

GREAT WRATTING PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of Great Wratting Parish Council held at 6 pm on Thursday 19th October 2023 at the Red Lion, School Road, Great Wratting CB9 7HA

Present: Cllrs Terry Holloway (Chair), Margaret May (Vice Chair), Dawn Fisk, Barry Judge and Stuart Kingsbury

Absent: Cllr Tim Hayes

In attendance: 4 members of the public
District Cllr Indy Wijenayaka
Richard Bowler (Parish Clerk)

Public forum

Comments and observations from members of the public

Members of the public voiced their concerns about the proposal for an anaerobic digester to be installed in Withersfield parish. Specific issues mentioned included HGVs and other traffic which the site would generate, the environmental impact, the visual effect it would have on the entrance to Haverhill, and the impact which traffic and smells from the site would have on Great Wratting in particular.

MINUTES

1. **Apologies for absence**

To accept any apologies, with reasons for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Hayes (work commitment)

2. **Members' declarations of interest**

To receive members' declarations of interest in items on the agenda

None

3. **Planning**

Ref: SCC/0045/23SE

Location: Land to the north of Spring Grove Farm, Withersfield CB9 7SW

Application: Construction and operation of an anaerobic digestion facility, associated infrastructure and new access road, connecting pipeline and covered digestate lagoons

Applicant: Mr Charlie Lywood / Acorn Bioenergy Ltd

Cllr May reported on a public meeting in Withersfield about the proposal which she had attended. She said that the company behind the project, the MP and Thurlow Estate had all been invited to the meeting but none of them had attended.

Issues raised at the meeting included: the fact that the land which the plant would be on was Grade 2 agricultural land; why that site had been chosen; the impact of extra traffic on local roads; the visual impact which 24-hour lighting would have on the gateway to Haverhill; the flaring tower which would be used in emergencies; the impact on the nearby Epicentre and the possibility of jobs being lost if businesses moved away from there as a result of the development; potential leaching into waterways; the generation of particulates as part of the process; inconsistencies within the planning application and the lack of clarity on details relating to vehicle movements.

Cllr Holloway said that Thurlow Estate had told him that although the site was Grade 2 agricultural land it was of poor quality and was not needed by the estate.

AGREED unanimously to object to the application (*see Appendix A*)

4. **Closure of meeting**

There being no other business the Chair closed the meeting at 6.59 p.m.

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Appendix A

Planning application SCC/0045/23SE

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Applicant: Mr Charlie Lywood / Acorn Bioenergy Ltd

Comment submitted to Suffolk County Council on 25th October 2023

Great Wrating Parish Council has noted the contents of the planning application for an anaerobic digester to be installed on the edge of Haverhill, and is mindful of the acute local opposition to this development, particularly from the village of Withersfield, and from the Arboretum and Epicentre adjacent to the site.

We have studied the environmental statements which form part of the application and we question whether the perceived environmental benefits are offset by the environmental impact of the construction itself, and the exceptionally high number of vehicle movements predicted once the facility has been completed. We request greater clarity and quantification about this, please.

However, we are extremely concerned about the predicted high level of HGV and additional farm vehicle movements in and out of the facility, which are stated to be approaching 10,000 each year. There is scant detail about which roads will be used to access the planned facility. We require clarity about the additional traffic movements in and around the local area which will have a serious and deleterious impact upon the conservation village of Great Wrating.

The road between Great Wrating and Withersfield is designated as a “Quiet Lane”, is already designated as unsuitable for HGVs, and is therefore wholly unsuitable for use by any vehicles serving the anaerobic digester. Notwithstanding the HGV restrictions and Quiet Lane notices, we anticipate that this road will be used by heavy vehicles associated with the construction and use of this planned facility, which is totally unacceptable.

In conclusion, we strongly object to the application and trust you will provide, as requested above, substantive detail on environmental impact of the activity and the HGV movements.