

From: info@sunnica.co.uk
Sent: 20 October 2020 14:48
To: freckenhamparishclerk@hotmail.com
Subject: Fwd: Re: Statutory Consultation Concerns

Dear Jadi,

We are getting in touch to follow up on our letter dated 15th October 2020 and to respond to the remaining questions asked by the Parish Council at the outset of the statutory consultation.

Please find set out below answers to each of the Parish Council's questions. We are conscious that some of these were answered through our letter, apologies if there appears to be a degree of duplication.

- 1. The statutory consultation booklet pp19 says “Undeveloped buffers of at least 5m from existing boundary features have been retained throughout the Scheme”. During the 15th July briefing a minimum buffer figure of 20m was given. Which is correct, and what is the minimum?**

These are different figures referring to different mitigation measures. Habitat corridors will be maintained and existing boundaries offset by at least 5m for ecology matters. The 20m figure refers to the distance of the solar panels from the proposed perimeter fencing around each field.

- 2. As there will not be physical consultation events (per the SoCC), villages will likely be running their own e.g. Farmers Market stalls. Will Sunnica provide additional printed consultation booklets and questionnaires for distribution at these events?**

We will send a copy of the consultation booklet, questionnaire, and pre-addressed Freepost envelope, as well as physical copies of the plans in the consultation booklet, to anyone who requests them. We are also happy to provide large print copies of the booklet on request. If you could specify the quantity of materials that you require and the location to which you would like us to send them, we will issue these to you.

- 3. Will Sunnica make available a consultation poster or banner (preferably banner) to each Parish Council in directly affected villages for display in a central location for the duration of the statutory consultation?**

We are happy to take the Parish Council's advice that a banner would be a helpful addition to the publicity measures set out in the Statement of Community Consultation. We would be happy to provide a banner to the reasonable specifications provided by the Parish Council. This would be a voluntary addition to the activity in the Statement of Community Consultation.

- 4. Why were the first statutory consultation booklets delivered in plain white envelopes with no mention of Sunnica on the outside, even in the return address? This was clearly identified during the non-statutory consultation as a problem. Will consultation booklets posted to residents be clearly marked “Sunnica” so that residents don't discard them as unsolicited junk mail?**

We do not agree with the Parish Council's comments regarding the delivery of the consultation booklet. To date, we have had a higher level of response to the consultation than at the same stage

of the non-statutory consultation. Distributing the booklet, questionnaire and pre-addressed Freepost envelope to addresses in Consultation Zone 1 has been an effective means of enabling people in the local area to respond to the consultation. This has been supplemented by advertising through local media outlets. We have made additional copies of the booklet and questionnaire available to anyone who wants one on request. If you know of anyone who requires a copy, please put them in contact with us directly.

5. Considering in the past we were asked to forward questions, and we took the time to formulate questions and submit them, it is disappointing not to receive written replies, was this an oversight?

We responded to questions posed ahead of the briefing with the Parish Solar Alliance of 15 July 2020 at that briefing, it was not our intention to submit written replies.

6. In the last meeting it was mentioned that Saplings would be planted to screen the Solar panels, and it was confirmed established trees could not be planted as they require watering to survive. Surely the same is true for a sapling and a sapling would not provide a screen for 8-10 years, which would blight the views in that specific area?

The new planting would be whips or transplants which would be low in height, ranging between 0.6m and 0.8m for hedgerows and 1m and 3.5m for new trees. This information is set out in the PEI Report Chapter 10 (Landscape and visual amenity), paragraph 10.3.8.

All new planting would be implemented over winter months, so as to take advantage of the dormant condition of the plants, as well as rainfall, compared to planting in summer months when irrigation demands would be higher and plants would not respond well to being moved when in leaf. This is a standard practice on large scale planting schemes.

The proposed scheme is supported by a management regime, set out in PEI Report Chapter 10 Appendix I. As part of this, a contractor would be responsible for ensuring the new planting becomes established, which if there was prolonged drought, would involve watering. Similarly, it would involve replacement planting if plants failed.

Established trees can be planted but they would not have the survival rates and long term establishment success compared to planting smaller trees. The planting of smaller trees enables them to have a better chance at establishing and reaching maturity.

Kind regards,

Scott Harker
(For and on behalf of Sunnica)