**Bulworthy Solar Farm – Summary of community objections to date**

**Westleigh specific:**

* The parish were not invited to the initial consultation, despite the battery storage being entirely within the parish boundary and the public consultation has been limited, and with the application coming out mid summer little opportunity for the parish to be aware of the full implications of this development
* The fire service have detailed their concerns about the battery storage units which are comprehensive
* In addition there are traffic concerns for the Eastleigh side of the parish – extensive details of traffic concerns have been sent in including from our MP
* The proposed community fund from this site is the same as the Litchardon Cross one, despite the site being significantly larger, and also has the higher risk battery storage as well

**Regional/National:**

This development is one of a number of large solar farms linked to our proximity to the Alverdiscott substation and this one would see our neighbouring parish of Horwood become 7% solar panels. There is much concern over the cumulative nature of the development, particularly the impact on Northern Devon’a solar heat island effect, and that this 25% of this development is on agricultural grade 3A land.

At present it appears that the application does not have a confirmed grid connection. Whilst not currently a planning requirement, concern has been raised within the House of Commons about its absence: On 7th July 2025 the House of Commons Energy and Net Zero Committee Report: [https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmesnz/868/report.html](https://emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fpublications.parliament.uk%2Fpa%2Fcm5901%2Fcmselect%2Fcmesnz%2F868%2Freport.html&data=05|02||b6c3bfd15f0041ebaa6108dde3bec8bd|84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa|1|0|638917131036475996|Unknown|TWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D|0|||&sdata=cGVa%2FJR2F8ZzXPluCt2E0eN4jpB2KNd7VOvo%2BoJckjY%3D&reserved=0)  was published which amongst other things recommends that National Planning Policy should regard *the ability to connect a renewable project, including solar, to the National Grid, as a "Material Consideration" when the LPA is considering the planning application.*

With the cancellation by the government of the XLinks project (still in the queue at Alverdiscott!) there is not clarity on whether planned substation upgrades will progress at Alverdiscott which may make access to the grid less likely, as has been recognised by the Gammaton developer: *“Any solar/wind applications you're dealing with at the moment though - will be struggling to keep to their expected timelines and dealing with a high level of uncertainty with regards to their earliest date of energy export.”*

National Grid have confirmed their Strategic Spatial Energy Plan which will determine the amount of electricity each region is required to produce will not report until end of 2026. Strong arguments are being made that no further applications for solar farms here should be made until there is clarity about the grid connection, else we are potentially looking at fields of solar panels not producing electricity, with an international investor controlling them. Particularly given the likelihood that significant floating offshore wind developments will land into our region, the second phase are in the Alverdiscott queue, which may reduce our region’s need to produce renewable energy from solar.

Concern has also been raised about the provenance of the solar panels as the production of solar panels in China's Xinjiang region has been linked to the alleged exploitation of Uyghur Muslims and a government amendment is awaited on this supply chain element.

Overall there is a sense that we already have significant solar farm developments across Northern Devon constructed and which have cleared planning, and that it is not clear that this one is required for our national or local energy requirements.