

Burton Agnes Parish Council

Dear Mr Sunman

APPLICATION 15/01648/STPLF

1. Burton Ages Parish Council has no objection in principle to the above application subject to the following planning conditions being imposed should this application be approved:

a. That the Applicant will, in consultation with the Parish Council, and East Riding of Yorkshire Council draw up a comprehensive and binding odour management plan which will include a procedure for registering complaints and clear trigger points for taking action to identify the source of and eliminate any odour nuisance from the site. The ultimate sanction in the case of prolonged and unresolved odour problems from the plant would, after following appropriate and due process, be for the plant to be shut down until the odour problem was resolved.

b. That at no time during the lifetime of the installation will anything other than agricultural crops/slurry/manure be processed on the site. In particular food waste will not be processed.

c. That the Applicant formally undertakes to be considerate to local residents when spreading digestate on land owned and farmed by Burton Agnes Estates, and will not, as already agreed verbally, spread digestate on the fields immediately abutting residential property in Burton Agnes. A similar undertaking should also be sought from farmers to whom digestate from the plant is supplied.

2. The Parish Council has already run these potential conditions informally past the Applicant, who has been receptive to them. If, however, these concerns cannot be formally addressed in the form of a planning condition, or be covered another equally binding way, for example as part of the licensing process, then alarm bells will sound loudly and the Parish Council would be obliged, in the interests of the Community, to object strongly to this application.

3. Although not an issue for the Applicant, the Parish Council, and some of the residents on Main Street Burton Agnes, are concerned about the fact that the entrance to the site, beyond Harpham Grange on the A614 lies in a part of the road currently operating a 60mph speed limit where visibility is not particularly good. Given that the new access road for the site will be used by farm vehicles with low acceleration capability from a standing start, and of a size which inhibits the visibility of both following and oncoming traffic, the Parish Council requests that consideration be given to reducing the speed limit in the area to 40mph on either side of the new entrance.

4. The Parish Council has undertaken a thorough consultation of residents of the village of Burton Agnes who were supplied with written information about the application and invited to the Parish Council meeting held on 13 July. At that meeting the Applicant and his technical advisers presented the project to the meeting and answered questions. Following the meeting the Applicant facilitated a visit on 15 July to a similar plant near Doncaster for members of the Parish Council. The Parish Council circulated the findings of that visit to local residents on 16 July and requested feedback by 20 July. Additionally the Applicant hosted a presentation on 10 July at Burton Agnes Hall to which all residents of Burton Agnes were invited, and gave a presentation at Burton Agnes School, to which parents were invited, on 17 July.

5. The Parish Council would like to offer an observation that it is a great pity that the level of consultation undertaken by the Applicant since the submission of his application was not started a lot earlier. Although, for reasons we cannot understand given the nature of this project, it does not, apparently, fall within the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, earlier consultation and discussion in accordance with NPPF provisions would have prevented much of the worry and angst which surrounded the notification of the Application sent out by the East Riding Planning Department on 29 June, and would have enabled the Community to undertake its investigations and come to an informed decision in a far more relaxed timescale.

6. Letters were hand-delivered to residents following the visit to the anaerobic digestion plant near Doncaster, describing our findings and asking them to contact the Parish Council with their views so that we could ensure that these could inform this response to the Application. Of the responses received the majority expressed support for the project having been reassured by the Applicant's promise of an effective odour management plan, his (unsolicited) offer of an 'exclusion zone' for the spreading of digestate in two fields abutting residential property in Burton Agnes and his undertaking to act sensitively to residents in Gransmoor when spreading digestate in fields surrounding the village. It is assumed that this undertaking would apply equally to those properties in Thornholme which abut Estate land. Some of those prepared to support the project on balance retained some concerns about odour and had other reservations regarding the impact of traffic from the site and the speed currently permitted round the access road (see also the Parish Council's comments at paragraph 3 above). There was also concern expressed about the potential effect of this development on house prices in the village (see also paragraph 8 below).

7. Of those who objected, the primary reasons were around odour nuisance. There is a considerable fear that the pig slurry and chicken manure would not lose their pungent and highly unpleasant odour during the digestion process and that the resulting digestate when spread would cause unacceptable nuisance. The Parish Council believes that this concern would be addressed by the requested odour management planning condition.

8. There was also a concern regarding the visual impact in an area. In this context we would point out that the Applicant has made an error in categorising the location of the site as being within the Holderness Plain. The site actually falls within the area described in the still-extant East Riding Landscape Character Assessments as area13D : Yorkshire Wolds Open High Rolling Farmland (sub-division Wolds Plateau Farmland), and as such, sensitive to development.

9. Concerns about degradation of house prices were expressed at the Parish Council meeting and subsequently. This is a legitimate concern shared by a number of residents who are owner occupiers and who, if house prices were to be adversely affected would stand to lose the most, without any hope of compensation, from this development. However, rightly or wrongly, this does not constitute a planning ground for objection.

10. The Parish Council would appreciate being informed about your decision with respect to planning conditions.

Yours sincerely

Sue Burt
Chair
Burton Agnes Parish Council

23 July 2015