



Wiltshire Bridleways Association

Campaigning for riders' rights since 1970

www.wiltshirebridlewaysassociation.co.uk

11th January, 2024

Anthony Brindle Esq.,
Potterne Solar Project Ltd.,
306 The Plaza,
100 Old Hall Street,
Liverpool. L3 9QJ

Dear Mr. Brindle,

Wiltshire Bridleways Association (WBA) writes to express its concerns and object to your proposed solar farm project at Potterne Park Farm.

WBA has concerns about both the construction of the project and what we would then have to live with once it is up and running.

In terms of the construction, you state that "it benefits from a suitable access for construction and maintenance purposes" and on your Site Block Plan it says "main entrance to the site to be via existing farm track". However looking at the Public Rights of Way map, that existing farm track is actually two different PRow footpaths, POTT4 and POTT5 which becomes EAST10. Bearing in mind that the British Horse Society document *Advice on Solar Farms* states that "The construction phase of a 40-acre site is likely to be around 16 weeks, over this period there would be up to 100 lorry deliveries to the site" and we understand that the site of your proposed project is 200 acres we are potentially looking at five times those figures. *Advice on Solar Farms* further states "bridleways, byways and unsurfaced roads should not be used for site access" and yet your site access is along footpaths which are an even more unsatisfactory recipient of the enormous number of large lorries delivering all that is required for the project.

There are two public bridleways involved in this project - EAST12 which goes the whole way across the site and URCH34 which runs all the way up the east side of the site and along a small part of the top, connecting with the northern end of EAST12. In addition there are two public footpaths which cross the site, EAST10 and EAST14, and a further footpath which runs all the way up the west side of the site, MLAV1C. The bridleways will certainly be unusable during construction and we have considerable concerns about the safety of both horses and riders using the bridleways were the project to be up and running as the sight of all the solar panels would certainly spook a large number of horses. We attach three photographs taken on EAST12 three weeks ago which are very different to the image you have used on your Site Block Plan to illustrate the pledge "existing bridleway between hedgerows to have increased management". Your image gives the impression of a solid hedge through which a horse would be unable to view the solar panels but the photographs show a very different story.

Presumably there will be a need for cables to go across EAST12 to connect the fields either side of it and also across EAST10 to connect the fields either side of that footpath. Looking again at *Advice on Solar Farms*, it states "Trenches for cables should not cross or be laid along rights of way. If it is unavoidable, authorization will be required from the Highway Authority to disturb the surface of the

c/o 20 Coombe, Enford, Wiltshire. SN9 6DE
wiltshirebridleways@yahoo.co.uk
01980 670860 07504 508765

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Anthony Brindle Esq.

right of way.” Can we therefore ask if you are intending to lay cables across the bridleway and the footpath and, if so, do you have the necessary authorization from the Highway Authority?

On your website you state “Project will provide enhancements to the Public Right of Way network” and “existing bridleway between hedgerows to have increased management”. We would be grateful if you could let WBA know exactly what is proposed in order to undertake both of these pledges.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Norman Beardsley
Chairman
Wiltshire Bridleways Association

cc: Christopher Clark, Head of Local Highways & Countryside Access for Wiltshire Council

