TUTBURY PARISH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Charity Office, Duke Street, Tutbury on Wednesday 30 July 2014.

Those present were: Cllrs F Crossley (chairman) P Faulks, W Crossley, D Morris, Ms M Guest, A Allen, P Steadman, T Spencer Smith, G Wright; Mr J Kelly and Mr J Thompstone from Push Energy, in attendance S Powell Clerk.

61/1.0 APOLOGIES

1.1 There were no apologies, however, Peter Faulks the newly co-opted councillor was welcomed to the meeting.

62/2.0 PLANNING MATTERS – CONSIDERATION OF AN APPLICATION FOR A SOLAR FARM OFF LODGE HILL AND A MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM PUSH ENERGY

2.1 The chairman invited Jonathan Thompstone and Jamie Kelly to from Push Energy to join the meeting.

2.2 It was explained that prior to the formal application being made to ESBC a consultation process was initiated and the feedback from it resulted in the size of the farm being reduced from 80 to 56 acres. How the farm would be built, accessed, maintained and landscaped was outlined. Mr Kelly stated that one of the key criteria in determining suitable sites was the availability at suitable connection to the electricity grid. Such a connection was available on Lodge Hill. After further information on the project was provided by Messrs Kelly & Thompstone. The chairman invited questions from members.

2.3 Cllr Morris asked how the consultation had been carried out. The nature of the consultation was explained; a public meeting was held and local property owners contacted; leaflets were also made available.

2.4 The question was raised if a 'live' planning application existed with a decision by the PC needed at the meeting. It was confirmed that a decision was required to provide a response within ESBC's consultation period. Members were advised that pre-application advice had been sought from planning officers at ESBC.

2.5 Cllr W Crossley referred the borough council's emerging local plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and asked whether the proposal fitted in with them as references in both documents had regard to the protection of the countryside and valuable 3a grade agricultural land,

2.6 Cllr Spencer-Smith asked what the life of the array was. Mr Kelly stated that it was 25 years with a planning condition to remove it at the end of this period.

2.7 When asked why a brown field site had not been chosen, Mr Kelly explained that it was the availability of a suitable electricity cable in Lodge Hill that made the project feasible. The planning submission however, only contained summary information on the availability of brown field sites with limited details of alternative locations. After further discussions about security, fencing and landscaping. The chairman thanked Mr Kelly and Mr Thompstone for attending the meeting.

2.8 Cllr Ms Guest felt that renewable energy would be needed in the future and looked to the benefits that the proposal would bring.

2.9 The view was expressed that the proposal had good intensions but was located in the wrong place.

2.10 After further discussions the following proposal was put to the meeting. That the council object to the proposal on the following grounds.

1 The proposal would cause a significant loss of countryside and agricultural land.

2 The application was not supported by detailed evidence that alternatives on brown field sites had been fully investigated as recommended in government advice.

The proposition was carried by a majority decision.

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm.