

Kentmere Parish Meeting

An Extraordinary Assembly of the Parish Meeting

Monday 8th January 2018 at 7.30 p.m.

This meeting had been called specifically to consider a response to the Planning Application (ref: 7/2017/5817) for a lattice tower and equipment at Brow Top Farm, Kentmere to provide part of the communications network for emergency services

Present: Peter Lansberry (Parish Chairman), Iain Johnston (Clerk), Jackie and Peter Bettess, Max and Maggie Biden, Hazel Brownlow, David Capps, Robert and Clare Courtier, Roger Dewhurst, Jackie Green, Alistair Hall, Lee Hall, Christine Hevey, Sandra Johnston, Carol Lansberry, Nick Pighills, Jim Stilling and Tim Sturgis.

Apologies for absence had been received from Robert and Rosamund Ridley.

Peter Lansberry gave an outline of the application and explained the delay in notice being received by Kentmere Parish Meeting which had been caused by the information having been sent to the wrong ward councillor. A preliminary discussion with the planning officer had given some grace but any response would have to be made in the next few days. He emphasized that any individual could make their own response quoting the reference number on the public notices but he also proposed that a response should be made by the Parish.

Jackie Bettess explained that the proposed mast is a link in HMG's Emergency Services Network to replace the present Tetra Mast at Brow Top with more up-to-date technology. The new system would be operated by EE and would be a 4G Network. In rural areas a number of masts are required where it is not commercially viable to install normal 4G so in those situations the Home Office have allowed for funding for a mast to be erected for emergency service use only, i.e. Police, Fire and Rescue and ambulances.

The meeting was then opened for discussion and questions and comments were made about the following areas. Where possible, known answers were shared.

Choice of site:

Q. What area will the equipment cover?

A. It is designed to cover the roads in Kentmere. It will, however, miss some bits particularly Overend and the road to Hartrigg including Scales and Reservoir Cottage.

Comment: We need to know that this is the best site.

Response: If the planners felt that it wasn't the best site they would require evidence of due diligence in the application. There has already been some negotiation.

Q. Could there be an alternative site for the mast in a place where it would be less obtrusive? What about in the more industrial site at Hollingsworth and Vose?

A. The factory site is too low in the valley and the signal would be of no use.

- Apparently other sites have been explored including Green Quarter but the 'footprint' of the transmission would miss even more of the roads.

- Sites which could be used have to have an electricity supply and a broadband connection.
- The position of the mast could also affect any possible mobile phone signal.

Q. Would it require an abnormally high power supply?

A. There is already an appropriate supply to the nearby site of the Tetra mast.

Q. Is this Hobson's Choice? What happens if we object?

A. The Home Office is going to have a mast but we can object to some of the arrangements.

Comment: The television for Kentmere system has already had trouble with interference from 4G transmissions coming over from Troutbeck

Response: The transmitter has now been modified to prevent this.

Visual impact

Comment: The design is ugly and the site is very prominent in views of Kentmere which is a beautiful valley in the National Park and visited by hundreds of visitors.

Q. Could there be an alternative design, e.g. a tree?

Comment: There are questions about the finish of the lattice mast - galvanized steel can be bright and shiny. Glinting in the sun would make it more obvious. Even painting can be obtrusive whatever the colour.

Comment: The appearance and site: perhaps we might agree with the site but we can still object to the visual impact

Lack of Method Statement

Comment: The application does not appear to include a construction method statement. It is customary to have this which also includes environmental issues. (Planners did not think that this was adequately covered in the application.)

Comment: It would be sensible if this were to include the size of the construction equipment and vehicles and how they will access the proposed site and requirement for reinstatement

Q: How would appropriate reinstatement be achieved and monitored?

Mobile phone provision

Comment: Mobile phone provision should be part of this application. There are instances where people, particularly visitors, have been unable to make emergency calls. Can we make an objection based on mobile phone coverage? It seems that no consideration has been given to the number of visitors, walkers, climbers, ramblers and cyclists who frequent the valley and the surrounding hills.

Q. Will the proposed mast receive 999 calls?

A. Probably not as there is no equipment for receiving phone calls.

Q. What about 999 calls if there were mobile phone provision?

Response: There may still only be one provider but 999 calls can be made from any network's phone to any network's mast.

At this point the chairman took a straw poll -

“Do we want to use this process to get 4G mobile phone reception?” The meeting unanimously voted “Yes”. (However, the chairman reminded the meeting that objections should be specific to the planning application as it stands.)

Q. Could we request information about possible adverse health issues?

A. Heads Cottage would have a good case.

The chairman reminded the meeting that anyone could make their own objections but this meeting was concerned with a Parish response.

Another straw poll was requested. “Do we object to the planning application in principle on the grounds of:

- lack of construction method statement (80% in favour)
- HMG's requirement for “viable communities” which include superfast broadband and mobile phone provision + LDNPA policy (95% in favour)
- Visual impact (over 50% in favour)
- Doubts about it being the most suitable site and the due diligence aspect (over 50% in favour).

It was agreed that the chairman should make these feelings known to the Planning Officer.