

## Proposal for Scotton Solar Farm

Many thanks for your recent email/leaflet providing your details.

The leaflet drop has generated significant opposition to the proposed construction of one of the largest solar farms in the country which would generate 49.9MW on 279 acres of land at Lawrence House Farm, Scotton.

Interestingly, there has been much press in recent weeks regarding Alan Titchmarch's objection to a proposed solar farm in Winchester, 15 miles away from his home. However that site is only 55 acres with a capacity of 12 MW – only 20% of the size proposed for Scotton!!

Several people have commented that they are not opposed to solar farms in principle, however the sheer scale of the proposal in our villages is simply too vast. I agree with that statement, in that we do need to harness natural resources and indeed, I would not be opposed to one or two fields of solar panels in an appropriate setting; however this is a totally different scale and not one for a village location! Please see the map below which shows the potential land area which could become solar arrays at 3m in height!

I feel that Scotton is a totally inappropriate site for an installation of this scale, it will ruin the natural and incredibly beautiful countryside around us, which has been a blessing for us all during "lockdown" when many people have enjoyed a regular walk to balance health and indeed, mental health which has affected so many people during these difficult times.

### CURRENT POSITION

The initial approach to Harrogate Borough Council was to ascertain whether an Environmental Impact Assessment was required and HBC confirmed such in November 2020. I believe from activity on the site, that the EIA is well underway and as a consequence a planning application could be forthcoming, so we need to be "on the front foot" and prepared.

### POTENTIAL IMPACT

I believe the reasons for opposing can be summarised as follows:

- The location of the proposed solar farm is **too close to the village**
- The location is **adjacent to significant historical assets** – 30m from Scotton Old Hall, 10m from the barn at Scotton Old Hall, 5m from the Quaker Burial Ground and actually above the site of evidence of a medieval village.
- Already **overburdened and inadequate road infrastructure** to accommodate the potential of 1550 single journey 50 foot "artic" lorries, 330 single journey 33 foot rigid HGV's plus the large number of smaller vehicles for delivery/collection of goods/waste and transportation of construction workers and sub-contractors during the development of the farm which, based on other sites, **will take 3 to 4 months**. The minor roads within Scotton, Farnham and Lingerfield are totally inadequate for 50 foot artics, HGV's and additional vans and whilst the initial screening application refers to "**High Moor Lane at the north of the site connecting directly to the A61 making it accessible to strategic road networks**", this road is very narrow and unsuitable for large vehicles. All access routes are entirely unsuitable and we also need to think about the proximity of this development to **the village school**, which continues to have very serious issues with the high volume and speed of passing traffic, despite the recent installation of new speed reduction measures.

- The overwhelming dominance of this development on the **character of our landscape** and the **visual amenity** of our villages.
- Potential for the two existing public footpaths between Scotton and Brearton to pass through the array of **solar panels at 3m in height**.
- Potential **loss of grade 2, 3a and 3b agricultural** land.
- Potential **breach of Policy CC3 of the Local Plan** which states that renewable and low carbon energy projects will be supported when they would not adversely impact on the landscape, natural environment and heritage features. My comments above re Scotton Old Hall and the Quaker Burial Site refer.

On this latter note, Harrogate Borough Council has already commented that the proposed solar development will cover a large land area and has potential to have significant landscape and visual impact. Many solar farms are built on flat land to facilitate adequate screening of the site or on land away from villages/housing, however the proposed site dips from two sides and is rather undulating making screening virtually impossible.

### MAP & SIZE

As regards the actual solar panels, the image below provides an indication of the size compared with an average person – each panel will be 3m in height!!



The map below shows the land owned by Lawrence House Farm (edged in red), on which the solar farm will be built from which you can see clearly how close it will be to the villages of Scotton, Brearton and the impact it will have from the public footpaths, roads and houses in Farnham. (**Note:** the golf driving range is the new football pitch at Percy Fields).



## **WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?**

I have written to Andrew Jones, our local MP who has responded to say that he has written to Mr Toddington Harper, CEO of GridServe to highlight our concerns and will provide a copy of his response upon receipt.

Andrew Jones has also spoken to Councillor Tim Myatt, Cabinet Member for Planning at Harrogate Borough Council to make him aware of our concerns and **has commented that we will need to encourage as many people as possible to submit comments of opposition when the public consultation is held**, (which I understand, the developer should carry out prior to the formal application being submitted).

In addition we have written to Historic England, The Council for the Preservation of Rural England, The Open Spaces Society and The Ramblers Association. If anyone has any other suggestions, please let me know.

I have also reached out to some key influential people seeking their help to oppose the solar farm in our village and I presented to the local Parish Council, who have agreed to support us and engage with a professional firm to build a case to oppose the development.

**We need more support so, please share this with neighbours, friends and colleagues as no one should underestimate the impact this will have on our villages.**

Once the planning application is received by Harrogate Borough Council there will only be a period of 16 weeks for objections to be submitted and we will need hundreds of letters of protest, petitions and anything else you can think of in order to stop this. Some people have suggested banners and posters however we will need funds to cover these. If anyone has access to facilities to print such, please let me know. I will share some ideas with you and seek donations at that stage, if required.

I hope this helps us all, further information will be sent out over the coming weeks.

In the meantime, **please encourage more people to register their opposition**, by either emailing their name and address to: [solarfarminfo.scotton@gmail.com](mailto:solarfarminfo.scotton@gmail.com).

Many thanks

Richard Tallis & the Scotton Residents Group