

CONSTRUCTION OF A TEMPORARY SOLAR FARM, MERIDEN ROAD, FILLONGLEY
STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND ON AGRICULTURAL MATTERS
BETWEEN THE APPELLANT AND FILLONGLEY PARISH COUNCIL
APP/R3705/W/24/3349391

Ref	Appellant's Comments	Parish Council's Comments																														
Topic: AGRICULTURAL LAND QUALITY AND LAND USE																																
A	The Agricultural Land Classification for the Appeal Site (the 'Site') is c.96% Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land (BMVAL) The land quality, its quantity and distribution are not in dispute between the parties.	Agreed.																														
B	Accordingly the breakdown of the land on the site is. <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">ALC Grade</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Area (Ha)</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Grade 1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0.00</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Grade 2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">19.862</td> <td style="text-align: center;">32.599%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Subgrade 3a</td> <td style="text-align: center;">38.770</td> <td style="text-align: center;">63.631%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Subgrade 3b</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1.212</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1.989%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Grade 4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0.00</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Grade 5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0.00</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Non-Agricultural</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1.085</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1.781%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Total</td> <td style="text-align: center;">60.929</td> <td style="text-align: center;">100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Total BMV</td> <td style="text-align: center;">58.632</td> <td style="text-align: center;">96.23%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	ALC Grade	Area (Ha)	Percentage	Grade 1	0.00	0.00%	Grade 2	19.862	32.599%	Subgrade 3a	38.770	63.631%	Subgrade 3b	1.212	1.989%	Grade 4	0.00	0.00%	Grade 5	0.00	0.00%	Non-Agricultural	1.085	1.781%	Total	60.929	100%	Total BMV	58.632	96.23%	Agreed.
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C	The Site is mostly in arable farming uses.	Agree
Topic: EFFECTS ON AGRICULTURAL LAND QUALITY AND LAND USE		
E	With the exception of areas for the construction of bases for the transformer stations, the DNO and customer substations, and the access tracks, the land quality of the Site is not physically disturbed by the proposed works.	Disagree. The Rule 6 Party contends that the land quality of the Site is also physically disturbed by the supporting posts for the panels, CCTV posts, and fences
F	The land quality of the areas in part E can be fully restored to the original land quality on decommissioning.	Disagree – no detailed evidence has been provided of successful restoration of other similar sites to the original land quality on decommissioning.
G	Arable farming operations using conventional farming machinery will not be possible with the solar PV arrays in place.	Agreed
H	The land under and around the solar PV arrays could be used for grazing of small livestock such as sheep.	Agreed
I	Subject to good practice, which can be controlled by a Soil Management Plan and enforced by condition if appropriate, soils should not be adversely affected.	Agreed, subject to a management plan secured by condition.
J	The resting of soils from an intensive arable rotation can result in multiple benefits to the soils through reduced nutrient loading	Agree

Topic: PLANNING POLICY

K	Planning policy requires that the economic and other benefits of the Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land be recognised, but policy does not place a bar on the use of BMV for solar development.	However, planning policy does require in respect of solar development that applicants should, where possible, utilise suitable previously developed land, brownfield land, contaminated land and industrial land. Policy requires that where the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary, poorer quality land should be preferred to higher quality land avoiding the use of “Best and Most Versatile” agricultural land, with the highest quality agricultural land being least appropriate for solar development and as the land grade increases, there is a greater onus on developers to show that the use of higher quality land is necessary.
L	Planning policy does not place an obligation or requirement on developers of solar farms to undertake a sequential approach to site selection in respect of land quality	However, planning policy does require in respect of solar development that applicants should, where possible, utilise suitable previously developed land, brownfield land, contaminated land and industrial land. Policy requires that where the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary, poorer quality land should be preferred to higher quality land avoiding the use of “Best and Most Versatile” agricultural land, with the highest quality agricultural land being least appropriate for solar development and as the land grade increases, there is a greater onus on developers to show that the use of higher quality land is necessary.

M	Solar panels is a form of diversification that can take place on agricultural land.	Solar panels are not an agricultural use
N	Planning policy does not require agricultural land to be used for food production. Planning policy does not dictate how a landowner uses his/her land, or what intensity of use, for agricultural purposes,	However if development requires planning permission, planning policy is relevant in the determination of that planning application
O	The UK Government has not identified a current food security problem.	

SIGNATURES

Appellant

Signed:



Date: 07/02/25

Name: Steven Bainbridge MRTPI

Parish Council

Signed:



e07/02/2025.....

Name

Councillor_Adrian_White.....

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