

## **Acorn Bioenergy Presentation**

### **Questions and Answers**

#### **Ashton Keynes Parish Council 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

Q: 50% of the surrounding area is water. Ashton Keynes is surrounded on 3 sides by water. The SSSI site is in place to maintain biodiversity and the proposed location for the Anaerobic Digester (AD) is one of the most sensitive areas of the SSSI site (Shorncote Reed Beds). There is not a lot of natural land left and land would be used for planting crops specifically for the digester.

A: No new farms are being created to plant the crops. The SSSI will be considered.

Q: Can you build an AD within 500 meters of a SSSI?

A: You can build an AD near a SSSI, paying close attention to mitigate the impact on the SSSI. Due to the SSSI designation this site would require a bespoke permit, this will be assessed by the Local Authority and Natural England.

Q: South Cerney and Somerford Keynes are close to the proposed site and 75 houses are due to be built backing onto the site.

A: Everything will be assessed with detailed modelling and odour impact modelling.

Q: In the Lake District there was a smaller model that caused mess and odour, the proposed site would be much larger, with farmers bringing in silage etc. This will create a blot on the landscape and smell.

A: The Environment Agency are very good at producing guidance based on what has gone wrong in the past. Core contractors will be used rather than individual farmers bringing in their product.

Q: Concern about visual impact. Will the domes go up and down?

A: The dome will stay the same height, the bag inside will go up and down. The domes will be sunk down in a concrete bund and will be 7-8 mtrs from the lower ground level and then another 7 mtrs on top.

Q: Why are the most visually impacting parts of the plant being put nearest the road?

A: There will be lots of high hedges, the site will be screened.

Q: Do you own the proposed site?

A: Will be signing a long term lease for the site.

Q: Is there any likelihood that human waste will be processed at the site?

A: There are already AD plants at sewerage works. Cannot see processed solids from sewerage plants ever being brought to this plant.

Q: Can you clarify 'increased traffic at harvest time'?

A: We are tied to harvest and weather and are talking to local farmers and will submit a traffic report as part of the application. Traffic could double on specific days during harvest.

Q: How long will the construction of the plant take?

A: 9 months to a year.

Q: Setting up a campsite that will be one of the closest neighbours to the plant and concerned about the potential noise being produced at the plant?

A: The feed cycles are during the day, they will be filled quickly and then fed in on a timed process. Will use white noise beacons and a detailed noise assessment and mapping will take place.

Q: Why is this site a good site? Looking at an aerial view there is not a lot of farm land nearby.

A: Farms from the Swindon area would also be included. Have had lots of positive conversations with farmers within a reasonable radius of the site. The nearest neighbour is industrial.

Q: How many tonnes of methane would be produced in a day?

A: Just over 1200 cubic mtrs per hour condensed into 2 HGV's per day. Will get a full detailed analysis with the application that will give vehicle types and amount of materials.

Q: Do you flush out the tanks?

A: There can be maintenance reasons to do so and for integrity checks on the concrete. Would estimate 2-3 times in the lifetime of the plant.

Q: This community has lived through a lot of traffic due to gravel extraction etc and the stress associated with it, this will be another thing to put up with. This plant should be put in the middle of a green field area and not a waterlogged area. It is not economically or ecologically viable.

A: Over 100 hectares of land will be producing the product including arable land to the south of the site. Location is a balancing act of roads and farmland.

Q: What is the beneficial impact on residents of Ashton Keynes?

A: A community benefit fund will be set up, we will be trading with local businesses and creating local employment. The environmental impact is a benefit to all.

Q: How many plants do you have at the moment?

A: Acorn is a new company.

Q: What is the lifetime of the plant?

A: 20-30 years.

Q: The B road between the 2 villages is already struggling, would you invest in improvement to the road?

A: it is not within our power.

Q: The location is wrong, there are houses within 800 metres of this site. Acorn currently have 6 sites in plan, if other sites are successful will this site be dropped?

A: Multiple planning applications are being submitted as we want to do multiple projects and we will be assessing everything.