

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE TO SOLAR FARM PLANNING APPLICATION

Preston Parish Council supports the development of solar renewable energy and welcomes the opportunity to work with Belectric to increase supply to the national grid.

However, Preston Parish Council objects to this proposal on the grounds of size. The proposed 94-acre site will dominate the small community of Preston and destroy the open view from the bridleway and the Witpit Lane Bridge. The proposal is alien and urbanising; it does not fit well in the rural landscape and does not conserve or enhance it. This rural view is a valuable asset to local residents, visitors and walkers and the loss of this amenity is a significant material consideration.

The Parish Council wishes to see a reduction in the overall size of the application by removing the area parallel to the bridleway, equating to half of the first field. This amendment together with significant planting would result in the proposal being less visible from the Witpit Lane Bridge and the bridleway.

In addition, there is considerable local concern regarding the cumulative impact created by an existing solar farm in close proximity in the adjoining Parish of Ampney Crucis together with plans for another 2 such farms within a 5-mile radius.

However, if CDC is minded to approve the application, Preston Parish Council requests that the following issues be conditional on any planning approval and to be agreed with the Parish Council

- A transport plan to cover the building phase and include – a mobile wheel washer to be on site for vehicles leaving the site; A417 London Road to be kept clean throughout the working day; all road and verge damage (especially on Witpit Lane and A417 London Road) to be repaired at the expense of the developer; no heavy vehicles to use the road through the Village; working hours to be restricted to a reasonable time and enforced.
- Landscaping of the site including screening to protect the view from Witpit Lane Bridge and the bridleway.
- Details of Security, Lighting and Fencing.
- Details of any battery storage to be used in the future
- Decommissioning Method and Funding

Furthermore, the Parish Council requests that CDC gives a view on the scale of solar development across the District that it considers would be detrimental to the landscape as there are currently no guidelines but an increasing number of solar farm planning applications.