

# NEWBALD PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF NEWBALD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 7PM IN NEWBALD VILLAGE HALL

**Present:** Councillors G. Steward (Chairman) B. O’Sullivan (Vice Chairman), S. Dongray-Burke, J. Howard, G. Lewis, S. Milner, E. Openshaw, B. Smith, D. Stewart.

**In attendance:** Suzanne Smith (Clerk to the Council), Ben George (Representing BACB Renewables)

### 1. PUBLIC FORUM – none

### 2. APOLOGIES

Cllr. J. Barrett – shielding

Tony Maione, BACB Renewables – self isolating

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1) **Declarations of Interest** – none

2) **Dispensations** - none

### 4. NEWBALD COMMUNITY RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT

With the help of Ben George who was representing BACB Renewables, Members considered progress to date on the feasibility study.

Members expressed their concerns that too much time had been spent on things superfluous to the feasibility study, such as the website, potential wind turbine contracts, looking at a wider remit for Newbald Energy Company etc.

Members felt that the feasibility study should be brought back to basics and focus very specifically on the figures – predicted costs and likely returns, plus establishing how much community support there is for the project.

Ben said that figures had been available since before the grant application for the feasibility study had been completed and that the figures were gradually being refined based on new information received. The estimated cost of setting up the renewable energy scheme, should it go ahead, is £4.7 million. Up to 50% of those costs would be covered by grants and the other half would have to be raised by crowdfunding.

They were working on the assumption that 200 homes would choose to purchase energy through the Newbald energy scheme and that they would be using 15kwh each per day. The energy would be sold to residents at a reduced rate of about 10p pkwh, compared to a normal average of about 15p pkwh.

Excess energy could also be sold to other villages or ERYC under a sleeving arrangement. Also the National Grid would purchase any available energy at 5p pkwh.

Contingency is being built into the feasibility study to allow for purchasing some power from the grid in the event of the turbine breaking down or there not being enough wind to drive it round.

Three potential sites for the wind turbine are under consideration with the landowner being actively interested.

People would have the opportunity to invest in the new energy scheme, with a good potential for return on investment.

The various concerns/matters raised by Members of the Council were as follows:

- 1) The survey needs to be very short and focused very specifically on the possibility of saving money on electricity and whether an additional turbine would be acceptable to residents. People would not fill it in otherwise.
- 2) Doubts were raised about whether Newbald Energy Company should be set up as a Community Interest Company and, if it is, who would be happy to be the Directors, especially if the roles were unpaid. (It was acknowledged that they could be paid which would make them easier to fill).
- 3) Some Members voiced concerns about the financial liability that the Parish Council could be taking on if the project went ahead.
- 4) Questions were raised about whether the Parish Council needed to spend the full £30,000 on the feasibility study, feeling that it could be done for less and/or stopped if an insurmountable hurdle was reached, such as lack of community support. Others felt that as the money had been secured in the form of a grant, the feasibility study should be completed.

Reassurance was provided that, should the feasibility study show that the project was viable, the Parish Council would not need to be involved going forward.

It was agreed that the focus should at this moment in time be on getting a mutually agreed simple succinct survey out to the village both in printed format and via links from email/social media to survey monkey.

NPC is currently putting together its Autumn newsletter and that will include an article about the renewable energy project and encourage people to complete the survey.

BACB was also asked to focus in and supply figures relating to equipment, possible wind turbine sites, possible battery locations and energy transfer/supply etc.