

1. Good evening councillors, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for inviting us to present to you this evening our proposal for Foxwalks solar farm.
2. My name is Hugo House, I am a founder of Spring, the developer. Our mission is to help to UK reach net zero emissions by delivering new renewable energy. I would like to share with you the journey we have taken from identifying a possible site for a solar farm to the proposed design we have here – A design we have presented locally today following consultation.
3. Spring is a small team with several of us working in renewables for almost 20 years. We identify possible projects by understanding where the electricity grid has the capacity or the strength to accommodate new generation.

You may be surprised to learn, or you may have read in the news in recent weeks that because of our aging grid network there are very few opportunities to make viable new grid connections and this is now recognised as a major challenge for the UK in achieving our Net Zero targets.

We identified that the Upton Warren substation can support a viable grid connection and we began our work to find a location suitable for hosting a solar farm.

We do this by conducting a constraints analysis, looking at local plans, considering the ecology, heritage, landscape designations, transport routes etc. Once we have shortlisted the most suitable areas we approach the landowners of those suitable sites.

4. We identified Foxwalks farm as a suitable location and in consultation with the landowner we identified an initial area to progress our design. This plan shows the area initially considered and we conducted our detailed study on this area and its surrounds. And we started a conversation with Bromsgrove council planning department through the pre-application process.

5. As our work advanced and we were confident we were likely to progress the project to a planning application, we presented our proposals locally in February this year, to let people know what our plans were and most importantly, to listen to their feedback.

This was the plan we presented in the booklet we hand delivered locally and which was included in the online presentation that members of the parish council attended.

6. We're very grateful for the time and attention people locally have given to engaging with our proposal. The important considerations we have incorporated into our evolved design are:
 - a. Distancing the panels from the residential property at Foxwalks farm. By moving the area set aside for skylark habitat from A1 to A
 - b. This sets the panels in this area back an additional 300m beyond the existing pylons
 - c. Introduced over 2 acres of new woodland planting to the east of this field. Enhancing the existing hedgerows to provide screening and improve landscape features.
 - d. Re-routed the construction access which will no longer pass beside the residential property and through Foxwalks farmyard and now routes to the south of the Moto-X track and into site here.

We think the feedback we received that influenced these changes have led to some really meaning improvements in the design and we are really grateful for that input.

VI – This design can achieve

- 45MW of electrical output
- 13,000 homes powered by the sites annual output
- 8,000 tonnes of CO₂ saved each year
- 1km from the grid connection
- If consented and during construction 5 HGVs on average daily – via Grafton lane

7. **Locating power where we need it.** As the UK replaces fossil fuels with new, clean energy, locating solar farms near large communities like Bromsgrove where we use the energy is a common-sense solution for meeting our energy needs. It helps to keep the lights on and to cut costs.

A viable grid connection. As I mentioned at the beginning, a key consideration is being able to **make a technically viable and cost-effective grid connection.** These opportunities are few and far between however this can be achieved at Foxwalks farm by plugging into the existing grid without major upgrades.

We aim to locate solar farms where they create minimal impacts. We consider factors such as local amenity, heritage, agriculture, landscape, transport etc. We think Foxwalks farm offers **the most appropriate location for a solar farm** of land available locally.

Today the site is of quite low ecological value. We propose to plant over **460 meters** of new native hedgerow and restore more than **2,200 meters of existing hedgerows** and woodland boundaries. We will install bat boxes and owl boxes, improve ponds and manage 7 acres of land for skylark habitat. If our planning proposal is approved, these changes will achieve a 169% net gain in biodiversity within the site.

8. Share some photos to help convey what is involved in installing and operating a solar farm. In the early stages steel piles driven into ground to affix the framework
9. Framework being installed – minimal disruption to the ground
10. A number of trenches are dug into which are laid cables that gather the electricity from the panels on route to the electricity grid.
11. Panels are installed to the framework
12. Cabins that house electrical switchgear similar to this are located within the site size approximately 3mx5m
13. St Marks school were very interested to come and see the site while in construction as part of their science and environmental learning. Additional H&S and Risk assessment to keep everybody safe we had a great day

14. Following construction we hosted an open day inviting the village to come and see the site
15. With the school children we prepared, filled and buried a time capsule in the site imagining what the world would and its environment would be like when the solar farm came to the end of its life. The time capsule was marked on the as-built plans so it would be easily located when decommissioned.
16. We design our sites so they can be grazed by sheep. The landowners are sheep farmers so the land we are proposing for solar will continue in agriculture as it does today.
17. The land surrounding the panels remains in permanent pasture
18. They become great location to locate bee hives, next to secure organic meadow

Why are we doing this?

We are in an environmental emergency. Climate Change is the greatest threat humanity faces - this is no overstatement. The scientific community is united: to avoid catastrophic climate change, we must keep global warming below 1.5°C - we need to take exceptional action to address it and urgently.

In 2019 the UK government declared a climate emergency and committed to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. Bromsgrove District Council has also declared a climate emergency.

Switching our energy system to renewables, including solar power, is one of the quickest, most effective ways to combat climate change. Every district in the country will need to host renewable energy projects like our proposed Foxwalks solar farm if we are to overcome this climate crisis and so we can safeguard our planet for our children and grandchildren.