

Dear Resident

Wartling Parish Council has been approached by Intelligent Alternatives Ltd.

They have notified us of their submission of an EIA Screening Opinion Request (application reference: WD/2021/6507/SO) to Wealden District Council for a “c. 50MW Solar Farm and c. 100MW Battery Energy Storage Scheme (BESS)” on Land south of Boreham Street. I have attached a site boundary plan for your reference below.

Their Assistant Planner says;

'The site is located on agricultural land in the countryside, almost entirely in flood zone 1, and it does not lie within a statutory planning designation. The land is Grade 3 and is understood to likely be poorer quality, although this will be fully assessed. The sites boundaries appear to be lined with mature trees and hedgerow, and the site lies on undulating, southward sloping topography. [It is noted that two Public Rights of Way \(PROW\) run in and around the western section of Site, connecting Boreham Street to Hooe to the south. These will be taken into consideration within the design review to minimise impacts on PROW users.](#)

[The AONB is noted to the north of the site, but does not appear visible from the Site on account of the mature trees and topography of the land.](#) A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will be undertaken to assess the visual impact of the proposals, and consider mitigation accordingly. A Heritage Impact Assessment is also being undertaken to understand any harm to the listed buildings or the Boreham Street Conservation Area as a result of the proposed development.

I also note the Pevensey Levels Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation, and Ramsar adjacent to the eastern and southern boundary of the site. The proposals will be set back from the trees that surround the Site, and the boundaries and margins of the site, including mature trees, hedges and other areas of flora, would be protected during construction and operation. There will be limited, if any, removal of hedges, and additional planting would be put in place to help screen the Proposals and contribute to the biodiversity of the Site and its surroundings. Existing hedging will be ‘gapped up’ and allowed to grow to contribute towards the screening of the proposed development. Measures will be taken to provide a substantial biodiversity net gain as part of the proposals.

The Site is likely to be accessed via the private lane from Boreham Hill to the northwest of the Site, which also hosts the PROW along it. If utilised, traffic management measures, including signage and the use of banksmen, can be adopted to ensure traffic impacts on PROW users are appropriately managed.

Drainage will be carefully considered to ensure the proposals, especially the deployment of the BESS, do not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

It is proposed that any future application is accompanied by the following information:

- Plans and drawings
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (including accompanying photomontages)
- Heritage Impact Assessment

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Biodiversity Management Plan, including Biodiversity Net Gain details and calculations
- Agricultural Land Classification report
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Traffic Management Plan
- Planning Design and Access Statement

With regards to cumulative impacts, the nearest solar farm is understood to be the solar farm at Pashley Farm approximately 3km to the south-east of the Site, and the solar farm at Sir Francis Farm almost 5km to the east is also noted. However, no combined views are anticipated on account of the distance between them and the topography of the area.

A proposed community benefit fund is also offered to the Wartling Parish Council in conjunction with the application. This is offered by the applicant (Pelagic Energy) who would own and operate the proposed solar and BESS scheme. The offer is made irrespective of whether or not the Parish Council support the application. It is not a formal material consideration as it is not offered through a legal agreement. Rather, it is offered through a community benefit deed which would be paid directly to the Parish Council. We suggest that a member of the Parish Council steps out of the planning discussions and deals with the community benefit payment discussions.

We would welcome potential ideas for any community benefit money received. We would also invite the input of any local wildlife groups/ knowledge to inform our proposals.

It is noted the LPA have declared a climate emergency in 2019, and that the Adopted Core Strategy 2013 Policy WCS14 supports a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development. Nationally, there is also increasing support for Solar and BESS Schemes as part of the renewable energy mix, and to increase the flexibility in the UK's energy system, especially following the IPCC's report on Climate Change and in the run up to COP26.

Lastly, I would take the opportunity to highlight/summarise the following main facts and benefits of the proposals;

- BESS scheme storing up to 100MW to increase flexibility in the UK's energy supply, to support national net zero carbon targets and the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy;
- the equivalent of 15,000 homes powered annually from renewable energy, making a substantial contribution to legally binding climate change targets;
- temporary installation, fully reversible, and the solar panel farm can be utilised for sheep grazing for the duration of the proposals;
- the topography of the land is well suited for the proposals due to the southward facing, and undulating topography of the site, as well as mature trees and hedgerow acting as effective screening measures;
- no significant adverse impacts on ecology and the potential for a substantial biodiversity net gain;

- supporting the diversification of rural businesses; and
- community benefit funding opportunities'.

Wartling Parish Council has invited Intelligent Alternatives to attend our meeting on the 3rd November to answer any questions you may have and they have accepted the Parish Council's invitation.

If you have any questions or queries in the meantime please let me know and I will forward them on. My email address is wartlingpc@aol.com.

Thank you.

Alison Stevens
Clerk to Wartling Parish Council

This originates from the Parish Clerk and the e-mail and any files transmitted with it may contain confidential information. It is intended solely for the individual or entity to whom it is addressed. If you have received this e-mail in error, please notify the sender immediately, and delete the email from your inbox. Any disclosures, dissemination, modification or distribution of this e-mail is strictly prohibited. All e-mails sent from this address are scanned for viruses before transmission by all reasonable means. Wartling Parish Council does not accept responsibility for e-mails that reach their intended destination with viruses attached by third parties.