

Welcome

Welcome to our exhibition of our proposals for a 49.9MW, 144-acre solar farm, on land to the south of Stowey Road, south of Bishop Sutton and north of Hinton Blewett.

The information on display has been prepared to give you a clear understanding of what we are proposing for this site and the benefits that the development could bring to the area.

We welcome any questions you may have, are keen to hear your views on the plans, and to explore the opportunities and constraints.



About Us

Regener8 Power Ltd is a leading clean energy development and regeneration company.

Our vision is to help power the country towards more reliable, affordable, and clean energy through quality and innovative schemes, which do more than just farm clean energy and which benefit the local community.

Founded in 2018, we focus on the development of high-quality solar, storage, and green hydrogen projects. At the moment, we have almost 50 projects across the UK, Italy and Poland.



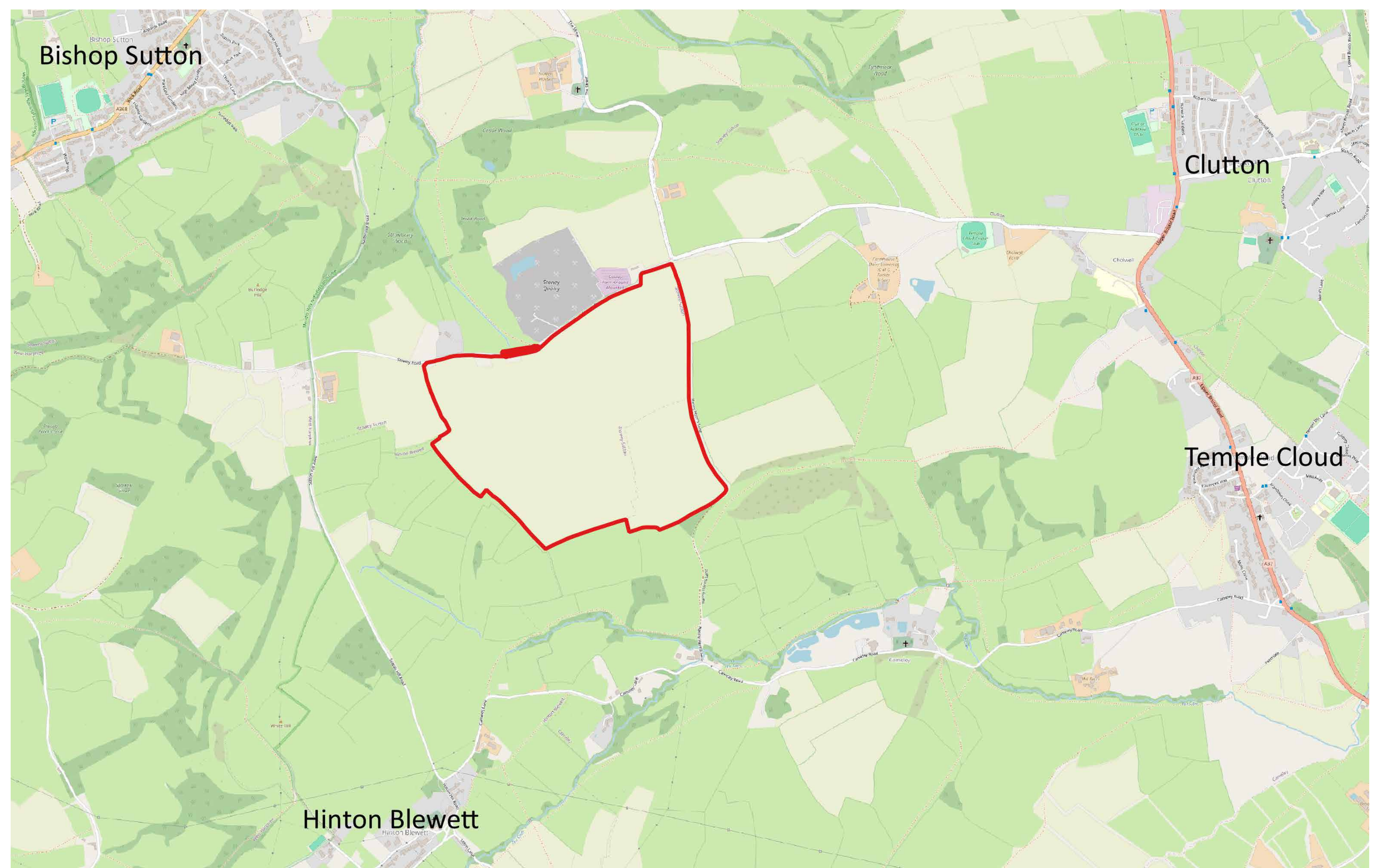
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info@stoweysolarfarm.co.uk



The Site

The 144-acre, 58.3Ha hectare site is on land to the south of Stowey Road, south of Bishop Sutton and north of Hinton Blewett.

In 2019, Bath and North East Somerset Council declared a climate emergency and committed to become carbon neutral by 2030. The Renewable Energy Resource Assessment report they produced highlighted this site as a preferred area for solar development as it sits on 'unconstrained land' with low agricultural land grade and minimal local impact.



All our sites go through a robust selection process and this site was rated highly in these 5 key areas:

- Close to a grid connection point that has capacity for renewable energy.
- Visually discreet and well-screened.
- On low grade and difficult agricultural land. The land is largely Grade 3b with some 3a.
- Has good access for construction vehicles.
- Is categorised as Flood Zone 1, which is the lowest risk.





Benefits

Solar power is an excellent way of generating renewable energy, as it:

- is quicker to build out than other energy sources such as nuclear power
- costs less to generate solar energy than using nuclear or fossil fuels
- helps improve the local environment by resting intensively farmed land and providing biodiversity improvements



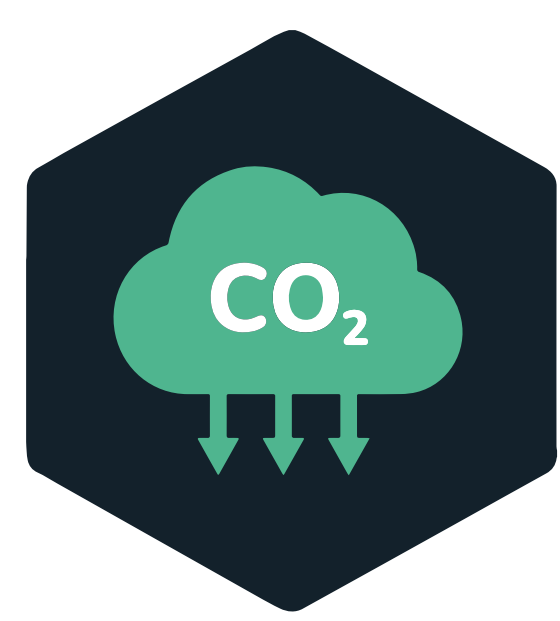
The 49.9MW development would supply **clean energy** (equivalent to the amount used by approx. 13,600 homes a year) into the National Grid to meet local and national demand.



Business rate contributions of approx. £100K per year.



Landscape and views will be protected with the retention and enhancement of existing hedgerows through 'gapping up' and tree planting at key places.



The displacement of over 450,000 tonnes of CO2 from equivalent fossil fuel energy. This equates to taking circa 5,500 cars off Somerset's roads per year.



A community benefit fund will be provided. Part of the consultation is to discuss how this can best be managed and directed.



Considerable biodiversity net gain, providing ecological benefits through new habitats, such as wildflower meadows, grassland areas, insect hotels, bird nesting boxes and beehives.



The site would continue to be used for sheep grazing.





Opportunities & Constraints

The benefits of solar are significant
but it has to be done right.

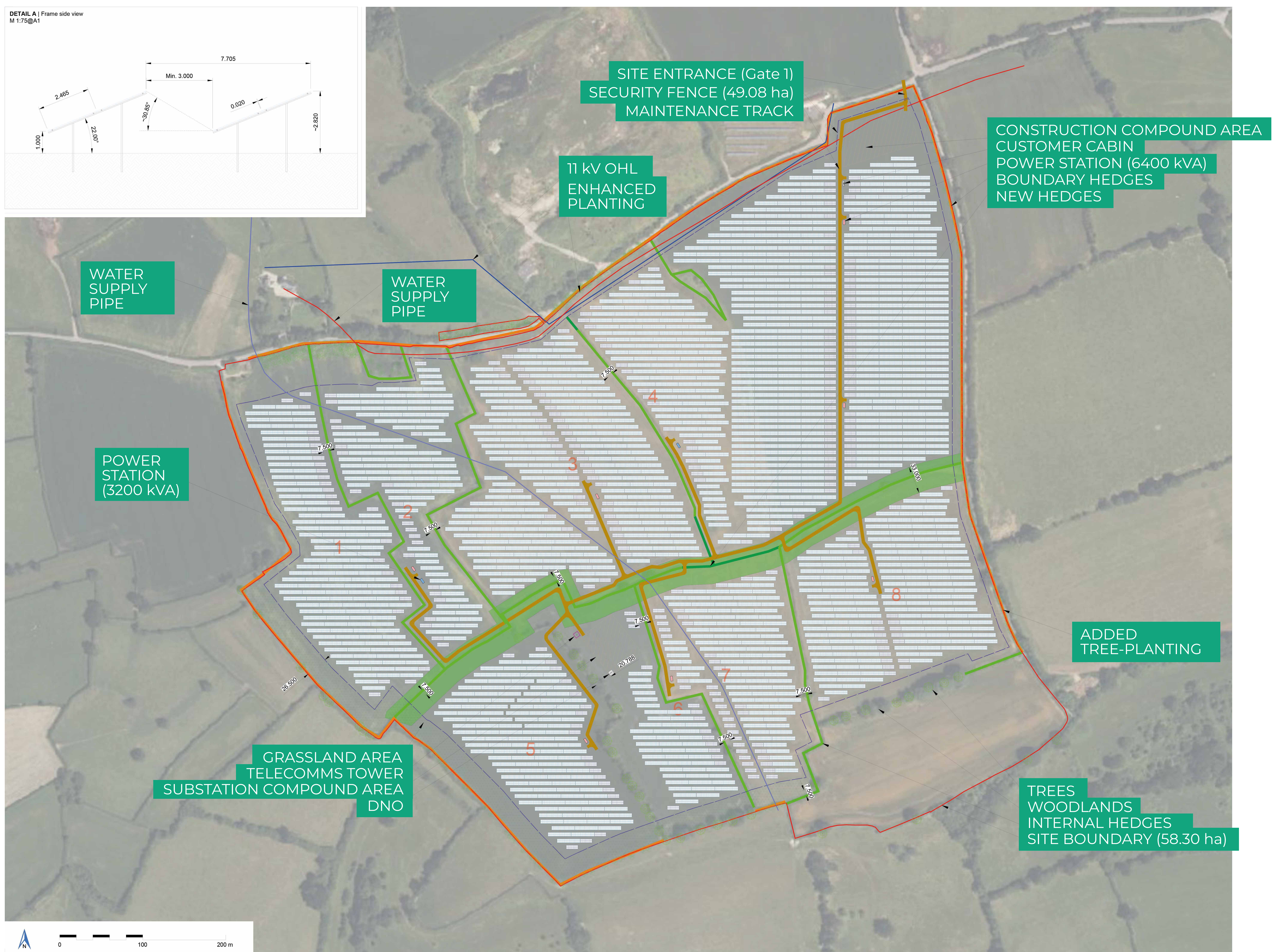
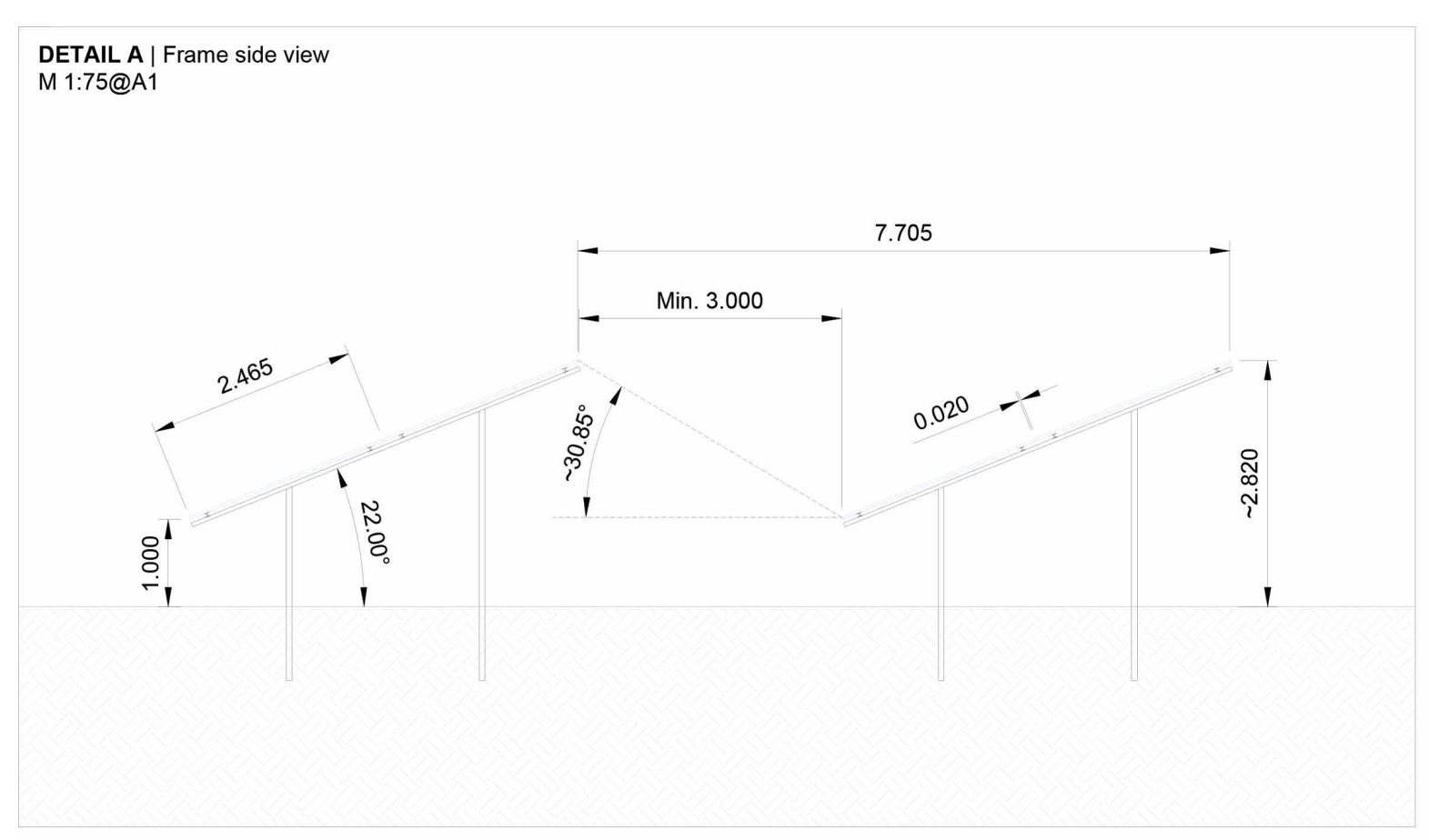
We are keen that our scheme
minimises the negatives and
maximises the benefits and the
plan shown below provides our
early thoughts on this.

We would welcome your views
on this.



Constraints and Opportunities Plan





Stowey Solar Farm

Site Layout

The photovoltaic (PV) panels here would be up to 3m high, connected in strings that feed into an inverter to collect the energy generated and transport it to the substation.

Alongside the panels, we are proposing a suite of measures to enhance the local environment including the planting of wildflower meadows on the site and providing new habitats to encourage biodiversity.

Highways, Construction & Ongoing Maintenance

Access for construction and maintenance vehicles would be from the A37.

Construction would take 6 to 12 months and we'd try to minimise disruption through measures such as restricting deliveries during rush hours and conditioned through a Construction Management Plan. At peak, there would be a maximum of 10 deliveries a day.

Once operational, the scheme will require minimal maintenance, which will likely take the form of occasional visits in one passenger vehicle from a maintenance team.

The application seeks planning permission for 55 years at which point it would be returned to how it looks today. Around 95% of the materials in solar panels are recyclable.





Agricultural use

An agricultural land grade assessment has concluded that the land is 66% grade 3b and 33% grade 3a, indicating it is not predominantly 'best and most versatile' land.

A further agronomic report has been commissioned to advise on which agricultural operations might be undertaken with a solar array installed. This concluded that:

- The land is unsuited to continued arable farming. Its yield potential is highly limited, the stone content of soils and consequent wearing burden on machinery is very high. Its small field sizes and awkward field shapes make machinery use difficult and inefficient, leading to soil compaction.
- A return to permanent pasture supporting livestock grazing would also contribute to reducing carbon loss from continued cultivation and restore soil organic matter content.
- Grazing sheep on permanent pasture under a solar array is proven in terms of deliverability and sustainability. Market conditions for sheep farming are also currently very favourable.

At a time when farmers are struggling, it is important to support them, or risk losing our locally-produced foods. Hosting solar farms allows farmers to find new revenue, helping British farming to continue.





Ecology

Not only are we facing a climate crisis, but we are facing an ecological emergency, too, and the two are intrinsically linked. Solar farms offer a unique opportunity to significantly improve the biodiversity of the land.

The exact details of our proposals to improve local habitats are still being developed, but we would welcome your thoughts on what you would and wouldn't like to see.

Our plans to achieve a considerable biodiversity net gain include:



Biodiversity and wildlife habitat provision



Soil erosion mitigation



Carbon storage



Community engagement



Flood attenuation



Food provision and support for sustainable agriculture



Pollination





FAQs

Are solar farms built with landscape in mind?

Absolutely, we've spent a lot of time looking at where best the panels should sit to minimise impact, how new planting can help, and how we can restore traditional meadows and hedgerows. The maximum height of the panels is 3 metres, which is roughly the same height as the existing hedgerows.

Our landscape plans include planting new hedgerows, tree planting, new foraging areas for wildflower meadows, all of which will provide ecological benefit alongside screening views of the site.

We're really keen to hear your views and ideas on this.

How much energy is used to produce solar panels?

In-depth studies show that the typical payback time for the energy used in solar panel production is 1 to 4 years.

Will there be disturbance during construction?

It is very difficult to avoid any form of disturbance during construction but our team are highly experienced and will do all we can to minimise this. There will also be a formal Construction Management and Ecology Plan which will condition aspects such as: the construction and delivery route, delivery and working times and road conditions, e.g. mud on the road.

Should planning be granted, we would commit to liaising with the Parish Councils and local residents to further help this.

Why are most solar farms built on agricultural land?

Solar is one of the cheapest forms of clean renewable energy and is vital in helping tackle both the climate and cost of living crisis. This cannot be achieved through rooftop and brownfield solar installations alone, due to the need for scale and the rooftop being so much more expensive. We have looked to see if there are any suitable brownfield sites in the area but there are not.



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Community Benefit

In addition to helping the UK meet its net zero targets, we believe it's important that the local community benefit from this. To support this, there will be an annual financial contribution to the community.

As well as our community benefit, business rates generated from this development will stay local and are expected to be around £100K per year.

Provision of a community benefit fund

It's important that the local community benefit from this development and to support this, there will be an annual financial contribution to the community.

Regener8 would welcome your suggestions for suitable projects for funding and we are keen to know your priorities. Examples of how the fund has been distributed through other schemes include:

- rooftop solar for community buildings or schools
- new community facilities or maintenance of existing one
- school or educational equipment and funding
- sustainable initiatives
- helping with local energy or food poverty

We are also keen to talk about how this could be managed and administered.



Feedback & Next Steps

Thank you for coming to the exhibition.

We are keen to hear what you think, so please complete a feedback form and pop it in the feedback box. Your comments are important to us and will help inform the developing plans, ahead of our planning application and form a part of the planning application.

Our public consultation is open until Monday 5th August.

You can leave feedback via the online feedback form on our website:

www.stowaysolarfarm.co.uk

You can also find copies of the banners displayed here today.

Get in Touch

✉ info@stowaysolarfarm.co.uk

☎ **Freephone 0800 689 5209**
(working hours)

✉ **Write to us at Freepost
CONSULTATION REPLY**
(If you write this address on an envelope and put it in a post box, it will come to our office free of charge – no need for a stamp.)

Indicative Timeline

- 22nd July 2024**
Public Exhibition.
- 5th August 2024**
Public consultation closes.
Deadline for feedback.
- Summer 2024**
Review of feedback.
Proposals reviewed,
amended and finalised.
- Summer 2024**
Submission of planning
application to BANES
Council.
- Autumn 2024**
Once submitted, the Council
will then consider our plans
and determine whether they
should receive planning
permission. It is difficult to
estimate how long this will
take, but we expect around
4 to 6 months.
- 2025 onwards**
If planning permission is
granted, construction takes
between 6 to 12 months. We
hope to be generating clean
energy in 2026/27.

