

Water Hall Solar Farm



Introducing Water Hall Solar Farm

Bluefield Renewable Developments Ltd is proposing to submit a planning application to West Suffolk Council for a solar farm on land at Water Hall Farm, Waterhall Road, Wixoe, Suffolk, CO10 8UA.

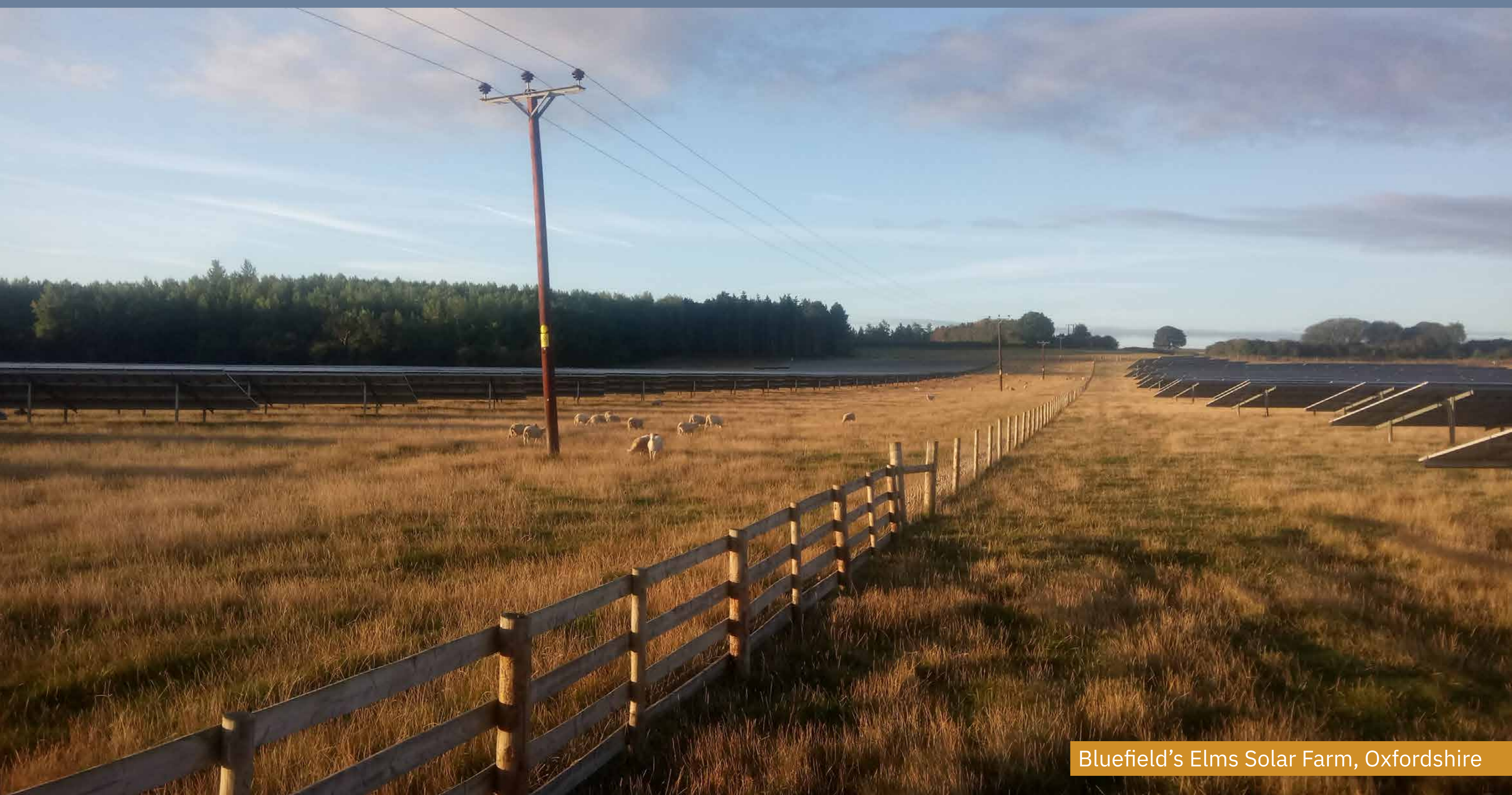


The solar farm would have an approximate capacity of 35MW. The proposed development would create enough renewable energy to meet the annual **electricity needs of approximately 8,100 homes.**



It would also offset approximately 5,500 tonnes of CO2 each year, the **equivalent of taking around 3,500 cars off the road.**

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Bluefield's Elms Solar Farm, Oxfordshire

Climate Emergency

In 2019, the UK became the first country in the world to declare a Climate Emergency. It has subsequently committed to reach Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050. In October 2021 the UK Government set out its Net Zero commitments and obligations in the 'Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener'. Amongst a number of initiatives, it confirms that by 2035 all our electricity will need to come from low carbon sources.

West Suffolk Council declared a climate emergency in September 2019. The Council's ambition is to reach net zero carbon emission by 2030. West Suffolk Council's most recent Environmental Statement recognises the importance of increasing the amount of renewable energy generated within West Suffolk.

Bluefield Renewable Developments

The Bluefield Group is a UK-based business which develops, builds and operates solar farms on behalf of the stock market listed Bluefield Solar Income Fund (BSIF).

The Fund has invested nearly £1bn in solar since its foundation in 2013 and currently owns 107 UK solar projects, with an aggregate capacity of over 800 MWp.

All of the Funds solar farms are operated and managed by the Bluefield Group, with field teams operating from regional hubs around the country.

Because we own and operate the solar farms we develop, we seek to establish long-term relationships with local communities and local authorities.

We aim to deliver high quality projects that generate significant renewable energy, have low visual impact and enhance biodiversity and land management.

For further information, please do not hesitate to email feedback@alpacacommunications.com
Or visit the dedicated website www.waterhallsolarfarm.com

Water Hall Solar Farm



Bluefield operational solar farms in Devon and Somerset

What are the benefits of the Solar Farm?

- It will assist West Suffolk Council in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in line with national and local targets and in response to the Climate Emergency
- It will contribute towards the security of energy supply in West Suffolk through the provision of local, renewable electricity
- Careful consideration has been given to the development to avoid effects on landscape, heritage or ecological designations
- Public rights of way will be unaffected by the operational solar farm
- A community fund will be established to invest in local projects and initiatives
- It will have a significant positive net biodiversity impact with provision of new trees and hedgerows and 'Biodiversity Enhancement Areas'
- This is a temporary development, allowing the land to rest for the period of operation up to 40 years
- Decommissioning and full restoration of the site at the end of life of the development will be secured via planning condition
- The proposed solar farm will not require Government subsidy.

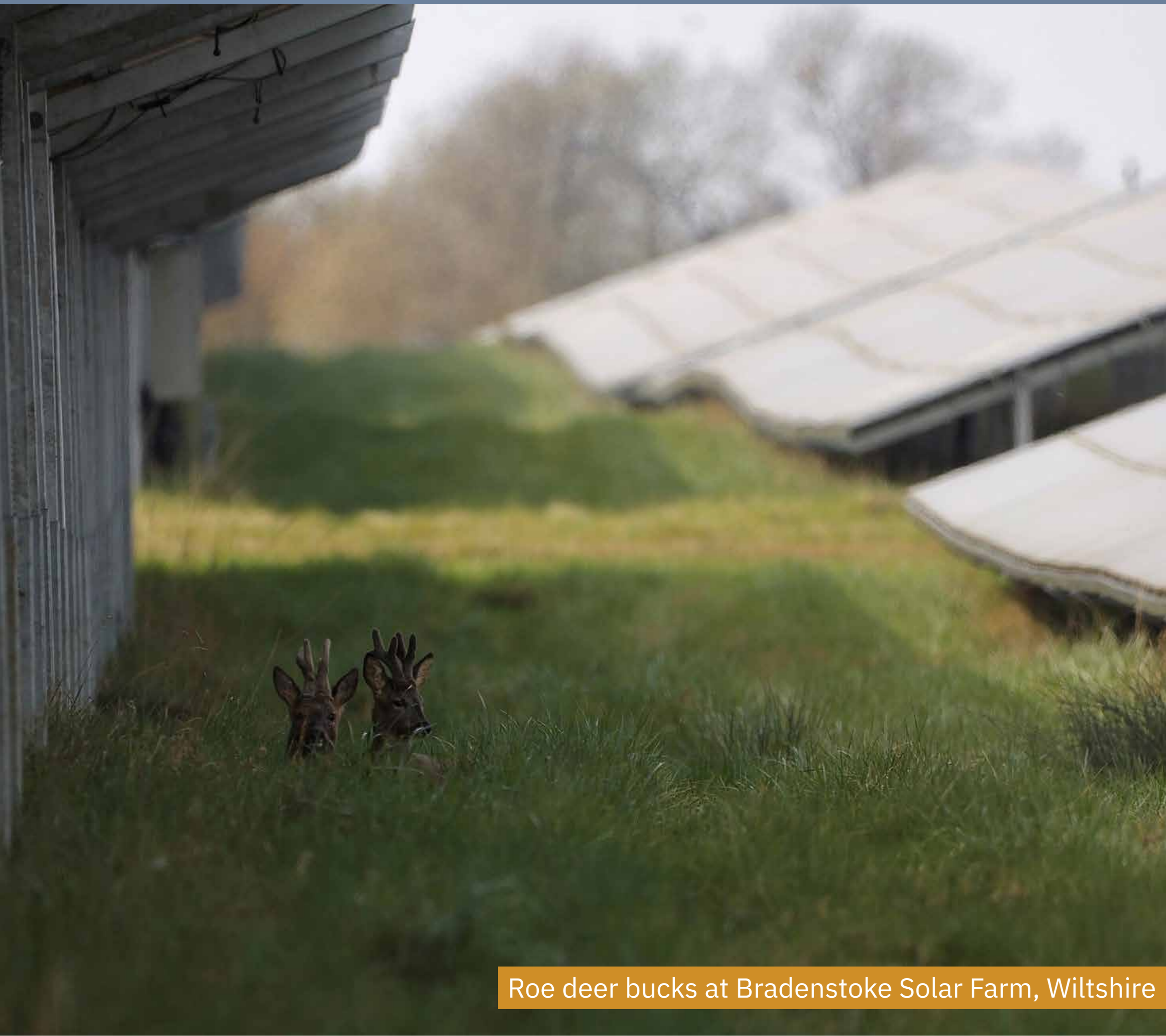
Why solar?

The Climate Emergency, the cost of living crisis and the energy crunch are all linked by how we generate, use and supply energy. We urgently need to generate energy from new, low cost, low carbon sources and solar is the lowest cost and quickest to deploy of all energy sources. It is currently one-tenth of the cost of gas and less than one third of the cost of nuclear.

Solar is already making a difference. For example, between June and August 2022, solar often provided up to 25% of UK daytime electricity (National Grid ESO carbon app). The government's Energy Security Strategy (2022) proposed a five-fold increase in solar by 2035. This can only be achieved by deploying solar on both land and buildings.

Community benefits

We believe that it's right that the community closest to a solar farm is able to benefit from it. In addition, we believe that the community itself is best placed to say what the community benefit should be. If you have an idea for a sustainable community-based scheme or project, then please share your idea with us within the comments below.



Roe deer bucks at Bradenstoke Solar Farm, Wiltshire



Wildflower planting at Freathy Solar Farm, Cornwall



Mute Swans at Redlands Solar Farm, Somerset

Ecological mitigation measures

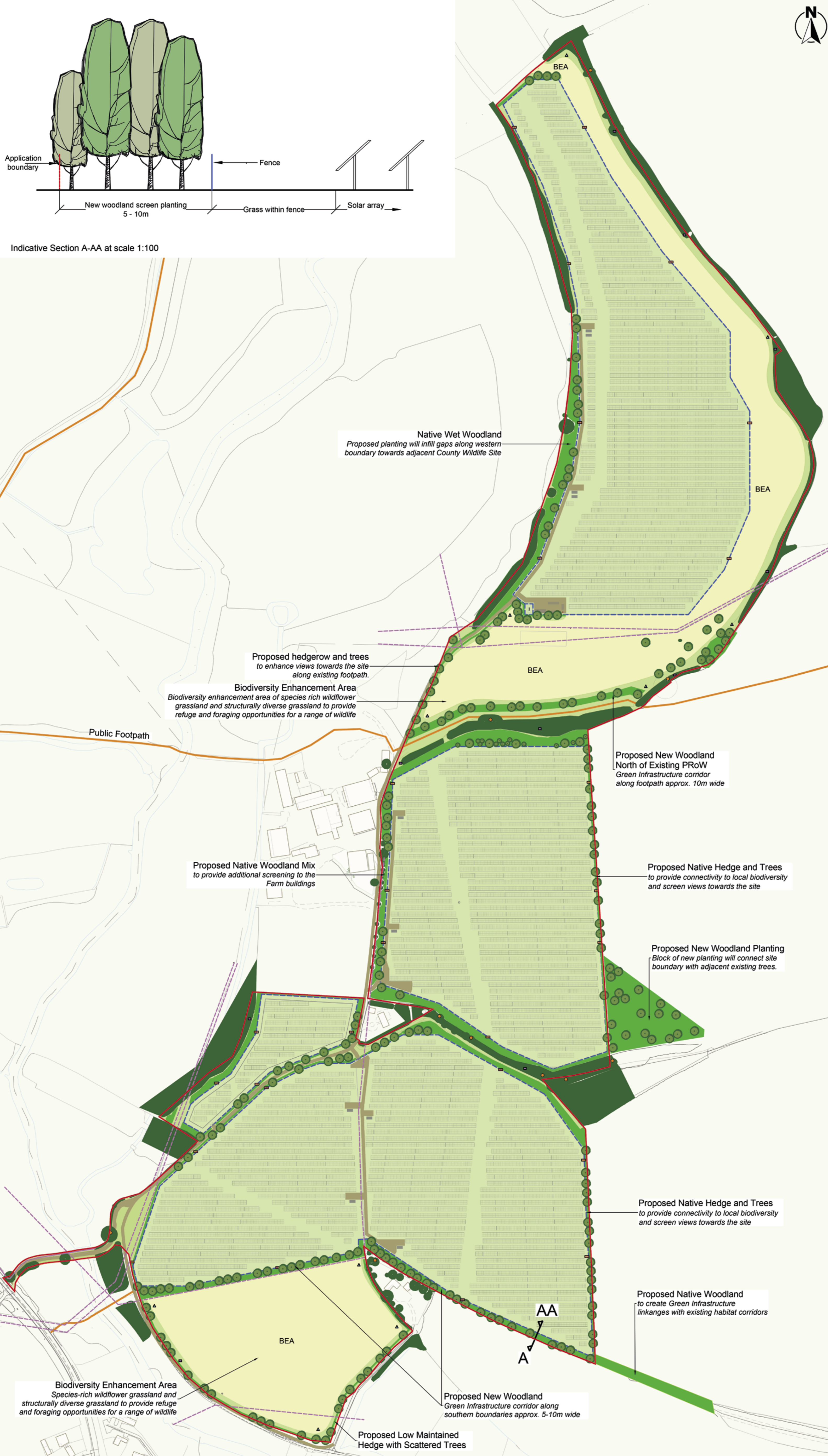
Bluefield Renewable Developments are committed to achieving significant net biodiversity gain at Water Hall Farm through the creation of new habitats to support local wildlife and protecting the habitats of wildlife that already make the site and the surrounding areas home. Existing hedgerows will be strengthened and new hedgerows will be planted to improve habitat connectivity across the site. A significant proportion of the land will be set aside for Biodiversity Enhancement Areas which will provide wildflower meadows for pollinators and grassland habitats to support mammals, birds and invertebrates.

Existing arable land will be converted to grassland within the fenced areas of the site to encourage the growth of populations of species that we know are present due to extensive survey work that has already been undertaken. This survey work will form the basis of an Ecological Assessment Report which will be submitted into planning. The fenced areas within the site will provide shelter for vulnerable species who will be able to gain access via the provision of small animal gates at the bottom of the fences.

Bluefield have a good track record of ensuring that the development of solar farms do not come at the expense of wildlife and supporting habitats.

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Landscape plan



KEY

- Site Boundary
- Proposed track
- Solar Arrays
- Overhead Power Lines
- Fence
- PRoW - Footpath
- Existing Vegetation
- Existing Tree
- Proposed New Vegetation
- Proposed Native Tree and Shrub Groups Within Species Rich Grassland
- Proposed Tree
- Biodiversity Enhancement Area
- Grass within Security Fence
Areas under Solar Arrays to be seeded with meadow grassland
- Grass Outside of Security Fence
Wildflower Mix Edge along woodland and hedges
- Ecological enhancement
- Bird boxes to be fixed at location agreed by ecologist
- Bat box to be installed at location agreed by ecologist
- Informal hibernacula deadwood gathered after site clearance, to provide shelter for existing wildlife.
- Wildlife friendly holes at the base of new fenced boundaries to allow wildlife to pass freely at location agreed by ecologist

Construction and access

The proposed site access, including construction traffic is to be taken off the existing farm access at Water Hall Farm. This access will then be used for maintenance vehicles for the lifetime of the Solar Farm. Construction is expected to take 9 months.

It is anticipated that the average number of deliveries to be made by HGVs, vans and smaller lorries during construction period which would be approximately 3 per day.

Once operational there would be limited vehicle visits each month comprising of a small commercial vehicle, accessing the site for maintenance purposes.



Route A: The most direct route for all vehicles approaching from the north, south, and west would be via the A11 or M11. This would route vehicles along the A1037, which connects into the A1017 approximately 7km northwest of the site, to then arrive at the A1017 / Ains Ford junction.

Route B: Whilst this route is appropriate for all vehicles leaving the site, the current junction arrangement cannot accommodate a HGV turning left. It is proposed that all HGVs arriving from the west would head south along the B1057 then east along the B1054 which connects back onto the A1017 at Wixoe. From this location, large vehicles are then able to turn right onto Ains Ford from the A1017.

Route C: For all vehicles approaching the site from the east it is likely they will use the A131. The A1017 provides direct access to the A131 approximately 21km southeast of the site. There is no concern regarding HGVs approaching / departing along this route as it would require all vehicles to naturally right in and left out at the Ains Ford / A1017 junction.

Elements of a Solar Farm



Solar Panels



Sheep grazing alongside solar panels



Deer fencing



Substation



Transformer/Inverter Unit



Onsite equipment

PHOTOMONTAGE 1

Stour Valley Path, looking north across the northern field



Existing view



Year 1 view - showing new onsite planting



Year 15 view - showing matured onsite planting

PHOTOMONTAGE 2

Water Hall Road, next to the pumping station access



Existing views (year 1) Site not visible due to the embankment/topography

PHOTOMONTAGE 3

Water Hall Road, further east towards Fordwater



Existing view



Year 1 view - showing new onsite planting



Year 15 view - showing matured onsite planting

PHOTOMONTAGE 4

Hill Lane, east of the farm and copse on the ridge



Existing view



Year 1 view - showing new onsite planting



Year 15 view - showing matured onsite planting