



Extraordinary meeting of the Cavendish Parish Council took place on Wednesday 6th August 2025. In the Cavendish Memorial Hall at 7.30pm.

Councillors Present: Nicholas Vosper (Chair), Malcolm Halliday, Ted Gittins, Annette Williamott, Nicky Welch and Alison Kenny.

Also present: Kay Garner (Clerk), District Councillor Marion Rushbrook and 41 members of the public.

1. Acceptance of apologies for absence.

None. No apologies for absence received from Councillor Ed Stevens.

2. Declaration of Interest in items on the agenda and dispensation requests.

Councillors Annette Williamott and Nicky Welch declared an interest in the planning application.

3. Public Session (20 minutes)

Prior to the public session the Chair invited the members of the public to read the report drafted by members of the planning committee, Ted Gittins and Malcolm Halliday. (See attached *) This draft report detailed the objections from the Parish Council. (See attached) Ted Gittins and Malcolm Halliday then informed the public that this provides the basis for discussion and the draft would be amended after hearing the views and points from the public.

Several Members of the public contributed to the session and several points were made which included:

- Traffic
- Road
- Lifespan/Ongoing Maintenance
- Other Solar Farms in the locality
- Potential Health Hazards/Risks
- Location
- Access for emergency services
- Impact on Village Life
- Impact on Businesses
- Impact on School
- Parking
- Wildlife
- Future Development
- Loss of Farmland

These will be added to the comments from the Parish Council to the Planning Application as appropriate.

It was also noted that:

- No benefit for Cavendish
- An opposition group – Wales End Solar Farm Group has been set up by parishioners



4. County/District Councillors' reports

Marion Rushbrook informed the meeting that she was there to represent District Councillor Nick Clarke who was closely involved in the Solar Farm application but was unable to attend the meeting. She read out a short statement from him:

I have been speaking, at length, with the planning officer. Obviously, the impact on the highway, during the construction phase, is the greatest cause for concern.

The planning officer is waiting for comment from Highways. I have let him know that if this is given approval, by him, I want to call it in. We have agreed to stay in close contact.

I suspect, without the highways issue, this application would sail through on appeal. The planning Inspectors are being lent on, by government, I fear.

I suspect this will run on for some time.

5. Planning Application

All Councillors discussed the application. It was proposed to Object to the application. It was unanimously agreed to object to the application along with submitting comments.

DC/25/1027/FUL

Proposal: Hybrid renewable energy scheme for the construction and operation of a Solar Farm and battery energy storage system (BESS), with associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure.

Location: Land North of Wales End Road, Wales End Road, Cavendish, Suffolk.

Parish Council Response: Object with comments (See attached **)

6. Any other business for noting or including on the next agenda of the next meeting on Wednesday 10th September 2025.

None

Signed:

(Chair) Dated:

10/9/25



**** Draft Comments issued to Members of the Public attending the meeting.***

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF CAVENDISH PARISH COUNCIL : 6th AUGUST 2025

APPLICATION NO. 25/1027/FUL : SOLAR FARM & BATTERY STORAGE : WALES END

PROVISIONAL VIEWS OF CAVENDISH PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Summary

Cavendish Parish Council strongly objects to this proposed development which would be seriously harmful to the amenity of the occupants of numerous residential properties along the access route by way of noise and disturbance, would create unacceptable highway hazards within the village, would be harmful to heritage assets - including Grade I, II* and II Listed Buildings and their settings, as well as harming rural resources and particularly the village's countryside setting.

Crucially, the proposed development is in clear conflict with West Suffolk Local Plan Policy LP6 : Renewable and low carbon energy - as a result of its ill-chosen location and its failure to rule out alternative and less impactful sites, namely sites which do not rely on access along a narrow country lane via a built-up area, a Conservation Area, and residential streets.

The Parish Council therefore urge West Suffolk District Council to refuse this Application as it represents a clear departure from the relevant policy guidance in the Adopted Local Plan and would otherwise give rise to serious harm to the amenities enjoyed by residents of the village and to its historic environment and rural setting.

Location

We consider, as a first principle, vehicular access to renewable energy development should be served by adequate roads along which construction traffic can be routed with minimal disturbance to the environment and residential amenity. It is considered that the Alternative Sites Assessment fails to address the issue of access as a key consideration in a fair and balanced way. The Assessment's conclusion that there are no suitable alternative sites available is undermined by its highly confined search area of only 2 kilometres. Such an Assessment should examine potential sites within a much wider search area to enable reasonable comparisons to be made in relation to the highway accessibility of alternative sites alongside other criteria such as land classification, impact on heritage assets and on residential amenity. In focusing



on such a limited search area, the Assessment is therefore contrived in order to justify a highly inaccessible location where the only access is via a built-up area.

Highway Considerations

The occupants of large numbers of residential properties along the access route would be harmfully and unacceptably impacted by way of noise and disruption. In addition to the large numbers of HGV's and other vehicles causing general safety hazards along the access route, there are site specific concerns regarding highway safety in the vicinity of the Parish Church and Primary School and at the Nether Hall crossroads.

The access road, being a narrow and single track country lane, is totally unsuited to serve a development of this nature and magnitude. Having regard to the large tracts of open Suffolk countryside where access can be secured directly off primary or secondary roads, it makes no sense to promote a site which poses serious access problems as in this case.

Rural Amenity

The area immediately to the north of Cavendish forms part of a tract of unspoiled countryside largely inaccessible by road and characterised by its remoteness and tranquillity. The introduction of an extensive area of solar cells and associated structures into this landscape will seriously erode this feeling of remoteness and, notwithstanding mitigation via screening, will appear due to its nature and scale as an alien feature in the surrounding rural landscape.

Additionally, the character of the lane will be seriously compromised by the engineering works necessary to facilitate access - again reflecting the unsuitability of the location.

Heritage Assets

The only access route, as noted, passes through the heart of the Conservation Area and past Grade 1, II* and II Listed Buildings, whose setting will be harmfully affected by the substantial increase in heavy traffic which also pose a threat to their fabric from vibrations. The impact on the heritage assets and amenity of an historic village reflects the unsuitability of a site which can only be accessed by a modified lane and dead end.



Planning Policy

The Parish Council asserts that the proposals are in serious conflict with Policy LP6 : Renewable and low carbon energy - the key policy in the newly adopted West Suffolk Local Plan. This key Policy states that all proposals for renewable energy technology will be supported subject to compliance with 5 specified criteria. The proposals in this case are in direct conflict with 3 of the 5 criteria as follows:-

b) Where the proposal involves significant development of agricultural land, preference has been given to areas of poorer quality agricultural land.

The value of the Alternative Sites Assessment is compromised by the limited attention devoted to agricultural land classification both within and outside the 2 km search area. The Application fails to demonstrate that agricultural land of poorer quality is unavailable and in particular that land classified as Grade 3b or brownfield land could not be used elsewhere.

c) The proposal does not adversely impact on the amenities of sensitive neighbouring uses (including residential amenities), in matters such as visual dominance, noise, fumes, odour, vibration, glint and glare, shadow flicker, and traffic generation. (Our underlining)

The Parish Council asserts that no amount of evidence or mitigation measures can disguise the serious impact and consequences of this proposed development on the living, historic and natural environment that draw the proposals into direct conflict with this limb of the policy. The policy affords great weight to the protection of residential amenities in particular and seeks to minimise the harmful impacts which will inevitably arise should permission be granted in this case.

e) The potential impacts on heritage assets, highway safety and associated infrastructure, topography, broadcast interference, aviation, radar and telecommunications and associated infrastructure, and soil quality have been considered and minimised within the proposal.

The Parish Council raise serious and particular concerns in relation to heritage assets and highway safety which cannot be satisfactorily addressed by mitigation measures. It is considered that this reflects the fundamental problem arising from the promotion of a site where the access is not only physically constrained but can only be reached by vehicles passing through the historic centre of a village and via residential streets. This is the exact scenario that, inter alia, this limb of the policy seeks to avoid and hence



the location and impacts of the scheme bring the proposed development into direct conflict with the terms of this policy.

The Parish Council also draw attention to paragraph 169 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF February 2025) which states :

" Once suitable sites for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas."

Despite the above national policy guidance being in effect since the original version of the NPPF in 2012, most local planning authorities have not identified "suitable sites" in their Development Plans which has resulted in a vacuum of geographical guidance able to be exploited by random and poorly-located schemes, as is the case in this instance. In these circumstances, the Parish Council consider that added weight should be afforded the relevant policy in the recently adopted West Suffolk Local Plan and in particular those specific requirements of Policy LP6 which seek to safeguard the environment and residential amenity.

Conclusion

The Parish Council respectfully request that the above representations and those received from the local community are supported and that this Application be refused.

Councillor Malcolm Halliday

Councillor Ted Gittins



***** Comments Sent to the Planning Department along with Objection.***

APPLICATION NO. DC/25/1027/FUL

SOLAR FARM & BATTERY STORAGE: WALES END, CAVENDISH, SUFFOLK

REPRESENTATIONS OF CAVENDISH PARISH COUNCIL

Preface

Cavendish Parish Council has carefully considered the proposals in the above Planning Application and the Council's representations are set out below. An Extraordinary General Meeting was held on 6th August 2025 and provided a forum for approximately 40 villagers to air their views. These views have been taken into account by the Parish Council in formulating its representations whilst a summary of points raised during the Public Session of the Meeting are listed in an Annex to these representations.

Summary

Cavendish Parish Council strongly objects to this proposed development which would be seriously harmful to the amenity of the occupants of numerous residential properties along the access route by way of noise and disturbance, would create unacceptable highway hazards within the village, would be harmful to heritage assets - including Grade I, II* and II Listed Buildings and their settings, as well as harming rural resources and particularly the village's countryside setting.

Crucially, the proposed development is in clear conflict with West Suffolk Local Plan Policy LP6 : Renewable and low carbon energy - as a result of its ill-chosen location and its failure to rule out alternative and less impactful sites, namely sites which do not rely on access along a narrow country lane via a built-up area bordered by heritage assets, a Conservation Area, and residential streets.

The Parish Council therefore urge West Suffolk District Council to refuse this Application as it represents a clear departure from the relevant policy guidance in the Adopted Local Plan and would otherwise give rise to serious harm to the amenities enjoyed by residents of the village and to its historic environment and rural setting.

Location

We consider, as a first principle, vehicular access to renewable energy development should be served by adequate roads along which construction traffic can be routed with minimal disturbance to the environment and residential amenity. It is considered that the Alternative Sites Assessment fails to address the issue of access as a key consideration in a fair and balanced way. The Assessment's conclusion that there are no suitable alternative sites available is undermined by its highly confined search area of only 2 kilometres. Such an Assessment should examine potential sites within a much wider search area to enable reasonable comparisons to be made in relation to the



highway accessibility of alternative sites alongside other criteria such as land classification, and impacts on heritage assets and residential amenity. In focusing on such a limited search area, the Assessment is therefore contrived in order to justify a highly inaccessible location where the only access is via a built-up area.

Highway Considerations

The occupants of one hundred and forty plus residential properties and also thirty-five grade listed properties along the access route would be harmfully and unacceptably impacted by way of noise and disruption. In addition to the large numbers of HGV's and other vehicles causing general safety hazards along the access route, there are site specific concerns regarding highway safety in the vicinity of the Parish Church and Primary School and at the Nether Hall crossroads. This would be a recurring problem with the need in future to maintain and replace infrastructure.

The access road, being a narrow and single-track country lane, is totally unsuited to serve a development of this nature and magnitude. Having regard to the large tracts of open Suffolk countryside where access can be secured directly off primary or secondary roads, it makes no sense to promote a site which poses serious access problems as in this case. Indeed, the submitted Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) indicates the need to resort to various measures including the introduction of parking restrictions and suspensions, banksmen with stop/go boards and engineering operations along the route in order to facilitate access to the site.

Moreover, the Parish Council consider that the overall disruptive effect of construction and related traffic will have wider repercussions and unacceptable impacts on the village. It would result in higher traffic flows along the A1092 through an already congested High Street which continues to suffer from the passage of large numbers of HGV's following the failure to progress the proposed ETRO diversion of lorries onto strategic routes or to introduce weight restrictions. In particular, the traffic management arrangements for the stretch of Peacocks Road between its junction with the A1092 at Hyde Park Corner and Nether Hall, (which serves the Primary School, Parish Church, Five Bells Public House and Bottle Bank), will interfere if not remove current kerbside parking and drop-off and collection points for the Primary School where many pupils from Glemsford and nearby areas arrive and leave by car, as well as disrupting parking for the Parish Church. Current kerbside parking and drop-off/collection trips will be diverted to other parts of the village centre where there is already a dearth of parking space, especially south of the Green in the vicinity of the busy Sue Ryder Charity Shop, the community-run "Duck or Grouse" Village Shop and the Tea on the Green Tea Room. There will therefore be consequential and detrimental environmental and commercial impacts arising from the implementation of the CTMP, especially at peak times, which cumulatively represent an existential threat to the normal on-going life of the village.

With regard to the engineering works to form an embankment on Peacocks Road within the village, this will harm the streetscape and be detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring residents.

Finally, concern is registered in relation to the potential for emergency vehicles to be delayed arising from highway obstructions and the traffic management measures proposed. Unobstructed access must be retained for ambulances to reach the northern parts of the village where the majority of residents live. The same is true for fire engines - fire being an important consideration as reflected in the submitted Fire Strategy Plan. The potential for emergency vehicles to be obstructed or delayed would therefore be substantial.



Rural Amenity & Landscape Impact

The area immediately to the north of Cavendish forms part of a tract of unspoiled countryside largely inaccessible by road and characterised by its remoteness and tranquillity. The site lies between Northey Wood and Easty Wood which are SSSI's and are important habitats for wildlife and for botany, whilst the verges along the rural sections of Peacocks Road are also important for their wildflowers. The introduction into the landscape of an extensive area of solar panels and associated structures of an industrial appearance will seriously erode the feeling of remoteness and, notwithstanding mitigation via screening, will appear due to its industrial nature and scale as an alien feature in the surrounding rural landscape.

The cumulative impact on the open countryside arising from a proliferation of schemes within a small area of the County is also of deep concern to the Parish Council - there already being 7 schemes within 5 miles of this site either operational or proposed. This matter is raised further below under "Planning Policy".

Heritage Assets

The only access route, as noted, passes through the heart of the Conservation Area and past Grade 1, II* and II Listed Buildings, whose setting will be harmfully affected by the substantial increase in heavy traffic which also pose a threat to their fabric from vibrations. This is particularly the case in relation to Grade II Listed Nether Hall where Peacocks Road passes in very close proximity to this historic building.

The impact on the heritage assets and amenity of an historic village reflects the unsuitability of a site which can only be accessed by a modified lane and dead end.

Planning Policy

The Parish Council asserts that the proposals are in serious conflict with Policy LP6 : Renewable and low carbon energy - the key policy in the newly adopted West Suffolk Local Plan. This key Policy states that all proposals for renewable energy technology will be supported subject to compliance with 5 specified criteria. The proposals in this case are in direct conflict with 3 of the 5 criteria, namely: -

b) Where the proposal involves significant development of agricultural land, preference has been given to areas of poorer quality agricultural land.

The value of the Alternative Sites Assessment is compromised by the limited attention devoted to agricultural land classification both within and outside the 2 km search area. The Application fails to demonstrate that agricultural land of poorer quality is unavailable and in particular that land classified as Grade 3b or brownfield land could not be used elsewhere.



c) The proposal does not adversely impact on the amenities of sensitive neighbouring uses (including residential amenities), in matters such as visual dominance, noise, fumes, odour, vibration, glint and glare, shadow flicker, and traffic generation.

The Parish Council asserts that no amount of evidence or mitigation measures can disguise the serious impact and consequences of this proposed development on the living, historic and natural environment that draw the proposals into direct conflict with this limb of the policy. The policy affords great weight to the protection of residential amenities in particular and seeks to minimise the harmful impacts which will inevitably arise should permission be granted in this case.

e) The potential impacts on heritage assets, highway safety and associated infrastructure, topography, broadcast interference, aviation, radar and telecommunications and associated infrastructure, and soil quality have been considered and minimised within the proposal.

The Parish Council raise serious and particular concerns in relation to heritage assets and highway safety which cannot be satisfactorily addressed by mitigation measures. It is considered that this reflects the fundamental problem arising from the promotion of a site where the access is not only physically constrained but can only be reached by vehicles passing through the historic centre of a village and via residential streets. This is the exact scenario that, inter alia, this limb of the policy seeks to avoid and hence the location and impacts of the scheme bring the proposed development into direct conflict with the terms of this policy.

The Parish Council also draw attention to paragraph 169 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF February 2025) which states:

" Once suitable sites for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas."

Despite the above national policy guidance being in effect since the original version of the NPPF in 2012, most local planning authorities have not identified "suitable sites" in their Development Plans and as noted above, this absence of geographical and locational guidance has led to a proliferation of random and sometimes poorly-located schemes, as is the case in this instance. Indeed, there are already 7 operational or proposed solar farms within 5 miles of this latest proposal, including the operational site at Foxearth to the south and the proposed Bosted Solar Farm project very close by just to the east. In these circumstances, the Parish Council consider that the cumulative impact is an important material consideration such that added weight should be afforded the relevant policies which safeguard the rural environment in the recently adopted West Suffolk Local Plan and, in particular, those specific requirements of Policy LP6 which seek to safeguard heritage assets and residential amenity.

Conclusion



The Parish Council respectfully request that the above representations and those received from the local community including those summarised in the attached Annex are supported and that this Application be refused.

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ANNEX

Summary of views expressed by Attendees at an Extraordinary Meeting of Cavendish Parish Council held on 6th August 2025 to consider Application No. 25/1027/FUL.

Concern about extra traffic in High Street.

Recurring traffic problems with initial construction followed by maintenance and servicing.

The traffic forecasts underestimate the likely traffic generation.

Inadequate Traffic Statement and highway information.

Potential health and fire risks.

Obstructions and delays for emergency vehicles.

Existential threat to normal on-going life of the village.

Serious conflict with school traffic and increased danger to pedestrians in vicinity of school.

Need to avoid peak hours.

Cynical timing of Application during school holidays.

Need to consult the Local Education Authority.

Serious loss of parking space would impact other parts of the village.

Precedent for future expansion.

Too close to ancient woodland and important wildlife and wildflower areas.

Potential flooding from run-off.

Close to proposed Boxted Solar Farm site and already a proliferation of sites in the surrounding area.

Need to liaise with opposers of the Boxted Solar Farm project.

Loss of high-quality farmland.

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