

Byers Gill Solar

Confirmation of Oral Comments & Questions raised by Sean Anderson, Bishopton Resident at the Open Floor Hearing 2 (OFH2) – 24th July 2024

1.0 Design:

Has a full Design Risk Assessment been carried out?

It is generally accepted that the hierarchy of Risk Management is as follows:

- Identify Risk
- Determine the Consequence of Risk (eg: Injury/Fatality – particular equestrian!)
- Likelihood of Risk
- Can the Risk be avoided?
- Can the Risk be mitigated?
- Mitigation measures
- Residual Risk

I first brought the matter of risk to the Applicant's attention when we first met in November 2022

I specifically raised the matter of risks of the proposed development to my family/our riders/our horses and the need for a Design Risk Assessment with the Applicant on 24th May 2023 (Public Meeting)

I have yet to see a response in the Design.

Has one been carried out?

Will it be made public?

This assessment of the Design at every step of the process is vital – it cannot be left until the end of the Examination Process, that would be extremely irresponsible!

2.0 Integrity:

In the process ie; Consultation/Engagement/Examination

- In November/December 2022 – initial contact was made with Defra (Therese Coffey) & Levelling Up, Housing, Communities (Michael Gove) to seek some engagement – Poor/No Response!
- The Consultation Process has been misrepresented and is considered disingenuous:
 - Accessibility to documents/meetings has been deliberately difficult!
 - There has been no genuine transparency of how the Consultation Feedback Questionnaires (16th June 2023 – 500+) informed the design.
 - The 'You Said/We Did' document provided misrepresentative reasoning for changes eg: Mill Lane fields
 - Community Benefits – which member (singular!) has been consulted on the community benefits?
 - Biodiversity Benefits – which local source of knowledge has been consulted on Biodiversity Benefits?
 - Hiding behind Desktop Studies

- The Applicant's Landscape and Visual illustrations are not comprehensive and therefore misleading, eg; views looking from the school towards Downland Farm, do not provide for an opposing view. The Applicant argued at ISH1 that BVAG's proposal for the ExA Team to visit Downland Farm to get a perspective of this view, was unnecessary as it was from a private property!
- Panel heights – the Applicant confirmed at ISH1 that panel height would be 3.5m. At the very same hearing (ISH1) the Applicant provided an image of an RWE project to suggest what the panels would look like (ref: Components of Byers Gill Solar, Issue Specific Hearing 23 July 2024, page 3) – This does not appear to be 3.5m!
- For clarity, can the Applicant confirm the height of the panels in the image, and provide a scale alongside to demonstrate what 3.5m height panel would look like?
- BVAG requested a meeting after the submission of the Consultation Period – the Applicant refused, suggesting that might be possible once the application had been submitted and accepted by NSIP.
- The Applicant did agree to a meeting with Bishopton Parish Council (December 2023) – who in turn invited several BVAG Representatives. At that meeting, the Applicant was asked if they would 'pause' the process to have serious and genuine discussions with the Residents with a view to establishing what would be acceptable – this was not accepted!
- There has never been a genuine attempt at sincere consultation/engagement with the Local Community – a community that will have to live with the consequences of the apparent misrepresentations of the Applicant and its advisors. I'm sure that the Community would still welcome genuine and sincere consultation/engagement.
- The Applicant suggests that the residents will benefit from the development by the provision of a Community Fund, which is suggested to be in the region of £1.5m. Over 40 years, spread between the local public bodies would represent a few thousand £, maybe £5k - £6k per village!), the residents are not interested in being 'bought off' for a few pennies! - they are interested in how they can live their lives! (for most of us – the rest of our lives!)
- Concerns have been raised previously that although the Applicant could not find the time to meet with BVAG or the Community, a key representative could find time to share a platform with a senior member of NSIP at a conference on Solar Farms, at or about the time the Application was accepted by NSIP. Was this just a coincidence?

For the reasons above, there are concerns about how the application has been conducted thus far and it is vitally important that the ExA ensures that the process is carried out with transparency and integrity, otherwise the development may be unfairly inflicted upon residents of the affected area.