set out in the Noise Policy Statement for England March 2010.

On the basis of this unacceptable increase in noise level, we strongly object.

12. Vibration

The cumulative vibration effect from 200 units, plus any ancillary equipment, is likely to be considerable.

The vibration impact on underground workings in the area is a significant risk and therefore we strongly object.

13. Light Pollution

Any motion sensor lighting is likely to be triggered frequently given the abundance of wildlife in the area.

As well as generating light pollution, this will exacerbate the landscape issues to the extent that the site will be dominant in the landscape 24/7 and therefore we strongly object.

14. Equipment Weight

With some ancillary equipment on the site expected to be circa 500 tons in weight, we expect the cumulative weight of the battery storage equipment to be highly significant, posing a threat to

underground workings from various quarries in the vicinity as well as significant archaeology. One disused quarry is extremely close to the proposed site and is not shown on your mapping.

Given the likely cumulative weight and the risk to archaeology/heritage and underground workings, we therefore strongly object.

15. Wildlife/Biodiversity.

The proposed site is a wildlife haven with otters, newts (including Greater Crested Newts), birds including owls, deer, bats, badgers and stoats, frequently seen. We note Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre Report "Wiltshire's Critical Species" March 2023 and the incidence of species at risk in this area.

There are important colonies of Lesser Horseshoe and Horseshoe Bats at the nearby Park Lane Quarry and the wider landscape surrounding the proposed site is of international importance for bats. Lesser Horseshoe Bats fly an average of 2km from roosts during summer and as these bats have a clear preference for meadows, riparian woodland, stone walls, tree lines, deciduous woodland and tall hedgerows, their habitat would be at grave danger from the proposed development. In addition, the Drews Pond Wood Direct Migration Route passes directly over the proposed site. The noise and vibration from the proposed batteries will also have a very negative impact on this species.

Buttonhole Wood is also nearby which contains an especially rich and biodiverse area, with a beautiful water course teeming with wildlife. The area is famous for being one of the remaining habitats of the rare Bath Asparagus plant - *Ornithogalum Pyrenaicum* - which it is believed was originally introduced to the area two thousand years ago by the Romans. There are a large number of mature trees on and around the site some of which are protected.

With a huge impact on wildlife/biodiversity, how can we possibly believe any Biodiversity Net Gain is realistic and therefore we strongly object to the proposal.

16. Wellbeing

The area is currently enjoyed by walkers, local residents, and those travelling from further afield. The development would turn a pleasant and rural area into an industrialised area protected by CCTV cameras, motion sensor lights, and high fencing with warning signs, which are far from welcoming to those who currently benefit from the quiet and unspoilt public access pathways and bridleways.

In summary as there will be a significant negative impact to the amenity of local residents and visitors, which will in turn impact on wellbeing, we strongly object.

17. Not Green

Battery storage systems are high carbon in production and we note that vast quantities of water are needed in mineral extraction and raw materials and components crisscross the globe. We also note that such systems are highly damaging to the environment, involving the mining of rare minerals and metals, often in inhumane conditions. According to the Wall Street Journal, mineral battery mining and production are worse for the climate than the production of fossil fuel. Lithium batteries are extremely sensitive to high temperatures and inherently flammable. These fires generate toxic gases, quickly spread and are hard to put out, causing a lot of damage. Attempts to extinguish battery fires involve a high volume of water which can contaminate water supply and land over a wide area. What will happen to the waste material and redundant equipment at the end of the life of the site?

In summary it is misleading to categorise battery storage as renewable or green and we strongly object on that basis.

18. Size and Location of the Development

The very large size of the proposed development is totally inappropriate. It will be one of the largest in the nation and possibly in the whole of Europe.

The visual impact of such a huge industrial battery storage site would fundamentally change the tranquil character of the area and therefore we strongly object.

19. No Benefit to Local Community

The proposed development won't benefit the local community. The power generated by the batteries will go straight to the national grid, no doubt exploiting opportunities for commercial gain from fluctuating wholesale prices – this will not be a source of cheap electricity for people living in the vicinity. Residents living adjacent to the site will have a significant adverse visual impact from the site, whilst there will also be a loss of the rural amenity of the extensive open views. There will be considerable disruption during the construction phase.

We strongly object.

20. House Values in the Villages

House sales are already blighted by the proposed scheme and house prices, particularly in the village of Whitley, and are expected to fall further. At least three house sales have already fallen through as a result of the application to build the battery storage area. Given the pre-existing flood risk, and the threat of water contamination from this proposed scheme, household insurance premiums will escalate dramatically and some properties may become uninsurable.

There is no proposal for any compensation for such damage and we strongly object.

21. Economy and Effectiveness

A remote battery storage site will necessitate the duplication of equipment (electronic controls, and a power transformer) and will require rectifiers to convert the AC from the link into DC for storage.

On the grounds of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, and to minimise the environmental impact, we submit that battery storage should be as close to the point of generation as possible and therefore we strongly object.

22. Cumulative Environmental Effects

There are a significant number of other renewable schemes in the area either complete, approved, or planned. This additional proposed scheme will lead to the village of Whitley being almost completely surrounded, exacerbating the issues identified elsewhere in this paper. The map at Annex B (page 16) shows some of those schemes with the Whitley scheme roughly superimposed in red. There is already a surplus of renewable energy generation in Wiltshire, and the county has already met climate change targets.

Enough is enough and we strongly object.

23. Proportionality

This area of Wiltshire has already delivered more than its fair share (see James Gray MP Blog) – of the top 10 solar sites in the UK, 8 are in Wiltshire. Initial indications are, that if the project is built, this could

be the largest Battery Storage facility in Europe. Also note new Solar Farms at Wicks Farm, Atworth, between Shaw Hill and Broughton Gifford and battery storage behind the Golf Club.

An additional development such as this is wholly unacceptable and therefore we strongly object.

24. Alternative Sites

We submit that there are alternative and suitable brownfield sites that could accommodate an appropriately sized battery storage facility, and that sites such as these should be fully evaluated before any greenfield site is selected. Brownfield site selection should not be constrained by substation capacity as most substations, which do not have the necessary capacity, could provide it with investment.

There are a multitude of sites that could be considered including one of the enormous disused stone quarries (mines) around the Corsham area. Whilst we would expect such a site to have some engineering challenges, we are confident that those could be overcome as they were firstly during WWII and up to more recent times too, especially given the expected duration of the project. Such an approach might also provide enhanced security, improved resilience of important infrastructure, battery longevity, mitigation of fire risk and other, environmental benefits, and, of course, leaving fertile agricultural land available for food production and security.

Other brownfield sites that maybe suitable include the site on the North side of Westlands Lane near the sub-station that is currently earmarked for a Solar Farm on the basis that site may soon become brownfield, and on or near several suitable sites along the route of, and north, of the M4. We understand RAF Colerne is due to be vacated soon and this might also offer a suitable location. We also note that the facility could be based at the Cooper Tires brownfield site in Melksham where batteries could be housed in the redundant industrial buildings, and whilst there might be some constraints due to location, the site should nevertheless be fully evaluated. Finally, we submit that, rather than accumulating the entire battery capacity at one location, that capacity could be dispersed along the cable runs so that no single community is exposed to some of the issues set out in this letter.

On the basis that there are brownfield alternative sites in the region, we strongly object to the selection of the Whitley greenfield site.

25. Security

Given the likely value of the battery assets and the Health and Safety risk connected with them including electric shock, fire, chemicals etc, we assume some level of security will be provided consistent with other battery sites in the area. We assume that measure might include high security fencing, alarms, CCTV, motion sensors and a Public Address system.

These factors will exacerbate many of the objections set out elsewhere and will have an impact of privacy and quiet enjoyment people might take from the area and therefore we strongly object.

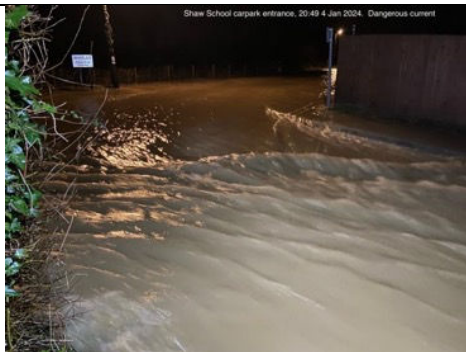
Annex B

Some Additional Supporting Evidence

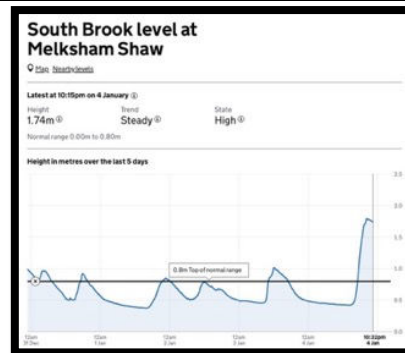
The evidence below is provided to support the objections set out at Annex A. This evidence is a very small subset of what we have available and we are therefore able to augment our evidence base progressively if we deem it necessary.

Flooding

We have a database of flood evidence covering the last 10 years and we also have evidence that predates this period. We recommend that you view the CEG video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4R4Oy6k2yS> and make contact with the Wiltshire Council Drainage Engineer for additional information.



On 4 January 2024 Corsham Road in Whitley was impassable with a strong current of water flowing around the school. This floodwater cascaded into South Brook from the proposed site.



South Brook is well known for being “flashy” and an example of which is shown from the monitoring station on 4 January 2024.



Shaw School on 4 January 2024.



First Lane, Whitley, was flooded on 4 January 2024 in two places. At one point the entire road was at risk of flooding with many households at critical risk.

Heritage

The 2nd Edition of “A Short History of Whitley and Shaw” will provide significant addition content regarding heritage assets in or close to the proposed site. The Rapeseed pictures below show the setting of many of the heritage assets in landscape. Many more pictures are available.



The map shows the Roman Road and Wansdyke which form the northern border of the proposed site. Many of the heritage assets are clearly shown on Top Lane.



This map dated 1808 but believed to be significantly earlier, shows the Roman area exactly in the middle of the proposed site. Heritage assets and wells, fed from the ancient water courses, are also shown.



Northey's Farmhouse (listed) is one of the oldest buildings in Whitley and the site is clearly visible to the rear of the property.



The setting of Whitley House (listed) and adjoining properties and buildings in the landscape with the proposed site clearly shown in the foreground.



The overall setting of Top Lane, a highly important heritage area of Whitley, in the landscape showing the slope over the proposed site towards the heritage asset.



The view of the site from the historically significant cottages on Top Lane.

Landscape

The site (highlighted by the rapeseed crop) is dominant in the local and regional landscapes.



The view from Bowden Hill, Lacock (6km).



The view from Sandridge (5km).



The view from Seend Cleeve (8km).



The view from Berryfield (4.5km).

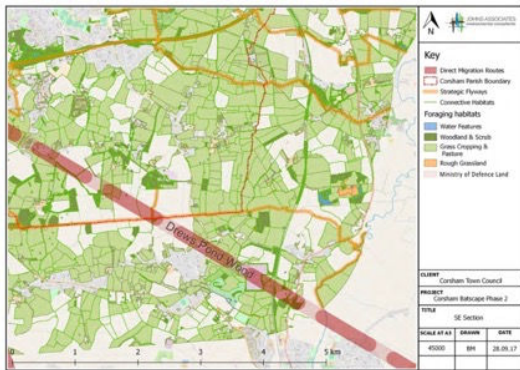
The following pictures are taken from around the local area. Many more are available.





Wildlife & Biodiversity

The following pictures are selected at random to evidence some of the wildlife that has been seen on or near the proposed site.



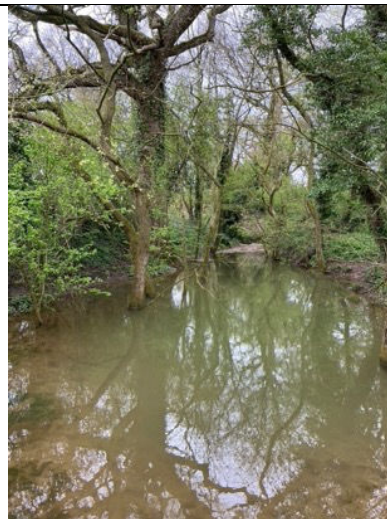
The Dreads Pond Wood Bat Direct Migration Route that passes directly over the proposed site.



A Greater Crested Newt found on a property that adjoins the site.



A pond in a listed house that borders the site that is fed from the water course on the site and is teeming with wildlife.



The pond in Buttonhole Wood on the west of the site.



An owl looking over the site on Top Lane.



A deer next to the site. There are a variety of breeds frequently seen on or near the proposed site.



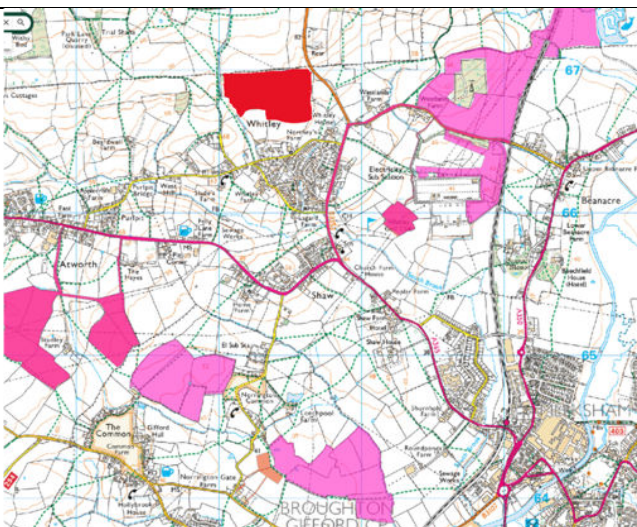
Grazing horses with the site shown behind.



Twilight from a video that includes the sound of owls.

Cumulative Environmental Effects

The map below is reproduced from the Wiltshire Council Mapping Facility to show some of the surrounding schemes and with the proposed Whitley site shown in red.



Security

Part of the Security at a nearby Battery Site which we assume will be similar at Whitley site if the site is developed.



Annex C

Questions Regarding Lime Down Battery Storage at Whitley

Please answer these questions in writing. Where a definitive answer cannot be given, perhaps because of the stage of design, please provide an interim answer based on your experience from the 34 projects worldwide you have been involved with.

In some cases we have received contradictory answers at your events. Where that has happened, we have listed all answers. These answers, and some others of interest, are highlighted in blue.

No	Question	Answer (if in italic, this reflects an answer already received but please confirm the answer)
1.	What type of batteries are proposed?	<i>Not yet decided</i>
2.	How much energy will the battery site store?	<i>250 megawatt hours</i>
3.	How many battery units are proposed?	<i>200</i>
4.	What ancillary equipment will be installed?	
5.	Please provide a full equipment list (type and quantity).	
6.	Will this be the largest solar battery plant in Europe?	
7.	If not, how does it compare with the top 10?	
8.	What is the weight of each equipment type?	
9.	Will be units be on concrete bases?	<i>Yes</i>
10.	Will there be generators on site (e.g. diesel)?	
11.	Can you confirm the batteries will only be used for storing energy from the solar arrays?	<i>A1 – Yes</i> <i>A2 – No, they will also be used for taking a charge from the grid</i>
12.	Will the number of units be increased over time?	
13.	What size are the units?	
14.	How does the size of the units compare with a standard ISO container?	
15.	If a mid-life upgrade (or any other upgrade) is part of the overall plan, when is that upgrade expected to be delivered?	
16.	Will there be equipment on site other than the battery containers?	<i>Yes, an agricultural building for the substation</i>
17.	Will the batteries be visible?	<i>Yes</i>
18.	What brownfield sites have you considered?	<i>A1 – None</i> <i>A2 – Some from WC's list of brownfield sites</i>
19.	Have you considered the underground workings in the area?	<i>We haven't done any surveys.</i>
20.	Have you considered using one of the many disused RAF bases?	
21.	Has the site been surveyed for suitability?	<i>A1 – Yes</i> <i>A2 - No</i>
22.	Why can't the equipment go underground? There are many large disused quarries in the area that could accommodate this project.	
23.	Why can't the facility be located in an area where noise pollution is less of an issue (e.g. close to the M4)?	

24.	What is the minimum required distance between battery related equipment and residential properties?	
25.	How will you mitigate for light for the properties closest to the site?	
26.	How will you mitigate for vibration for the properties closest to the site?	
27.	Is the Whitley Site a good option?	<i>No, not really – that’s why there are two options.</i>
28.	Do you think it’s a suitable site?	<i>Not really, its close to a lot of houses.</i>
29.	How will cables come into the site?	
30.	How will you get power to the sub-station?	
31.	Will you terrace the site?	<i>Possibly</i>
32.	Will you level the site?	<i>Possibly</i>
33.	Why has this site been chosen as an option?	<i>Because its available</i>
34.	Will only one battery site go ahead?	<i>Yes</i>
35.	Will the land be leased?	<i>A1 – Yes</i> <i>A2 – Probably</i> <i>A3 – No, it will be purchased</i>
36.	How long will the site operate for?	<i>A1 – 40 years</i> <i>A2 – 60 years</i>
37.	Is the battery storage unit a permanent fixture?	<i>No, it will be there for 60 years.</i>
38.	Will there be a security fence?	<i>Yes</i>
39.	Will there be security lighting?	<i>Yes</i>
40.	Will there be warning signs?	
41.	Will there be CCTV?	
42.	What will happen at the end of the life of the site?	
43.	How will the site be decommissioned?	
44.	Will the scheme affect house prices?	
45.	If so, will residents be compensated?	
46.	What is the size of the site in acres?	
47.	How many staff will be employed on the site during construction?	
48.	How many staff will be employed on site when the scheme is operational?	
49.	How will you deal with drainage?	
50.	Will the site be screened?	
51.	If so how?	
52.	How much water runoff will there be from units?	
53.	How much water runoff will there be from bases?	
54.	What will happen to the waste on decommissioning?	
55.	Why Wiltshire when there are so many other projects here?	
56.	Will the site boundary be extended over time?	
57.	Do you plan to terrace the site?	
58.	Will you remove any trees?	
59.	Will you remove any hedgerows?	
60.	Will you be widening the roads leading to the site?	

61.	How much extra traffic will be required when the site is running?	
62.	Would you like to live near a site like this?	<i>Maybe if I could not see or hear it.</i>
63.	Have you visited the site yet?	<i>No</i>
64.	Regarding the water and flooding issues, have you visited the site yet?	<i>No</i>
65.	Do you intend to visit to investigate the water issues?	<i>Yes</i>
66.	When do you intend to do that visit?	<i>In the summer.</i>
67.	When it is dry?	<i>Yes</i>
68.	What happens to the end of the life span of the batteries?	<i>I don't know, I'd have to ask someone else – I assume some of lithium might be recycled.</i>
69.	Would you set in place a Decommissioning Bond?	
70.	If so what type of bond would that be?	
71.	How would the performance of such a bond be guaranteed?	
72.	How will that guarantee be effective 40-60 years into the future?	
73.	Would a bond cover any decontamination of the site?	
74.	Would a bond address contamination on other sites caused by the facility (e.g. adjacent/nearby land)?	
75.	On page 10 of the Consultation Leaflet it says "the earliest construction would start is 2027". On page 11 it says that the anticipated start of construction is Q1 2025. Which is correct?	
76.	How long would you expect the construction phase to last?	
77.	What is your planning assumption for the life of the facility?	
78.	Would you expect the life of the facility to be extended, such as by the installation of upgraded equipment?	
79.	Do you have any options on other land in the area, adjacent or not, that might provide for future expansion?	
80.	How long will the construction last?	
81.	How many local people will the construction employ?	
82.	How many non-local people will be the construction employ	
83.	Where exactly do you propose to deliver BNG in Whitely?	
84.	How long would planted screening take to become effective?	<i>Approx. 10 years</i>
85.	Will the site have an industrial appearance pending effective screening?	<i>Yes</i>
86.	How long will the construction phase last?	<i>A1 - 2 years</i> <i>A2 - 18 months</i>
87.	What will the effect of screening be on vibration and light?	<i>That needs to be reviewed in due course</i>
88.	Will you select a battery site before the DCO application is made?	<i>Yes</i>
89.	When will you make a decision on battery site selection?	<i>September 2024</i>
90.	What will be the Transport Route?	
91.	Why not connect at Minety	<i>There is no capacity</i>
92.	Could additional capacity be provided at Minety	<i>Don't know</i>
93.	Has a flood risk assessment been carried out?	<i>Not yet</i>
94.	Will the land be purchased?	<i>A1 – Yes</i> <i>A2 – No, it will be leased</i>
95.	Why do you have two options for a battery site?	<i>In case one does not get planning permission</i>

96.	How do the two sites compare?	<i>The Whitley site would be more expensive to develop as it is sloped and the land would need to be flat for the batteries, so the slope does make it more difficult</i>
97.	Is the other site residential	<i>Not really. There are some houses but only a few, not like here</i>
98.	Do you think (Whitley) is a suitable site?	<i>No, not really</i>
99.	Will there be an increase in traffic?	<i>No, the entrance will be on the A350</i>
100.	What is the noise output level of ancillary equipment?	
101.	What is the cumulative frequency range of all the equipment?	
102.	What is the cumulative noise output of the site?	
103.	What does that cumulative noise output level compare to?	
104.	What does the noise frequency range compare to?	
105.	Are there any medical risks from the sound/frequency levels, for example for people suffering from Tinnitus?	
106.	How will you mitigate for noise for the properties closest to the site?	
107.	How will you deal with noise?	
108.	How much noise will be generated during construction?	
109.	What will the level of noise be?	<i>A1 – 30 dBA per unit</i> <i>A2 – 65 dBA per unit</i> <i>A3 – higher than 65 dBA per unit on average to take account of other equipment on site</i>
110.	Is there a fire risk?	
111.	How will fire risk be mitigated?	
112.	Would smoke from any fire at the site be toxic?	
113.	Have the Fire Service been consulted?	
114.	Will the Fire Service be a consultee?	
115.	How would local residents, impacted by an adverse event such as a fire, be compensated for loss of property or contamination of land and water supply?	
116.	Is there a risk the equipment could have an impact on medical equipment, such as pacemakers?	
117.	What H&S risks are there?	<i>A1 – There will be a risk assessment and the fire service will devise a plan to deal with any fire.</i> <i>A2 – a fire would cause a significant plum of toxic smoke to disperse across local villages</i>
118.	What will the transport plan look like?	
119.	How will you deliver Biodiversity Net Gain?	
120.	How will you protect wildlife/trees/plants etc?	

121.	How is the project being financed?	
122.	We note the scheme is being delivered by an international group. Which country will receive the profit and any other commercial/economic benefits?	
123.	How much profit will the scheme generate pa?	
124.	Can we see the financial model?	
125.	Can we see the business case?	
126.	Do you have any political support for the scheme and if so from whom?	
127.	What method will you use to assess feedback?	
128.	Do you expect to receive any grants?	
129.	How long has Lanpro been involved in the scheme?	
130.	Will you weight consultation feedback in your site assessment?	
131.	If so how?	
132.	Will you provide us with a copy of your analysis of the consultation feedback?	
133.	How would any community benefit be guaranteed over the life of the scheme?	
134.	Over the 34 projects you have delivered across the world, what is the average financial value of community benefit provided?	
135.	Do you expect the project to receive subsidies?	
136.	Please provided details of the company structure that will deliver the project.	
137.	Please provide details of the company structure that will run the facility.	
138.	Please provide details regarding how the liability of the developer and operator will be maintained for the next 40 years and/or the life of the project.	
139.	How long will the DCO process take?	
140.	Will the Parish Council be a consultee when the DCO process is underway?	<i>Don't know</i>
141.	When will the DCO process start?	
142.	Will members of the public be invited to comment on the DCO application	<i>Yes</i>
143.	How long will the DCO application process take?	
144.	Will Wiltshire Council be a consultee when the DCO process is underway?	<i>Yes</i>
145.	Please set out the key stages of the DCO process including rights of appeal.	
146.	How do you assess the green credentials of the scheme?	
147.	Are you aware of site heritage?	<i>A1 – Yes</i> <i>A2 - No</i>
148.	What about the heritage issues around the site?	<i>Even if its ugly and noisy, surely finding out about the Roman history next to your house is a positive selling point?</i>
149.	How will you deal with archaeology etc?	
150.	If the community do not want the scheme, will you proceed anyway if approved by the SofS?	

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Lorraine McRandle

From: Teresa Strange
Sent: 26 April 2024 11:18
To: Lorraine McRandle
Subject: FW: Lime Down Solar

From: Kirsty Gilby <kgilby@corsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 26 April 2024 10:28
To: Teresa Strange <clerk@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk>; David Martin <dmartin@corsham.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Lime Down Solar

Hi Teresa

As you know the consultation was considered at Corsham's Council (Planning) Meeting on Wednesday. An extract from the draft minutes is below:

PL 130/23 Lime Down Solar Park

There is a public consultation on Lime Down Solar Park from 14 March – 26 April. Island Green Power is developing proposals for a new solar park and battery energy storage located in North Wiltshire. Further details of the proposal are available – www.limedownsolar.co.uk

Resolved:

- i *to respond to the current consultation stating that whilst the Town Council is broadly supportive of climate resilience measures, there are many concerns in relation to this proposal especially the siting of a battery storage facility at Whitley and the cabling which could be routed through our Parish.*
- ii *to continue to press for a pre-application meeting.*

They have agreed to accept more detailed comments from us following the pre-meeting, which we hope will take place on 15 May.

Kind regards

Kirsty

Mrs Kirsty Gilby
Finance and Planning Officer
Corsham Town Council



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From: Teresa Strange <clerk@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk>

Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 1:11 PM

To: David Martin <dmartin@corsham.gov.uk>

Cc: Kirsty Gilby <kgilby@corsham.gov.uk>

Subject: FW: Lime Down Solar

Hi David

Just to confirm that these draft minutes were approved last night by Full Council – this includes the comments to be submitted to Lime Down’s consultation.

We had put the community benefit item on the agenda last night, and that was an interesting stance:
Here is what they resolved:

As the parish council strongly objects to the proposed battery storage facility north of Top Lane, Whitley and a decision on whether this site will be included in the Development Consent Order (DCO) application, which will not be made until circa September 2024, this council do not wish to provide feedback on community benefit.

The feeling was that they wanted to keep their powder dry, and it was too premature to bring forward requests at this point, which might help the applicants “improve” their application.

Kind regards

Teresa

From: Teresa Strange

Sent: 22 April 2024 12:35

To: David Martin <dmartin@corsham.gov.uk>

Cc: Kirsty Gilby <kgilby@corsham.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Lime Down Solar

Hi David

Please see draft minutes of the Melksham Without Planning Committee of 8th April.

There is a whole section on Lime Down, including notes from our meeting with them, and then the comments that are to be submitted to the public consultation.

These are for approval tonight, but am sending now as aware you are considering on Weds.

Hope they are useful,

With kind regards, Teresa

Teresa Strange
Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Melksham Without Parish Council
First Floor
Melksham Community Campus
Market Place, Melksham
Wiltshire, SN12 6ES
01225 705700
www.melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk

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Want to keep in touch?

Follow us on facebook: Melksham Without Parish Council or Teresa Strange (Clerk) for additional community news

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From: David Martin <dmartin@corsham.gov.uk>
Sent: 15 April 2024 10:52
To: Teresa Strange <clerk@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk>
Cc: Kirsty Gilby <kgilby@corsham.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Lime Down Solar

Hi Teresa,

At the public consultation event at the Town Hall last week, I asked Lime Down for a meeting with our Council. This has not been arranged yet. We will also put an item on our Council (Planning) agenda for 24 April.

I would appreciate a copy of your notes/minutes.

All the best
Dave

David J Martin
Chief Executive
Corsham Town Council
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From: Teresa Strange <clerk@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk>

Sent: Friday, April 12, 2024 4:51 PM

To: David Martin <dmartin@corsham.gov.uk>

Subject: Lime Down Solar

Hi David

Hope you are well.....

Members of Melksham Without PC have asked me if Corsham Town Council have a position/view on the proposals for the Lime Down Solar proposals, and if so, if you were able to share it.

Happy to share the view of Melksham Without Parish Council to Corsham TC – they strongly object and I can send the detailed comments when they have been typed up.

Have a good weekend,

All the best, Teresa

Teresa Strange

Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

Melksham Without Parish Council

First Floor

Melksham Community Campus

Market Place, Melksham

Wiltshire, SN12 6ES

01225 705700

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