

To whom it may concern at Kingsway Solar Farm

These are the comments/concerns from Balsham Parish Council based on the presentations of the proposals made on the 12th and 15th of November 2024 by Downing/Kingsway Solar.

The two presentations gave no useful information. There were no answers to our questions. It was just made obvious that the project is **“the biggest in Europe” and will have a significant affect on the residents of Balsham and the surrounding area.**

If Balsham residents were asked “are you in favour of green energy from solar panels” the answer would be yes. **It is down to the horrendous size of this project that they have rejected this project, plus other concerns as listed below.** (see current results of local survey below)

We are of course concerned at the loss of good arable land and the resulting loss of employment in agricultural and associated industries in the significant area covered by not only this proposal but also with the Sunnica Solar Farm plans a few kilometres north of this proposal.

We were told that Downing had acquired more land than is required to support the design of a system that will supply 500MW of power. During the design process. It is essential that this excess land be used to:

- Ensure that panels and battery containers are not sited in close proximity to residential properties.
- Ensure that areas of Special Interest are not affected visually and environmentally.
- Public footpaths must be maintained and enhanced.

Connection Corridor

Of great concern is the change in plan for the connection to the National Grid. We were told at the first consultation in March 2024 that the motivation for building the solar farm in this location is that there is a convenient main trunk

of the National Grid Network that runs down the side of the A11 and to which the Wadlow Wind farm is connected.

The connection point now proposed is to a new substation some 14 kilometres away at Burwell south.

This will necessitate the running of High Voltage cables on pylons the 14 kilometres as shown on your map.

This solution means that we are not only losing good arable farmland to black solar panels and battery storage but additional fields that are currently farmed, will also be lost to pylons.

There need to be alternative solutions, which are not just led by what maybe the cheapest option, and we suggest the following be taken into consideration:

- Underground cables to ensure that the farmland can continue to be farmed?
- A reduction in the need to run cables the total distance of 14 kilometres?
- A solution that cables would be fed underground whilst reducing the 14 kilometre distance?

Transportation

The increase in traffic movements during the construction phase and also when operational is of considerable concern. Once you come off the A11 and A14 access to the planned sites is a major problem. Many of the roads are single track and not suitable for HGV vehicles. The access for emergency vehicles that will be required should a battery storage facility bursts into flames will be adversely affected by the country roads.

You may not be aware that planning consent has, this year been given for an anaerobic digester at Streetly End. One of the feeder farms for this anaerobic digester is located between Balsham and West Wratting. The route that HGV's transporting the feed from the farm to Streetly End will be West Wratting Road to Balsham then along the West Wickham road to Streetly End which will already significantly increase the movement of HGV vehicles in the village.

The loss of good arable farmland to solar panels and pylons.

There is a huge concern that due to the unprecedented size of this project there will be an unacceptable loss not only of high-quality farmland but also agricultural jobs and established ecosystems of plant and animal species. We currently enjoy an area of maintained footpaths and natural landscapes with visual character that attract many visitors.

Plot A is positioned on one of the highest points in Cambridgeshire. It overlooks Fleam Dyke, an area that is of historical and Special Scientific Interest.

When standing on Fleam Dyke the visual impact would be destroyed by the installation of hundreds of black solar panels, high security fencing and security lighting that would be visible for miles in all directions.

Location

The Development Consent Order for the Sunnica Solar Farm project was awarded on the 12th July 2024. This is approximately 14 kilometres from the planned positioning for Kingsway Solar Farm.

The Inspectorate needs to seriously consider the cumulative effect of all projects on the population rather than considering the impact of individual projects in isolation.

Property Prices

There will potentially be a reduction in the value of property values in the area with potential buyers reluctant to consider houses near to the solar farm.

Balsham Parish Council feel that the following issues require more research:

- Risk of solar panel damage from unstable soil profile.
- Impact on local aquifers and water supplies.
- Industrial landscape causing increased heat, noise and visual intrusion.

Results from Balsham survey

The Parish Council is conducting a survey primarily in the village. To date the results are:

Responses to date	198
Against building the project	74.6 %
Undecided	12.7 %
In support	11.2 %

The closing date for this survey is 31st December 2024

The Parish Council is able to provide copies of all the survey forms if required.

Community Benefits

Details need to be provided about what benefits to the community will be afforded if this project proceeds.

All residents affected by this project must see reduced utility costs during the installation and the life of this solar farm.

Grants should be made available for rooftop solar installation and battery storage systems during the life of the solar farm.

An agreed fund should be made available yearly for the Parish Council to administer on community projects and buildings in the parish for the life of the solar farm.

During the installation of the project grants must be available to the County Council ring fenced to maintain the roads damaged by the significant increase

in transport use.

Planning Policy:

The National Planning Policy Framework Policy NH/2: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character: "Development will only be permitted where it respects and retains, or enhances, the local character and distinctiveness of the local landscape and of the individual National Character Area in which it is located", therefore Kingsway Solar should NOT be approved as it does none of the above.

In conclusion Balsham Parish Council unanimously voted **against** the plans for the Kingsway Solar Farm for all the reasons set out above.

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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gordon Fiddy".

Gordon Fiddy

Chair of Balsham Parish Council