

# Community Input



Yeowood Solar Farm, Devon



Newlands Solar Farm, Devon

Visit our YouTube channel 'Lightsource Solar' to watch the video!



'Solar Independence Day' at Dunsfold Park, Surrey

**Thank You** to all those who came along to our Community Information Evening in February and left feedback with us. Your input has been vital in ensuring that our proposals integrate with the activities and aspirations of the local community. In summary -

- Overall, the local community has been supportive of our proposals. Comments included: the importance of producing more local renewable energy to benefit the environment, the benefits the proposal would bring for local wildlife, and an appreciation that the construction time would be short and the ongoing operation of the solar farm would not interfere with local activities or traffic.
- As we received largely positive feedback, little has changed with regards to the layout or shape of the proposed solar farm since we last presented our plans. However, we have refined our plans for managing the land around the solar farm in response to the results of ecological studies and the recommendations of consultant ecologists. These plans are outlined in the Planting Plan and Biodiversity Management Plan submitted with the application. They include: improving and planting hedgerows, installing bird and bat boxes, building log piles, and seeding strips of wild bird seed to increase food resources for wildlife.
- A neighbouring landowner raised concerns that the hedges along the boundaries of the southern fields required reinforcing - presently his livestock are able to escape onto the site. So our plans now include additional planting to strengthen these hedgerows where necessary.
- During our routine assessments of the site, two areas of archaeological interest were found - one in the north east, and one in the north west. These areas will remain panel-free in order not to disturb them.
- Finally, thank you to the local interest groups and businesses who got in touch and expressed an interest in getting involved in the project. If you have not yet left your business/group details with us and would like to be involved during and post construction, please contact our team.

## What Happens Next?

A formal planning application has been submitted to Antrim and Newtownabbey Council and has been validated with the following reference number:

**T/2015/0094/F**

The application is currently within a 'public consultation phase' and is available to view and submit comments online.

**If you have any further questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact us.**

# Project Update, March 2015 PROPOSED SOLAR FARM at MILLAR FARM

Application Reference: T/2015/0094/F



## What's Changed?

**Biodiversity Management Plan finalised, including bird and bat boxes, wild flowers, wild bird seed strips and insect-friendly hibernacula**

**New tree and hedgerow planting to reinforce the northern and southern field boundaries**

As you may be aware, Lightsource Renewable Energy is working on a proposal for a solar farm on land North West of 72 Milltown Road, known as 'Millar Farm'. Lightsource already owns and operates a variety of solar farms and rooftop installations across the country, working with local communities, businesses and landowners to generate green energy locally and sustainably.

We have now finalised our proposal and a formal planning application has been submitted to Antrim and Newtownabbey Council. The application has been validated and is available to view in full on the Council website by searching the following reference number: T/2015/0094/F

As we received largely positive feedback on our initial design, little has changed with regards to the layout or shape of the solar farm. But we hope this update will give a helpful overview of the finalised Planting Plan and Biodiversity Management Plan, and an insight into other ways the project has developed. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch with our Planning Team directly.



*Solar farms provide great opportunities for biodiversity enhancement*

# THE REVISED PROPOSAL:

## Proposed solar farm North West of 72 Milltown Road, known as 'Millar Farm', Antrim, BT41 2JJ

Lightsource worked closely with ecologists on a Biodiversity Management Plan which has been submitted as part of the planning application. The plan will ensure that the land is managed responsibly throughout the life of the solar farm; enhancing botanical biodiversity, improving prospects for wildlife and minimising disturbance, and allowing a continuation of agricultural practices on-site:



**Meadow Pasture**  
Grass will be sown throughout the solar farm, including the areas oversailed by panels. It will be seeded with a mix of wild flowers and grassland species to create a meadow pasture.

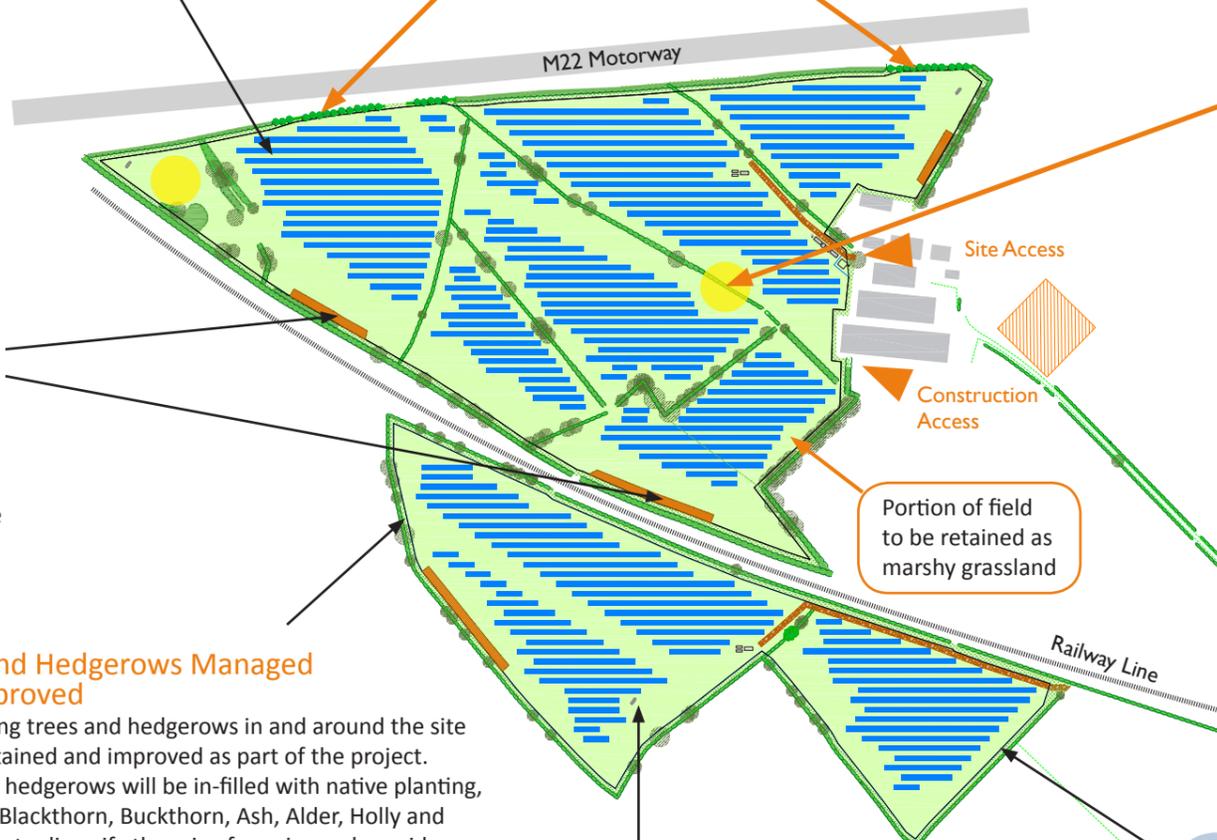
**New Planting**  
New native trees and hedgerow are proposed to fill the gaps between the adjoining motorway tree lines. This will provide better visual screening, reducing any potential views into the solar farm.



**Wide Field Margins**  
The panels are set back a large distance from the boundaries of the field to avoid areas shaded by the surrounding vegetation. These expansive field margins and the wide gaps between the rows of panels will leave the majority of the solar farm's grasslands completely open and uncovered.



**Wild Bird Seed Mix Strips**  
A wild bird seed mix, including mustard, spring wheat, white/red millet, triticale and barley, will be sown in strips as shown in orange on the plan. These areas will provide a valuable food resource for local birds.



**Preserving Archaeology**  
Our studies found two areas of archaeological interest on the site - marked in yellow. In order not to disturb the findings, the design leaves these areas panel-free.



**Bird and Bat Boxes**  
Bird nest boxes and bat roost boxes are proposed in suitable trees around the site boundary to encourage nesting and roosting.



Holly

**Trees and Hedgerows Managed and Improved**  
The existing trees and hedgerows in and around the site will be retained and improved as part of the project. Boundary hedgerows will be in-filled with native planting, including Blackthorn, Buckthorn, Ash, Alder, Holly and Hawthorn, to diversify the mix of species and provide better connectivity, shelter and foraging resources for wildlife. New planting will specifically aim to reinforce the hedgerow along this south western boundary as recommended by the site's neighbour.



Hawthorn



**Log, Rock and Stone Piles**  
3 hibernacula will be installed, comprising log, rock and stone piles. These are aimed at providing shelter for reptiles and amphibians and may also be used by a variety of insects and small mammals.



**Rural Fencing**  
A timber and wire agricultural fence of about 2 metres in height is proposed, appropriate to the rural setting. The fence will sit within the surrounding hedgerows and trees. Mammal Gates in the fencing will allow small mammals to move freely across the site.

### HOW MUCH ENERGY?

- 7.62 Megawatts Peak (MWp)
- 1,907 households powered
- 3,250 tonnes of carbon emissions saved, every year
- ...Equivalent to taking 723 large family cars off the road

The operation of the solar farm would be of no disturbance to farm animals, wildlife, walkers or motorists nearby. There will be no flood lighting, no new overhead lines and no moving parts, and as solar panels are designed to absorb daylight, any reflection is dull and minimal.



**Sheep Grazing**  
The land is currently used as grazing pasture for cattle. Once the solar farm is in place the land will continue its use for grazing, becoming home to a flock of sheep. This will enable the land to produce food as well as locally generated energy.