



Photograph courtesy of Brenda Langton

STOW BUGLE

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE RESIDENTS OF STOW PARISH

*Stow, Normanby by Stow, Coates by Stow, and the
surrounding rural area.*

This is a special edition of the Bugle mainly – apart from a few ‘What’s on’ dates for your diaries – about the proposals for Cottam 1.

The information that follows is gleaned from the booklet that has been circulated by Island Power, www.cottamsolar.co.uk and from the responses to questions at the consultation events. Based on this, we have tried to provide the information as accurately as possible.

Stow Parish Council will be providing feedback as part of the formal consultation process and would urge all residents to also complete the feedback forms available. The decision on these proposals will affect the landscape of the Parish for the next 40 years.

What is Cottam 1

It is a proposal by Island Power to generate renewable energy via solar photovoltaic panels and to develop a solar farm based on land in Stow parish and elsewhere. It is part of a wider development incorporating Cottam 2 and Cottam 3. In addition, there are proposed developments linked to West Burton. If you go to www.cottamsolar.co.uk and look under Document Library, you will find detailed maps that show the identified fields much more clearly than in the booklet.

The Consultation

The proposals are out for consultation between **3rd November and 15th December**. All householders should have received an information booklet setting out the proposals and a feedback form in early November. Unfortunately, a number of residents, including some on Ingham Road directly affected by the plans, did not receive the packs initially. We complained and so Ingham Road residents should all have received a pack by 22nd. Unfortunately, it would seem there are other people in the Parish, who did not receive the booklet. You can contact Island Power on 0808 169 1848 or at info@cottamsolar.co.uk.

If you have not yet seen the explanatory booklet

If you have still not seen it, there are copies of the booklet and feedback forms in St Mary's near the Post Office stand and also in the Cross Keys. If you use one of their forms to submit your feedback you can send it by freepost to: FREEPOST CAWB Solar Projects.

You can also find information on line at: www.cottamsolar.co.uk and you can also complete the feedback form online.

There have been consultation events at Willingham, Marton, Saxilby and Blyton where detailed maps were on view. We have been told the information displayed will be put on the website.

Why is it important to us?

While many of us welcome the proposals for greater green energy, the detailed proposals however will potentially have a significant impact on the lives of some of our residents at Normanby, on Ingham Road by Fleets Lane, and at Coates.

What are the proposals?

There are extensive proposals for the **installation of solar panels** at a number of sites. Island Power has engaged in agreements in principle with landowners, who have identified fields they would make available for solar panels or the infrastructure required such as battery storage and the substations.

Where? At Normanby the field between the flat tops and East Farm and other fields to the east of East Farm have been identified. The main field is also adjacent to the main road and clearly visible as you drive towards Willingham. In addition, fields have been identified along Fleets Lane and along Ingham Road on the south side near the Fleets Lane junction and behind the flat tops and behind nos. 27 – 33 up to the Till including both sides of Green Lane. At Coates the fields identified are to the north of the settlement.

Why these fields? The interested landowners have identified the fields, but the sites are all provisional. The landowners have already gone into legal agreements in principle with Island Power, therefore, all the land coloured red on the maps is available, but no leases are yet fixed. Matters raised during this consultation and the various surveys will determine the final choice. The final allocation will be set out in 8-12 months time.

People have raised concern that some fields would appear to be **prime agricultural land** and that this should be retained for agricultural use. We are told that the landowners have identified the fields and the developers believe that they are mainly Grade 3A. To the layperson this means it is not top quality like the Grade 1 silt of the fens; much of the land in this area would be classed as 3A, B or C.

The panels We understand each individual panel is approx. 2.5m x 3m and they then put 2 or 3 together, so they are 5-6m. The height, once the panels have been mounted at the most acute angle, can be a maximum of 4.5m. (about 15 feet). The panels will tilt as the sun/light crosses the sky. The solar panels can withstand some flooding, but Island Power will survey. Where the land does flood next to the river, some form of attenuation will have to take place.

There would be 3 **substations** for Cottam 1-3 with the largest being the nearest to Cottam. It is anticipated this will be at Coates. Such a substation could be 4.5 meters high, but there would be screening. One comment was that substations are easier to screen than the panels.

We have been told that **hedging** will be retained and in some cases enhanced. There is a 3 year gap between cuts to enable wildlife to use the hedging. The hedges could be allowed to grow higher and wider than they currently are. The perimeter fencing will consist of hedging then a gap of around 3m then deer type fencing. There will be flaps for hares, badgers, foxes etc. to use. They need to keep deer out as well as people.

All trees currently planted will remain and in some cases more trees could be planted to enable effective screening. Lincolnshire County Council have placed the **River Till** as an ecological area. There is much scope for improvement. In some cases sheep can be grazed, but obviously the area is far too big for sheep to graze it all. It has been pointed out that unless the wiring is armoured there will be loose wires and, for the sheep, a risk of electrocution. The representatives intimated that wildflower meadow and different grasses would be planted under the panels and around the sites.

We were told there would be **high fences** made of wooden posts and stock fencing (say, 10cm square wire mesh) with a lot of security cameras on them, possibly with hedges around them, then inside the stock fences an access track and a second set of more secure fencing. The outer boundary would be right on the edge of the individual plots. When asked about the height of the panels, they said that the height of the top of the panels from the ground could be as high as 4.5m. so passers by would not see over the panels.

There are ongoing **ecological surveys** being carried out. They have been surveying for the last 8 months or so and will continue into next year.

There will be discussion with residents and **landscaping** will be part of each development. We were told they do not envisage too much landscaping (it's expensive). Their access road to the site will have to withstand HGVs, but around the fields it will be left to grass or flower. The impact on the views from each residence affected will have to be addressed in any application.

The issue of **glare and glint**: although they accept this can happen, we were told it should not be a big problem. The siting and angles of the panels are taken into consideration with the surrounding area. Such as if there are any homes near-by. The **panels** themselves are light capturing.

Permitted noise levels are not yet clear as this is assessed against the prevailing background noise. The substations and battery storage will make noise, the latter due to cooling requirements. The storage will be some 20Mw-Hrs at West Burton and a bit more (but not yet clear) at Cottam. They said the storage would be local to the solar farms, but that the details are not yet fixed.

We asked whether there was a minimum distance between dwellings and the sites. We were told there is no set standard for a buffer zone. There will be a 25-50m offset near to properties. The proximity of some of the selected fields to a number of dwellings is of considerable concern in terms of quality of life, views and vistas and even the value of properties.

A number of the proposed sites are along popular walking and cycling routes e.g. along Fleets Lane or along Green Lane. We asked what plan there was for **buffer zones** between dwellings/roads/walkers' footpaths/bridleways and cycle routes and the boundary fence or hedge around the respective sites. We were told this would be considered in consultation potentially with householders. There is no set standard.

Geophysical survey Where the survey finds any evidence of archaeology below the surface they will use concrete rafts instead of piling the structures.

How long does the project last? The leases are for 30 years with the option to renew for two further five year periods. The land will be returned to grass; it will not be a brownfield site.

There is scope for the project to have a positive impact on the environment and biodiversity. They are expecting a 60-80% net gain in biodiversity. The majority of this is due to the land no longer being farmed by machinery and put to grass/meadow. There is scope to clean the river by creating swales where the fields flood on the land they are leasing. There could be work to mitigate flooding.

Current footpaths should be retained, but there is also scope for permissive paths (not footpaths) to be created. As they are leasing the land, any permissive paths created will only be there for the duration of the project. They are prepared to consider foot and cycle paths across the project sites, e.g. to link with existing paths, if proposals are put forward before the designs progress too far.

Community benefits There is scope for betterment for the community. Community aspirations are welcomed. It could take a number of forms, for example, a fund for community projects.

Further consultation

They will consider the issues raised at the Consultation meetings and via the feedback forms by post and online, the proposals will be refined and then, in 8 – 12 months there will be further consultation with more details. The further consultation will show exactly where the solar panels are to be placed along with infrastructure, such as the battery storage and substations.

Remember to send in your feedback by 15th December.

PLANTING TREES

In November the Parish Council decided to plant two trees in the cemetery as soon as possible. In addition, given the September public consultation resulted in a preference for a replacement tree to be planted on the village green opposite the church gate, the PC has decided to plant a tree there in 2022 to mark the Queen's Jubilee.

CHRISTMAS TREE

Our thanks to Coates Estate (Limestone Farming), who have donated the Christmas tree this year. Many thanks also to Doug Garner for organising and decorating the tree and to Charlie Marshall for his assistance in putting it up.

WHAT'S ON – DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

ADVENT CALENDAR

Following the success of last year, we once again have a living Advent Calendar with a new window being revealed each evening around the village:

Date	Address
Weds 1st	33 Ingham Road (just past the Fleets Road turning)
2nd	Tarn Howes, Ingham Road (near the 30 mph sign)
3rd	10 St Mary's Crescent
Sat 4th	5 Stow Park Road
5th	5-7 Ingham Road
6th	The Cross Keys, Stow Park Road
7th	29 Church Road
8th	31 Ingham Road
9th	Harley House, Church Road
10th	8 Sturton Road
Sat 11th	Exchange House, Ingham Road
12th	Gothic House, 25 Church Road
13th	5 Church Lodge
14th	11 Ingham Road
15th	Highfield Cottage, Stow Park Road (on your right, past the bridleway to Willingham)
15th	8a Sturton Road
16th	Minster View, Church Road
17th	11 School Lane
Sat 18th	Highfield Farm, Stow Park Road - next door to Highfield Cottage
19th	10 Manor Court, Stow Park Road
20th	8b Sturton Road
21st	12 Church Road
22nd	23a Church Road
23rd	Post House Normanby Road
24th	School House School Lane

CAROLS AND CHRISTMAS SONGS AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE

6.30pm Friday 17th December

Everyone is warmly invited to come and join in with the singing of Carols and Christmas songs around the Christmas Tree on the crossroads, accompanied by Willingham Band. Bring a torch. Carol sheets provided. Wrap up warm. Hot drinks and warm mince pies will be available. There will be a collection in aid of St Barnabas Hospice. Afterwards the Cross Keys are serving mulled wine/hot drinks and pulled beef baps. This food will be by TICKET ONLY IN ADVANCE - if you are interested in the festive food, please watch out for further details on the Cross Keys and Stow Facebook pages or contact Hayley at the Cross Keys on 01427 788314.

FESTIVE CAROL SERVICE - ST EDITH'S, COATES

Saturday 18th December

3pm stalls and light refreshments in the Church
4pm Carol Service in the Church grounds centred round a cheery log fire. Wrap up warm.

STOW CHRISTMAS EVE CAROL SERVICE ST MARY'S

6pm Friday 24th December

Christmas Eve Carol Service. Wrap up warm.

WI

7.30pm Tuesday 13th December

Christmas Party Sturton Village Hall

7.30pm 11th January 2022

Angie Clay – Medieval Medicine

Contact Rosemary Harwood for further info. on [01427 788748](tel:01427788748)

Stop press - The bench on Stow Park Road provided with funds from Stow Recreation Fund is due to be sited any day now, facing South (by a narrow margin of one vote!)

Contact the Parish Council on: 01522 704687 or stowparishclerk@gmail.com