

# MINSTER PARISH COUNCIL



The Parish Office  
John Spanton Sports Pavilion  
St Mildreds Road  
Minster-in-Thanel  
Ramsgate  
Kent CT12 4DE

Tel: 01843 821339  
Email: [clerk@minsterparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@minsterparishcouncil.org.uk)  
20<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Clerk to the Council: Kyla Lamb - MAAT

## PLANNING, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Sir or Madam,

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Planning, Highways and Transportation Committee which will be held at the John Spanton Sports Pavilion, St Mildreds Road, Minster at **7.p.m. on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024**, for the purpose of considering and passing such Resolution or Resolutions as may be deemed necessary or desirable with respect to the matters mentioned in the agenda.

### Clerk to the Council

**NOTE: Residents and members of the public are cordially invited to attend the meeting of the Committee.**

## AGENDA

### 1. APOLOGIES

To receive apologies for absence, if any.

### 2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To register any new interests, or deregistration, by Members.



### **3. MINUTES**

To approve the minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transportation Committee meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024 **(Appendix A)**.

### **4. MATTERS ARISING**

To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

### **5. SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS - HERONSBROOK SITE, EDEN GROVE AND HOO FARM**

The Clerk will update members with any information received since the last meeting.

### **6. HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Following the Committees meeting with Lezanne Cesar (Kent Highways Community Engagement Officer) via teams the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) has been updated. The Clerk will update members on the follow up with Ms Cesar.  
**(Updated HIP emailed)**

### **7. DISCUSSION REGARDING MINSTER PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSES TO THANET DISTRICT COUNCIL AND DECISIONS**

The Chairman will update members following the meeting held with Iain Livingstone (TDC Planning applications Manager)

### **8. BARRATT DAVID WILSON HOMES – LAND WEST OF TOTHILL STREET DEVELOPMENT**

The Chairman will update members on any information received since the last meeting.

### **9. OL/TH/23/1404 - Land On The North Side Of Foxborough Lane RAMSGATE Outline planning application for the erection of up to 115 dwellings following demolition of 97 Tothill Street with all matters reserved except for access.**

The Chairman will update members on any information received since the last meeting.

### **10. EDEN GROVE – SUNNINGDALE DEVELOPMENT**

The Chairman will update members on any information received since the last meeting.

### **11. STREETWORKS**

To receive any updates on works.

### **12. SEALINK – NATIONAL GRID**

To receive any updates on consultations and information on the project.



### 13. MANSTON AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER

The Chairman will update Members with the current position with the DCO.

### 14. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

To consider those planning applications received since the last meeting and in accordance with the decision taken by Council at its meeting on 7 August 2007 (Minute No. 78) to submit observations to the Thanet District Council thereon.

#### **Applications for ratification- comments already sent**

#### **F/TH/24/0034 - Construction of a 99.99MW battery storage scheme and associated development (Retrospective)**

Minster Parish Council, having previously submitted an objection to this application, is now submitting this supplementary and most strong **OBJECTION** to sit alongside it (albeit for a retrospective application for something already constructed and completed).

The reason for MPC doing so is that new and fuller information has since come to our attention both in general and with respect to a very recent planning application dismissal for similar within the Swale Borough Council area. The Swale Borough Council planning reference is 23/503812/SUB<sup>1</sup>.

The site is sandwiched between the River Stour on one side and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on the other. Downstream from the site is the Ancient Monument and Grade 1 Listed Building of Richborough Castle and beyond that the ancient Cinque Port of Sandwich with its many river users. The river then flows out to Pegwell Bay which is a RAMSAR site and with a National Nature Reserve and other SSSIs on either side of the estuary entrance with their abundance of natural wildlife.

MPC believes that it is only right and proper to make this objection for the safety of the surrounding inhabitants and the surrounding natural environment for a facility that has been allowed to be completed so far without taking into account many varying potential hazardous risks that have not been fully researched or investigated by both the applicants and the battery storage industry.

The old Richborough Power Station site, now the Richborough Energy Park, is filling up with the NEMO Link Converter Station (complete) and parts of the site (in both TDC and Dover DC areas of responsibility) becoming or approved for BESS (Battery Energy Storage Systems) facilities. There is currently limited UK specific guidance for BESS.

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<sup>1</sup> 23/503812/SUB | Submission of Details to Discharge Requirement 3 of The Cleve Hill Solar Park Order 2020 - Battery Safety, Phase 2 | Land At Cleve Hill Graveney Kent ME13 9EE



Little or no guidance regarding safety and design has been forthcoming to date from those public services or bodies that could and would be involved if any explosion or injury to a person was to ever happen. If there was to be an explosion and/or death, beyond the local Kent Fire & Rescue Service, the Health & Safety Executive (along with the Police) would be the first to be on the scene and would take control of any investigations.

However, when reviewing Consultees or potential Consultees much is about the application per se but not about potential consequences in the event of an accident/incident with the BESS:

- **Kent Police:** crime prevention
- **KFRS:** will endeavour to provide consultation but no statutory requirement to - but refer to KFRS letter dated 9th October 2023 attached to F/TH/22/0579
- **HSE:** not a consultee - why?
- **Environment Agency:** Flood Risk
- **Natural England:** not able to provide specific advice on this application and therefore has no comment to make on its details - advises Local Planning Authorities to use NE's online tools to assess the impacts

The parts of the Energy Park in question have received a number of applications between 2020 and now – the following is just a short list of those:

- Phase 1 F/TH/20/1467 49.9MW Battery Storage approved 2021
- Phase 2 F/TH/21/0305 71.6MW Battery Storage approved 2021
- Phase 3 F/TH/22/0579 and F/TH/23/1216 249.0MW Battery Storage approved 2022 and 2023 respectively
- The latest one was submitted in January 2024: F/TH/24/0034 seeks approval for amendments to Phase 1 and Phase 2 (and now newly entitled 'Construction of a 99.99MW battery storage scheme and associated development (Retrospective)' and is still open for consultation

Minster Parish Council may have had no objections in the past with the earlier applications (due to not comprehending the potential issues that are now forthcoming) until F/TH/23/1216 (for the 'brownfield' land southeast and northeast of the old wind turbine site (the empty area as can be seen in the photo below)) when we had to submit a supplementary response which was an OBJECTION to that application based on some new information that threw up big question marks over potential safe operations of such battery storage facilities.





It is apparent that even where MPC have added objections or supplementary objections, the TDC Planning Department note those but in the greater scheme of things take little notice, and other consultees haven't considered much beyond what has been directly submitted in the applications.

Most of the submissions by other consultees only appear to consider potential risks from floods and are reliant on the applicants' documentation, with the LPA then to approve various aspects of the applications. Have for any of those schemes (landscaping water run-off, SuDS, etc) ever been submitted, reviewed and approved? Have any environmental permits been obtained if the sites are deemed close enough to the River Stour to require any?

As MPC has previously indicated, there are major concerns regarding run-off from the site due to any fire-fighting materials or cooling fluids used in the event of any battery storage unit fire. Not only should run-off risks be revisited but also percolation of those same materials into the ground (and beyond).

With respect to the battery storage units, not only should a fire be considered but a thermal runaway<sup>2</sup> of the batteries whether from environmental conditions (ambient temperatures, humidity, etc.) or even from the batteries failing as Lithium-ion ones have a tendency to thermal propagation of cell thermal runaway reactions. A thermal event may burn for 8 hours. The layout of the batteries is not in keeping with the recommendations outlined in the KFRS letter of 2023.

A global BESS Failure Event Database exists, with the latest entry being Nov 2023: [https://storagewiki.epri.com/index.php/BESS\\_Failure\\_Event\\_Database](https://storagewiki.epri.com/index.php/BESS_Failure_Event_Database)

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<sup>2</sup> Thermal runaway: the condition when an electro-chemical cell increases its temperature through self-heating in an uncontrollable fashion and progresses when the cell's heat generation is at a higher rate than it can dissipate, potentially leading to off-gassing, fire, or explosion



An organisation called “The Faversham Society” has been instrumental in fighting the Cleve Hill Solar Farm Development Consent Order (DCO) in Swale. Also in recent months an application to discharge Requirement 3 of the Cleve Hill DCO, which is for a 150MW (and up to 350MW) BESS, has seen them use a barrister whose submission has led the Planning Committee of Swale Borough Council to refuse permission in the past few weeks.

In their objections for this BESS, The Faversham Society has used an explosion of a 4-unit BESS in Liverpool in 2020 as an example of the dangers they hold for the unsuspecting. Detail of the report of the incident by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service via a Freedom of Information request can be seen at <https://favershamsociety.org/battery-explosion-and-fire-in-liverpool/>

Some aspects to note from this incident are:

- Being remotely managed and operated led to delays in instigating switch off and electrical safety measures
- Although an automatic fire alarm system was present and actuated due to the ignition of flammable gases inside the BESS unit, it did not prevent the fire or the ‘significant blast event’ (explosion).
- The use of a conventional inert “clean-agent” fire suppression system which blankets the thermal runaway event prevented combustion but allowed major quantities of flammables to build up. When finally mixed with air and ignited this creates a major explosion.
- The explosion occurred prior to the arrival of responding fire crews. This was fortuitous since the explosion potential is a significant risk to emergency responders that has caused life-altering injury to firefighters at fire incidents on international BESS sites, such as Arizona and Beijing
- Once water was applied, the resulting run-off contained Hydrofluoric Acid (HF)<sup>3</sup> – a highly toxic substance which can dissolve concrete and whose fumes can be fatal to life.

So should there be a fire-fighting requirement at the energy park, just imagine how many gallons of water could be used over at least an 8-hour period and that too could be dependent on how many units may need to be cooled – and that run-off and any other chemicals could be percolating into the ground and flowing into the river.

According to the Site Safety Plan the unit layout has been designed for easy maintenance and emergency access, with nominally 3500mm between container sides, and 4000mm between container ends **BUT** this is far less than the minimum recommended spacing between units of 6000mm (ref KFRS letter 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023).

MPC are not opposed to Battery Energy Storage Systems but have very serious health and safety issues with the BESS applications for the energy park. Beyond that are the serious potential environmental impacts that could emanate from the failure

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<sup>3</sup> Refer to this Materials Safety Data Sheet for information regarding HF acid  
<https://www.sigmaaldrich.com/US/en/sds/sigald/339261>





of a BESS system following a fire or explosion? Hence MPC's supplementary **OBJECTION**.

MPC would therefore also urge TDC to

- Consider the information regarding the Swale Borough Council's refusal of the Cleve Hill BESS application which can be seen at <https://favershamsociety.org/latest-on-cleve-hill/> - much of this applies to F/TH/24/0034
- Review all of the previous energy park applications regarding BESS systems – particularly F/TH/22/0579 and F/TH/23/1216 which are the largest ones and have yet to be constructed, although groundworks have been commenced. Are there grounds for permissions to be amended or even withdrawn until satisfactory improvements are made?
- Ensure Risk Assessments for the BESS systems are in place.
- Liaise with DCC similarly regarding the BESS on their area of the energy park.

### **Application(s) for Consideration**

#### **CON/TH/24/0301 - Land North Of Telegraph Hill Industrial Estate Laundry Road RAMSGATE Kent**

Application for approval of Conditions 11 (Landscaping), 13 (Landscape Management Plan) and 17 (Biodiversity Enhancement Measures) attached to Planning Permission F/TH/22/1058 for the erection of a warehouse building for storage and distribution purposes (Use Class B8), provision of associated vehicle parking and change of use of adjoining land to a trailer park to facilitate relocation of existing trailer park

#### **CON/TH/24/0263 - Southern Water Waste Water Treatment Site Jutes Lane Ramsgate Kent CT12 5FH**

Application for approval of Conditions 6 (Archaeology), 15 (Noise Impact Assessment) and 16 (Air Quality) attached to Planning Permission F/TH/23/0170 for the installation of a grid stability facility consisting of synchronous compensators and associated electrical infrastructure, underground cabling, access tracks, drainage, and ancillary infrastructure.

#### **CON/TH/24/0256 - Land North Of Telegraph Hill Industrial Estate Laundry Road RAMSGATE Kent**

Application for approval of Conditions 20 (Foundations Designs) and 23 (Foul and Surface Water Drainage) attached to Planning Permission F/TH/22/1058 for the Erection of a warehouse building for storage and distribution purposes (Use Class B8), provision of associated vehicle parking and change of use of adjoining land to a trailer park to facilitate relocation of existing trailer park

#### **CON/TH/24/0237- Land Between 47 And 49 Rose Gardens Minster RAMSGATE Kent**

Application for approval of Conditions 3 (Foul and Surface Water), 4 (Construction Management Plan) 6 (Landscaping) and 10 (Electric Vehicle Charging Points)



attached to Planning Permission F/TH/23/0983 for the Erection of 2no. two storey, two bedroom semi detached dwellings with associated parking

**FH/TH/24/0051- 9 Fairfield Road Minster RAMSGATE Kent CT12 4AW**

Erection of a single storey rear extension together with 1No. rooflight

**F/TH/23/0497- Land between 44 and 46 Monkton Road, Minster**

Erection of a detached, pitched roof, timber outbuilding (retrospective application) – the description of this application has been amended.

**R/TH/23/1474- Land on the West Side of Tothill Street**

Application for the reserved matters of outline permission OL/TH/18/1488” outline application for the erection of up to 214no. dwellings, cemetery expansion, and associated access, with all other matters reserved” for the approval of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of development within phase 2 (81 No dwelling)  
**(AMENDED)**

**F/TH/23/1475-Land on the West Side of Tothill Street**

Erection of 36 no. dwellings, with vehicular access onto Tothill Street and associated landscaping.

## **15.PLANNING DECISIONS**

The decisions since the last council meeting will be reported.

## **16.ENFORCEMENT ISSUES**

To consider any other enforcement issues that have arisen since the dispatch of the agenda.

## **17.LATE APPLICATIONS**

To consider any late applications that may be received following the dispatch of the agenda.

The above applications can be viewed online at:-

<https://planning.thanet.gov.uk/online-applications/>

