

Kettleburgh Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday 12th August 2025 at 19.00 – Kettleburgh Village Hall

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Cllr Jardine, Cllr Clark, Cllr Garland and Cllr Mealing.

1/12/8 Apologies and Approval of Absence – Cllr Booth & Cllr Barton: proposed and seconded; approved.

2/12/8 Declarations of Interest - None

3/12/8 Planning Consultation

Application No.: DC/25/2733/FUL

Proposal: Full planning application for the construction and operation of a Solar Farm (49.9MW) and Battery Energy Storage Scheme (50MW) with all associated works, equipment, enclosures, access and biodiversity net gains

Site Address: Parcels to Northwest of Easton and Southwest of Letheringham, Suffolk

Link: [here](#)

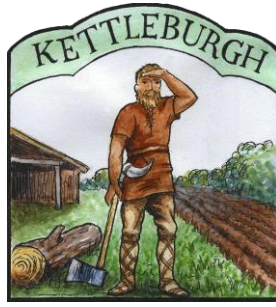
1. Introduction to the Application

Cllr Jardine provided an overview of the planning application. It was noted that the generating capacity is 49.9MW, marginally below the 50MW threshold which would require a formal Environmental Impact Assessment. This omission was highlighted as significant given the scale of the development. A more detailed Visual Impact Assessment was requested, particularly to include CGI visualisations of the views affected.

2. External Representatives

2.1 Cllr Bryce

Cllr Bryce reported that she had attended Easton Parish Council's meeting earlier that evening and confirmed her opposition to the proposal. The primary grounds for her objection included:



- **Highways Impact:** The local rural road network is wholly inadequate to accommodate the volume and size of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) required during construction. Many roads measure approximately 3.5m in width, compared with the 5.5m necessary for two HGVs to pass.
- **Safety Concerns:** The vulnerability of rural road users would be significantly increased.
- **Landscape and Restoration:** Long-term harm to local views and no guarantee of site restoration after the proposed 40-year operational period.
- **Battery Disposal:** Lack of information on end-of-life battery management.
- **Cumulative Impact:** Additional traffic and disruption from other major developments, including Sizewell C and the Wickham Market park-and-ride.
- **Planning Approach:** The application is seen as part of a piecemeal strategy that could open the door to further large-scale energy projects in the area.
- **Emergency Access:** Fire and rescue access arrangements are unclear; further details have been requested.

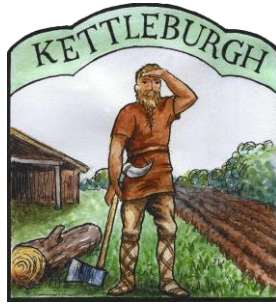
She confirmed she has contacted Suffolk Highways to request an on-the-ground site assessment to evaluate these concerns in practical terms.

Cllr Bryce left the meeting at 19:14.

2.2 Cllr Andrew Maskery (Letheringham Parish Council)

Cllr Maskery advised that Letheringham Parish Council had not been consulted by the applicant or landowner, and became aware of the application only via the East Suffolk Council planning portal. His report included the following:

- **Public Engagement Failures:** Company representatives attending a prior meeting at Easton Village Hall gave inconsistent and, at times, inaccurate information.
- **Neighbouring Council Responses:** Both Easton and Letheringham Parish Councils have formally resolved to object to the application.
- **Coordinated Opposition:** A working group has been formed across parishes, engaging planning, landscape, flooding, and ecological consultants.
- **Scale of Development:** The proposal covers 150 acres in Letheringham and 50 acres in Easton. Infrastructure would include a 2.4m-high security fence, CCTV, a 6m-high high-voltage compound with motion-sensitive lighting, and 3m-high solar panels.
- **Access Routes:** Construction access is proposed via the B1078 from Wickham Market. Most local roads are too narrow to accommodate two passing HGVs.

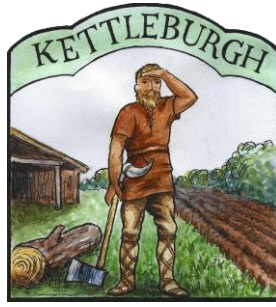


- **Grid Connection Works:** A 132kV cable is proposed from the battery storage facility, running approximately 6km under and alongside roads, through Easton, and connecting to the substation at Wickham Market near Garnet Garden Centre. This route would pass close to Easton's historic crinkle-crankle wall. The cable length could result in power loss, potentially requiring an increased cable width.
- **Historic Significance:** The site lies within a former deer park associated with Letheringham Lodge (Grade II listed), which increases the heritage sensitivity of the location.
- **Precedent Risk:** Establishing a substantial grid connection could encourage further conversion of agricultural land to solar energy production.
- **Lack of Mitigation:** No changes have been made to the application to reduce impacts, such as additional planting or relocation of infrastructure away from housing.
- **Traffic Volumes:** For a similar battery storage facility, 80 personnel and approximately 850 HGV movements occurred over a 12-month construction period, excluding private vehicles.
- **Biodiversity:** The application claims a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), the minimum requirement, but offers no detailed evidence.

3. Public Participation

Members of the public raised the following points:

- The development is industrial in scale and more accurately described as a power station than a solar farm.
- The company's primary interest appears to be financial gain.
- Farmers may be incentivised by a guaranteed 40-year income, but this comes at the cost of significant environmental harm.
- There is no clear evidence of need for the development in this location given the existing energy generation capacity at Sizewell B and C.
- The Easton Neighbourhood Plan makes no reference to solar farms.
- Concerns about excessive noise levels, particularly during night-time, despite assurances in the noise assessment.
- Questions regarding why this specific location was selected and whether other sites were considered.
- Comparison to other solar farms offering substantial community benefit funds (e.g., £400,000), with uncertainty as to whether similar funding would be available here.



4. Kettleburgh Parish Council Discussion and Responses

Cllr Clark:

- Objected based on deficiencies in the BNG assessment, which did not specify the percentage gain and failed to consider the full impact of the solar panels.
- Supported Suffolk Wildlife Trust's position that the assessment was flawed.
- Noted missing or inadequate surveys, including for great crested newts, wintering birds, and bats (with the bat survey heavily redacted).
- Highlighted the absence of clear mitigation measures, and the need for a habitats regulations assessment.
- Raised concerns over protection of trees and hedgerows.
- Objected to the significant visual impact, particularly during the first 15 years of operation, with permanent harm to public footpaths and the rural character of the landscape.
- Considered the proposal contrary to neighbourhood plan policies on openness and views.

Cllr Mealing:

- Objected, citing the absence of a logical rationale for siting the development in this location and its harmful impact on the beauty of the countryside.

Cllr Garland:

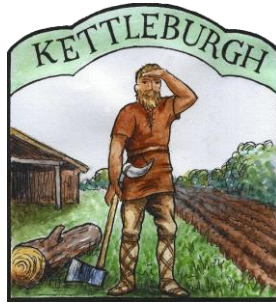
- Objected, referring to Forestry Commission concerns over inadequate buffer distances to ancient woodland (20m considered insufficient).
- Criticised the Statement of Community Engagement as inadequate, noting the survey achieved only a 6% response rate and was carried out before the planning application was submitted.
- Raised significant concerns regarding increased flood risk.

Cllr Jardine:

- Objected for the reasons discussed earlier in the meeting.
- Recommended that Kettleburgh Parish Council coordinate its response with neighbouring parishes to ensure alignment.

5. Resolution

It was **resolved unanimously** that Kettleburgh Parish Council objects to Planning Application DC/25/2733/FUL.



4/12/8. Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled ordinary meeting of Kettleburgh Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 9 September 2025.

Meeting closed: 20:10

4/12/8 Dates of Next Meetings:

Scheduled Ordinary Meeting: Tuesday 9th September 2025

Meeting closed – 20.10