



MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL
Extra Ordinary Meeting
on Monday 18th August 2025 at Leeming Village Hall, Leeming

Parish Councillors:		Cllr M Curry; Cllr F Stead; Cllr O Robinson; Cllr A Bowes; Cllr W Withington; Cllr C Capel; Cllr K Temple	
County Councillor:		Not present	
Clerk / Others:		S Nicholson (Clerk); approx.: 70 Residents.	
Meeting Chaired by: Cllr Curry			
Item ref 25/26	Item Details	Issues	Action
34)	Welcome & Apologies	The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. There were no apologies	Resolved
35)	Public Session	The Chair stated that this was not a question-and-answer session as this had been facilitated at the previous meeting. However, the Chair acknowledged that Enviromena was present, and residents would be allowed a 15-minute period to put their case forward regarding the Planning application that the Parish Councillors would discuss. 1. In 1969 The Highways decided against a flyover over the B6285 because of the danger to children and adults trying to use that way. The road is so narrow and in places there is only a single-track and no pavements. There are blind bends on the roads that have been designated to be used, and accidents have occurred on these roads. At present the company has stated it will employ 150 people meaning 300 more traffic movements along roads which are suitable only for incredibly low traffic usage, without and pedestrians. The amount of noise and air pollution to residents of Exelby and Bedale not to mention the family that will be trapped inside a Solar Farm. How can we / they put cheap energy before human lives? 2. I originally lived in Aiskew but moved to Exelby to enjoy a quiet lifestyle and to be able to walk along the safe public footpaths without fear of injury. The footpath at the bottom of the village is the only safe footpath to walk to Bedale and is to be blocked. The B6285 road out of the village, the only major road out of the village, is quite narrow in places, single track over Flood bridge which is a Grade II listed bridge and is getting busier and certainly not safe to walk. The footpath is used daily by walkers and children which is locally seen as the Exelby local park area.	

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		The government in the 1980 Highways Act S130 states the Protection of public rights with the following statement. - It is the duty of the local highway authority to assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of any highway for which they are the highway authority. I have produced for everyone to see the scale of these panels which are 2.9 mtr high. This is only the start with their Nett work having no doubt further plans which means the end to our footpaths, our countryside that we know, just like it has been decimated around Tunsall. 3. Please look at the two photos I have made of other installations. Look at the CCTV cameras monitoring everything. The land looks bleak and sterile with large gates across what was once open fields. This installation will completely enclose Lords Farm with a family being imprisoned for no other reason than wanting to live their lives in a pleasant rural position. 4. I have lived on my mother's and father's farm for 26 years looking and growing up around open fields and nature. - No one can tell us what it will be like to be imprisoned with Solar Panels around us. - No one can advise if we will have additional medical needs due to the panels. - No one can tell us how it will affect our mental health. I can only state it is already causing us stress so what will it be like once / if they get their own way. We will be living on an industrial site for years. Please object to this application on humanitarian grounds. Our family are not against good, reliable, renewable energy but this is not the right site for this type of installation. It will cause more harm than good in this area. 5. I have reviewed the application and would urge the Parish Council and County Council to reject the application on the following grounds: - Not compliant with government Farming Policy - Not compliant with government Land Policy - Not compliant with government Health and Wellbeing policy - Not compliant with Historic England stance - Not compliant with government Planning Policy This will decimate the local landscape. If you look at this application, it does not meet the requirements and if accepted not likely to comply with noise levels. I can also state that the company has failed to comply with North Yorkshire Highways requirements to look at the site and various paths, which is why Highways are against this application as it stands in its present format.	
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		6. I walk and run the footpath everyday where will I go safely to exercise. I see children every day on the footpath where will they be able to go and play. I see nature all around me where will all that go. No to these panels. 7. What I want to know is what happens in 40 years. Every other site that this company as been involved in has been sold to other companies. • There is no exit plan. • Who will it be financed this site being put back to its original use? The only answer is from local taxes, Council Tax money that you and I have put into not this company. So, who benefits certain not the local community.	
36)	Declarations of Interest	None	Resolved
37)	Parish Matters Councillor & Clerk issues	Planning - To consider, discuss and respond: ZB25/01246/FUL Installation of ground mounted photovoltaic farm with associated access, infrastructure, engineering works and landscaping Land At Lords Lane Exelby Bedale The Chair confirmed to everyone that the protocol the parish councillors would follow is from YLCA and NALC. The parish are sent various applications from North Yorkshire Council (NYC), but this is a particular important one and the parish needed to ensure that all the relevant points and procedures are adhered to. The Chair stated to the parish councillors that they needed to consider and discuss the various requirements from this application: 1. <u>Does the application comply with or not government or county council policies.</u> The Chair stated the following: • Solar energy is certainly a big part of the national government scheme to become carbon neutral and is therefore also part of the county council aim. So, I think we can confirm that this application does meet that requirement. 2. <u>History</u> The Chair advised the meeting that research she had found the following information: • 9 applications had been accepted by NYC (the Chair advising everyone present which cases had been accepted). • 2 cases in development and three that had been rejected. • 3 that were originally rejected were due to excellent quality arable land been used. However, one of those rejected has since been overturned by a	Agreed. Clerk to organise payment

		central government appeal. 3. <u>Design / Visual / Security and appearance.</u> A councillor stated that she had concerns on the overall landscaping of the application which was completely out of character with the area. We are getting used to increased housing but with this as well it is changing whole aspect of the area of North Yorkshire, which is known for its beautiful open areas. The other issue is that this application completely surrounds a farm, presumably decreasing the true value of that property (who would want to live in the middle of a Solar Farm). We should also consider the adverse mental health we would be pouring on to this family. If we look at the back historically even Historic England are not in agreement with the application on the grounds of visual pollution. We should also consider the noise pollution not only whilst the Solar Farm is being built but the constant emission of low humming that may have a long term detrimental effect not only on Lords Farm but other residents close by and those that may try and walk in the area. This application would be very intrusive with lighting and CCTV which detracts from the natural beauty of the area. 4. <u>Highway</u> A councillor confirmed, that as earlier, we were informed and need to consider the Public Right of way. The only safe public footpath out of Exelby village will be blocked and this contravenes the 1980 Highways Act, S130. I understand that the Highways Department at NYC have had requested meetings with Enviromena but they have to date not responded to any of the invitations. In view of this NYC Highways are not supporting the application on the grounds that the company are non-conforming. This application will change a whole village way of life and nearly make the village impossible to reach except by car. Another Councillor wanted to highlight Flood bridge that is a Grade II listed bridge. We believe it can be used for trucks, but it was never designed and not sure it will be able to withstand the amount of traffic the company are expecting both with heavy good vehicles and additional car usage from employees. We need also to consider that the routes these panels will take via single-track roads and with various sections of those roads having blind spots that are already accident spots. There is poor visibility on sections of the roads that the company anticipated using. Another Councillor felt that the additional traffic may well impeded on Bedale Roads which are already congested especially on market days. 5. <u>Effects on current Building</u> The Chair quoted the Bio Nett Gains (BNG) that were proposed but there are no details in the company	
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		accompanying literature about how the figures could or would be obtained. The meeting was also advised that below the panels could not be a BNG anyway, so the figures appear to be fictitious. The company intend to take out two TPO trees but there is no indication that those trees (that may be hundreds of years old) will be replaced. The councillors also agreed that an EIA had not been forth coming. 6. <u>Ecological Value</u> A councillor stated when considering this site, we needed to be aware of the following: • 164 Pairs of Birds nesting • 38 diverse types of birds • 17 pairs of rare breeding birds • Roe deer will disappear from this area. The area is renown for its deer and a monument celebrating the deer is on a roundabout in Bedale. • There are also so many other animals that occupy this area and will be moved from their natural habit including rabbits, hares, hedgehogs, otters, badgers, and wildlife within the beck that may well be affected. 7. <u>Humans expense.</u> The Chair also wanted the councillors to consider what the effect would have on humans in the area. A councillor advised that we really need consider public safety with the only public footpath not being available to use. The area has for hundreds of years had a bridlepath that horses and humans can use safely. In 1980 the government also agreed that humans needed to be kept safe and introduced the Highways Policy confirmed the right to ensure this public right of ways would be maintained by the local authorities. The application is being objected to by North Yorkshire Public Right of Way because of obstruction to a public pathway across this area. A councillor wanted the parish to consider the mental health issues we as parish councillors would be putting on not only Lords Farm residents but the whole of Exelby residents by supporting this application. Finally, the meeting was informed that Historic England is also objecting to the application on the grounds that it is to near Thorpe Perow that is classed as a Grade II Wooded site. A councillor also wanted to know how the electricity that was going to be taken off site. Presumable either underground with our roads being dug up or taken over ground via pylons. No specification is on the application. The Chair stated that every councillor had contributed to the discussion and thanked them and the public for being considerate whilst each had been able to speak without interruptions.	
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		Councillors were advised of three possible votes: 1. Support the application. 2. No objections either way to the application 3. Reject the application – written report with reasons. The Councillors voted unanimously in rejecting the application. The Chair and Vice Chair stated they would compose a response to planning and then distribute to councillors.	
38)	External Reports	Financial Matters - To Approve: 1. End of Month Accounts July 2025 2. Payments for August 2025	Agreed Resolved Resolved

Meeting closed at 7.45pm

**Next meeting is on Monday 15th September 2025
In Leeming Village Hall**

Signed by Chair:

Dated:

Response to North Yorkshire Council Planning department

Following meetings and discussion with residents of this parish we, the councillors of Exelby, Leeming and Londonderry Parish Council wish to register our **OBJECTION** to the proposed installation of ground mounted photovoltaic farm at Lord's Lane, Exelby, Bedale (ZB25/01246/FUL).

The reasons for our objections are:

Design/ Visual/ Security and Appearance

- a) The visual pollution that will arise with this development which comes soon after the vast increase in new house building in the region. This rural area is an integral part of North Yorkshire - a county renowned for its natural beauty, but will become irreversibly out of character and change the whole aspect of this region of North Yorkshire. Historic England also opposes the application on the grounds of visual pollution.
- b) While solar panels are silent, associated equipment such as inverters and battery storage units can produce a low humming noise that can be of concern to humans.
- c) Security fencing , lighting and CCTV cameras can also detract from the natural environment and negatively impact on the visual experience.
- d) Shadow flicker could be a nuisance to nearby residents

Highways issues and road safety

- a) Findings of the 'Glint and Glare' survey states that "...solar reflections are geometrically possible towards approximately 400m of the B6285, Bedale to Exelby road..." which must be a road safety issue on an already busy rural road with many blind spots.
- b) By necessity there will be increased heavy traffic (30+ runs per day) during the 36 months of construction. It is planned that this traffic will use:
 - Green Lane that has an extremely difficult junction at its westerly end;
 - Westfield lane with difficult junctions at each end;
 - Flood Bridge, a Grade II listed building (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act, 1990) that could be severely damaged by this increased heavy traffic; Flood Bridge is also a 'one-way' traffic bridge which is already well used and the possibility of accidents will be greatly increased.
 - Lord's Lane where there is poor visibility along the B6285 We doubt the traffic solutions proposed, ie a man with a Stop-Go sign will be adequate!

This additional traffic may well impede on the Bedale roads which are already congested especially on Market Days.

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The effect on nature and landscape

The proposed net gains shown in the submitted mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (NGA) provide significant positive gains without any indication as to how these are to be achieved. Indeed it has been pointed out by others that the land beneath the panels cannot be included in the NGA. So the true figures for net gain are nowhere to be found.

Two established and old trees, which we understand to have TPOs, are to be cut down with no indication as to replacement.

Ecological value of the site

The ecological value of this site encompasses the benefits provided to the environment and human well-being - how the ecosystems on the site support life and human health. The NGA focused only on the land and its cover. No mention has been made of the impact on the creatures that live above the ground.

Noted in the Breeding Birds Survey are the facts that 164 pairs of 38 species of breeding birds of which 73 pairs were found within the site itself; of these 17 pairs are on the Red list for endangered birds in the UK and 29 pairs are on the Amber list. It is further noted that habitat within the site will be lost and that whilst grasslands may be included within some parts of the solar farm or under panels, it is unlikely to be of a suitable size or open enough to attract breeding pairs within the development.

These endangered birds will be lost - not only to this community but to the UK as a whole.

The area is renowned for the roe deer. Roe deer are regular visitors to this site and can be seen to wander and graze there. Erecting barriers around the panels will deter these creatures from continuing to grace this area and they will never return after 40 years.

There are also many other animals that occupy this area that will be removed from their natural habitat including rabbits, hares, hedgehogs, otters, badgers, and wildlife within the beck that will never return.

Some would say "So what?" To us as councillors we would answer for the benefit of the other creatures that use this site - HUMANS.

The adverse impact on Humans in the area The Highways Act (1980, s 130) referring to the protection of public rights with the following statement: "It is the duty of the local highway authority to assert and protect the rights of the public to use and enjoyment of any highway for which they are the highway authority." Enviromena, as the development company for this development have failed to consult with the relevant Highways department which has resulted in this departments **objection** to the application on the grounds of non-conformance.

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As well as those people who live on or near the site (more of which later) humans have made use of the land in this proposed site for centuries with proven early settlement and usage going back to the Romans and Georgians - and perhaps even further back in history. This is noted by Historic England in their response to this application. So we have an area of historic importance that continues to be used on a daily basis by today's humans. The area is used by walkers, runners, riders, parents with their children and for other human pastimes. The only safe path from Exelby to Bedale will be blocked rendering Exelby as a village reachable only by car or bus. Indeed the application has been opposed by North Yorkshire Public Rights of Way department on the grounds of obstructions of a cross-field route and failure to consider providing a bridle way.

Physical health is so important to the population but so is mental health and wellbeing which are crucial because they impact our overall health ability to cope with life's challenges and overall quality of life so much so that mental health considerations are increasingly integrated into UK government policy with a growing emphasis on prioritising mental health alongside physical health (No Health Without Mental Health strategy, NHS Long Term Plan).

In essence prioritising mental health and wellbeing is not just about individual wellbeing, but also about building a healthier, more resilient and thriving society.

Promoting both physical and mental health can be achieved by encouraging walking, cycling and other forms of activity by supporting access to green spaces that offer opportunities for exercise and relaxation. Unless this application is refused then the physical and mental health of the local population will be jeopardised.

Can we remind the LPA of the following (taken from the National Planning Policy Framework Dec 2024):

- 97 c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;
- 98 a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities open space to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;
- 98 c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities... particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs

Perhaps the main group of people to consider are those who live close to the development and indeed within it and here we must turn our attention to our parish residents who live at Lord's Farm, a home they have lived in for 30+ years and in which they have raised a family and continue to live. The habitat known as Lord's Farm will be completely surrounded by this development. It will lie at the centre of 113.5 acres of land covered by solar panels with a high point of 2.9m. This raises several issues for the family that live in this home. Their mental health and wellbeing will suffer considerably due to:

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- noise (heat and the solar heat island effect WHO's stance on EMF from solar farms)- -
- loss of light/ glint and glare; ground floor rooms will look out on darkness under panels, security fencing and barren land whilst upstairs rooms will be subject to glint and glare from panels throughout the day;
- loss of property value and inability to sell and move to a better location.

There is no research on the long-term impact of living so close to a solar farm, however the above points should be taken into consideration.

In conclusion

As a council and a community we fully appreciate the need for renewable energy and accept that the development of solar farms is an integral part of the government's strategy for renewables. In addition we understand North Yorkshire Council's granting permission for numerous solar farms to be built within their jurisdiction area and in granting permission the LPAs will have considered all issues.

In the case of this Stell Farm we believe it is in the wrong place as we have outlined above and suggest the re-siting of the farm on alternative land - perhaps one of the other plots offered by the same landholder.

As a council we strongly **OPPOSE** Stell Solar Farm and strongly urge North Yorkshire Council to **REJECT** this application.