

BYGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL

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AUTUMN 2021 NEWSLETTER

To the Residents of Bygrave

We hope you are all keeping safe and well

Proposed Solar Farm

**Formal Presentation in St Margarets Church Bygrave
Tuesday 7th December 2021 commencing 5.00pm -7.30pm**

You will be aware that the village has been notified of a proposed solar farm installation to the Tophams Field which is to the left hand side of the road heading out of the top village towards Ashwell; from the tree nursery to Cat Ditch.

The proposal is being brought by a Company called Pathfinder Clean Energy (PACE) Ltd. To view the proposals please go to their website www.tophamssolar.co.uk.

- **There is no great resistance from the Parish Council to a Solar farm in the area. However, generally such farms are constructed away from towns and villages and are inconspicuous. It is considered that this installation is quite inappropriate for this proposed location directly adjacent to Bygrave Village.**
- **The Upper village is a residential conservation area; the proposal is for an industrial development. Pace literature states that other sites were considered but no reference to why these were rejected by them in favour of this treasured location**
- **A number of attractive views of open countryside from road and footpath would be severely impacted. Entering Bygrave from Ashwell, from the hill prior to the Knowl, all that will be seen will be a sea of steel and glass, as that area is undulating countryside. The Ickneild Way bounds one side of this proposed development again impacting on the views from that path for walkers and horse riders.**
- **With the proposed development of Baldock by the Local Authority to the South of our village, both ends of our village will be impacted by the urbanisation of North Hertfordshire**

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The PACE literature is heavily slanted towards being 'green' which on the face of it might make people think that the proposals are a good idea. However, we believe that there are additional, extremely important factors that should also be considered:

- **Loss of high grade arable farming for forty years.**
- **It is anticipated that a significant number of large vehicles will be using Ashwell Road to deliver all the components**
- **The PACE literature states that construction traffic will go through Ashwell and down Ashwell Road to the site. There is a concern that with the existing traffic issues in Ashwell, this will not happen and the construction traffic will go through Bygrave instead. You may recall the horrendous number of large lorries that plagued our village during construction of the Croudace site..**
- **The PACE literature states that ground levels will be reduced. It is hard to see how this would make any meaningful improvement to the visual impact of the proposed solar farm. It would, however, likely result in additional construction traffic (the excess soil will need to be transported away from the site)**
- **The PACE literature states that there will be additional planting of trees and shrubs. Clarification is required as to whether this will be mature planting. If not, we would likely be looking at 10 years plus for the planting to mature and provide suitable screening.**
- **The PACE literature states that there will be habitats produced. However, there is already a significant variety of wildlife in the field and surrounding areas which is likely to be adversely impacted by the development**
- **The PACE literature does not state that there will be a [security] fence surrounding the installation. Should one be required then this will add to the visual impact, as would any other security devices that they may decide to deploy eg CCTV cameras (which are usually used for such developments).**
- **There is concern of noise from plant installed to service the panels**
- **There is concern of glare from the panels**
- **There is a lot of information available on solar farms including challenge on their “green credentials” in areas such as production, gases used within the panels, installation and decommissioning and the small electricity production in the UK climate.**
- **In February 2021 PACE received planning permission for its first installation in Norfolk – so has no track record of such developments.**