

Minutes of meeting about Kingsway Solar Farm 13 January 2025

Present Patricia Mallalieu (PM), Terry Rich (TR), Frank Eve (FR), Indy Wijenayaka (IW), Jaclyn Lake (JL)

Apologies: Julia Korona (JK), Philip Stiles (PS)

TR opened the meeting by reminding everyone that WPC should restrict itself to making comments that are relevant to the parish and its residents.

TR suggested that we work through the document produced by the local community action group (CAG).

IW asked if the comments we are providing are going to be restricted to the EIA scoping or wider regarding the future planning application?

FE: There are some major consultees that are missing from the list namely West Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council. At 4250 acres the outer edge of the proposal comes close to the Withersfield Parish boundary and the village. Andy Rutter from Suffolk County Council aware of this as it has significant implications for the Acorn biodigester planning application.

The CAG have made a series of good points but unclear how they will benefit from it.

IW: For WSC the initial thoughts are what would it prevent WSC from doing such as preventing or hindering future guided busway or trainline connections between Haverhill and Cambridge. Could it restrict West Suffolk's future growth plans or benefit them?

Also what are the flooding impacts of the panels on the edge of the proposals near our parish: what is the risk of flooding of the Stour Brook, and impacts on wildlife?

FE: Another key issue is how big this proposal is; the next largest solar farm is 250 acres and this one will be over 4000 acres. This is a huge, 40-year project and there should be a community fund to support community requirements such as green infrastructure and sustainable travel to benefit the local community affected.

There should be a traffic plan to ensure that Withersfield is not affected by increases in traffic during construction.

TR led on working through the CAG document, and we formulated the following questions to form the WPC response to the EIA scoping consultation:

Consultation and engagement

- We advise that West Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council should be added to the list of consultees as there are potential implications for Local Plans.
- There should be continual consultation throughout the project, including of neighbouring local authorities.

Flood risk and management of water resources

- How will water and run-off be managed and what will the impact be on local rivers and local water resources?
- Although the panels and infrastructure are located in floodzone 1, what are the implications for and cumulative impacts on the surrounding communities? Is there potential to improve the flooding situation for these communities through this development?

Impacts on regional growth

- Will this development impact on future transport links between Haverhill and Cambridge?

Disruption during construction

- A traffic management plan is required to ensure that Withersfield is not affected by increases in traffic during construction.

Community benefits

- There must be no disruption between our connections between Haverhill and Cambridge.
- A community fund should be set up to deliver benefits for the local community.

Please include WPC in all future rounds of consultation.

Please produce clearer maps as it was difficult to separate out the different layers.