

NEWS

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SILTON WIND FARM PLANNING APPLICATION REFUSED

The application to build six 120m wind turbines at Silton near Gillingham was rebuffed by the Development Control Committee of North Dorset District Council on Thursday 2 July which was minded to refuse the application.

More than 200 people attended a special meeting of the committee at the Olive Bowl conference centre in Gillingham with a further 100 people unable to gain access to the venue because of fire regulations which limited the number allowed in the hall.

The committee heard planning case officer James Lytton-Trevers present the facts of the application before some 22 local people aired their objections to the proposal. Objections were also raised by North Dorset MP Bob Walter, Gillingham Town Council, Silton Parish Meeting and Bourton and Cucklington Parish Councils.

Representations were also made by the Save Our Silton campaign chairman Chris Langham, the Cranborne Chase West Wiltshire and Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Council for the Protection of Rural England who all vehemently opposed the proposal.

Objections ranged from the detrimental effect on the landscape, loss of income to businesses involved with tourism (such as bed and breakfast establishments) and concerns over noise and shadow flicker. Other worries expressed included: human rights issues, health concerns, hazards to low flying aircraft and damage to the local economy.

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Bill Batty-Smith who had to contend with, among other things, a power failure which brought an early coffee break. Cllr Batty-Smith said: "This was always going to be an emotional day with so many people wanting to air their opinions and the oppressive heat did not help but I hope that everyone feels they had an opportunity to say their piece. After nearly six hours of debate the committee was unanimous in its opinion to be minded to refuse the application."

The application had been made by Next Generation Ltd, the parent company of Ecotricity which operates wind farms on several locations across the UK. They were represented by Simon Coles who put the case for wind farms generally and Silton particularly as a suitable site.

Many of the claims made by Next Generation Ltd about the efficiency of the turbines, the noise they make and their safety could not be substantiated and failed to win over the members of the committee.

- more follows -

Silton wind farm planning application refused continued ...

The meeting was held at the Olive Bowl because it was the largest available venue in North Dorset and was relatively close to the proposed site at Silton. Development Control committee meetings are normally held in the Council Chamber at North Dorset District Council but this would not have been large enough to accommodate everyone who expressed an interest in attending.

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For more information contact: Cllr Peter Webb, Leader of North Dorset District Council, on 01258 473631 or the Communications Manager on 01258 484100.