

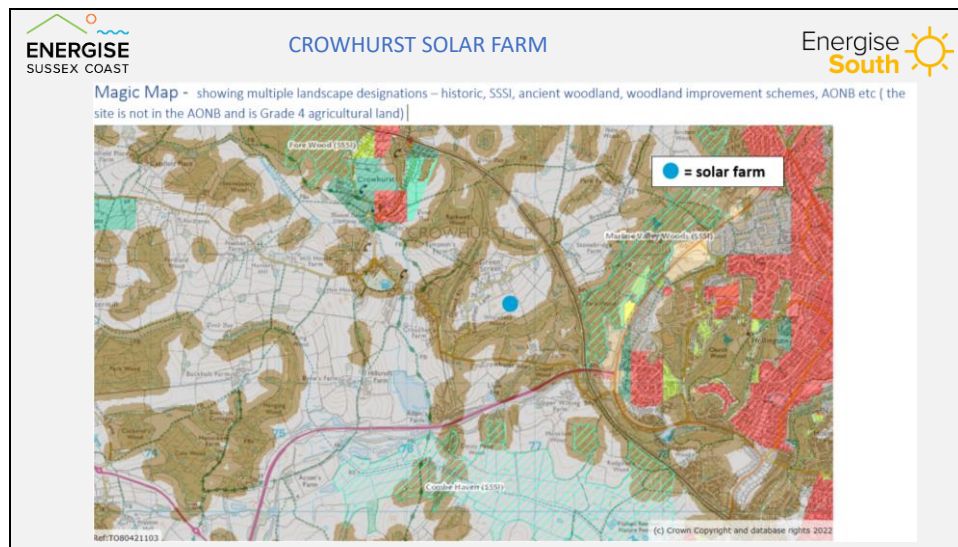
Slide 1



SLIDE 1


- Energise Sussex Coast and Energise South are both community benefit societies.
- ESC was awarded a Stage 2 grant by the Rural Community Energy Fund worth £ 100,000.
- The grant is roughly a quarter of the cost to develop a community solar farm in Crowhurst and would be enough to take the proposal to the point where it is ready to apply for planning (but doesn't cover planning costs).
- It might take 2 years before anything happens. The Pashley solar farm in Ninfield took 5 years.

Slide 2




SLIDE 2

- Horseshoe farm is a family owned farm in Swainham Lane - Bernard Leach grew up there , and he has offered 5 fields for solar panels as part of a community project.
- There are no guarantees that the planning application will be successful. Or that we will be able to connect to the grid or to the railway line
- However, the site has a lot going for it. There are no obvious barriers...




CROWHURST SOLAR FARM



The 01243 787600 (Customer Services)
 Your ref: P/0000002022
 Our ref: P/0000002022
 Please ask for: Miles Joyce
 Direct dial no: 01243 787615
 Date: 06/03/2022

Richard Walton
 Director
 EnergiseSussex Coast
 Email: richard@energisesussexcoast.co.uk



Mickie Johnson MBE MA BSc(Hons) BSc(Hon)
 Councillor
 Chief Executive
 Rother District Council
 Town Hall
 Southsea Road
 TN30 2LN

Highways Impact

It is not clear from the information provided to what extent that the proposed development would have staff and there need to be in close proximity to the site itself. You are advised to consult with the County Highways Authority who provide their own pre-application advice prior to any formal submission of a planning application. Such information should include the likely construction phase and impacts of the development.

Biodiversity Net Gain/Ecology

This in line with relevant planning policy and guidance would consider how the site can be enhanced by the development. Consideration of planting and provision of enhancement measures for local fauna should be sought as part of this application. You are advised to consult with the County Ecologist with regard to this matter prior to submission of a formal planning application.

Conclusions/Planning Balance

Provision of providing electricity to local homes (exact amount not known and more information required). The proposal would support economic growth in this part of Rother DC by providing an additional source of income and so increasing the financial security of farming enterprises.

The proposed development could represent farm diversification which is supported by the NPPF. The agricultural function of the land may be able to continue and there would be a financial investment in the local economy with employment opportunities.

Environmental benefits include meeting decarbonisation and climate goals addressing the Climate Emergency. It would represent a transition away from fossil fuel energy production and towards renewables. There is potential for ecological enhancement of the application site through species diverse planting and improved habitats for fauna and as such would accord with national guidance that biodiversity improvements are to be encouraged around arrays. It will also contribute a biodiversity net gain on sub-prime agricultural land.

Overall, the proposed solar farm could result in a substantial benefit in terms of energy Production and officers have not identified any no significant adverse impacts which would outweigh this benefit. The proposed development is, on the limited information provided, acceptable and would represent sustainable development.


Should the proposed solar farm could result in a substantial benefit in terms of energy Production and officers have not identified any no significant adverse impacts which would outweigh this benefit. The proposed development is, on the limited information provided, acceptable and would represent sustainable development.

With this in mind you are strongly advised to submit more detailed pre-application advice and the advice is contained here:
<https://www.rother.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/pre-application-advice-and-help/>

Other

Notwithstanding the response set out in this letter, a scheme of this size is likely to provide controversial or at least of significant local interest. You are advised to arrange for local consultation to take place to promote and explain the proposed scheme, ideally prior to submission of a formal planning application.

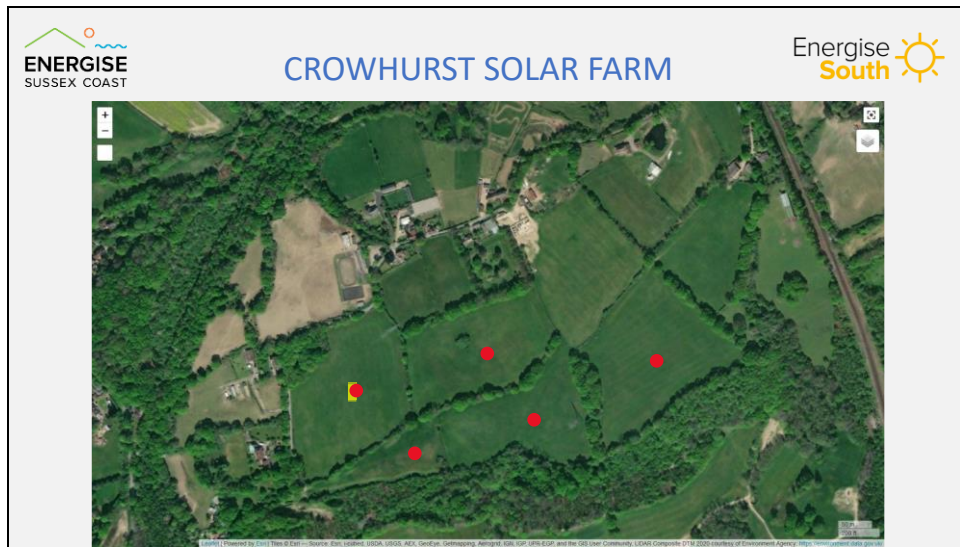
Yours faithfully


 Miles Joyce
 Main Development Manager

SLIDE 3

- The planners seem to agree. Their pre planning advice is positive, the key sentence, is the one highlighted. “Overall, the proposed solar farm could result in a substantial benefit in terms of energy Production and officers have not identified any significant adverse impacts which would outweigh this benefit. The proposed development is, on the limited information provided, acceptable and would represent sustainable development.”

Slide 4



SLIDE 4

- These are the 5 fields that could be used for the community solar farm. The one that is most visible to neighbours or from a distance has been excluded. The biggest obstacle may be the connection to the grid or the railway line.



SLIDE 5

- So what is a community solar farm and how will it benefit you?
- A solar farm is a nature reserve that also happens to generate renewable energy. This was said by Dr John Feltwell, a local ecologist who is chair of the Crowhurst environment group. He has done environmental audits for 60 solar farms and is helping with this project.
- See West Solent, a working sheep farm, Westmill solar farm in Oxfordshire, hares everywhere, Cuckmere solar farm – with Alister Scott and his Solarbee project – Bernard Leach is a beekeeper. So the project can do a lot to enhance local nature and biodiversity



SLIDE 6

- Anyone can become a member of the co-op and invest from £ 50 to £ 30,000. You get a single vote no matter how much you invest, can put yourself up for membership of the board, and will be paid 4% interest.
- Your capital and interest will be repaid annually over 25 years. After that the panels can be removed and the land remain a nature reserve, or since they have a lot of life left in them the panels can be gifted to the village and continue to generate revenues for the local community.
- Most commercial solar farms will gift a sum of money to the community, Pashley gave £ 25,000 to the parish council, but in this case all the surplus would be for the use of the community, which we estimate (conservatively) to be around £ 1 mil.
- That money can be used to pay for the upgrade of local homes and local heating systems. It should generate around 40 jobs. We want to gift a single share to every child in the village if the project goes ahead, so they can grow up with it as part of their future and as a source of potential income.

Slide 7



SLIDE 7

- There is a longer report, with over 6000 words, which I am very happy to email to you if you want to leave your email address with me.

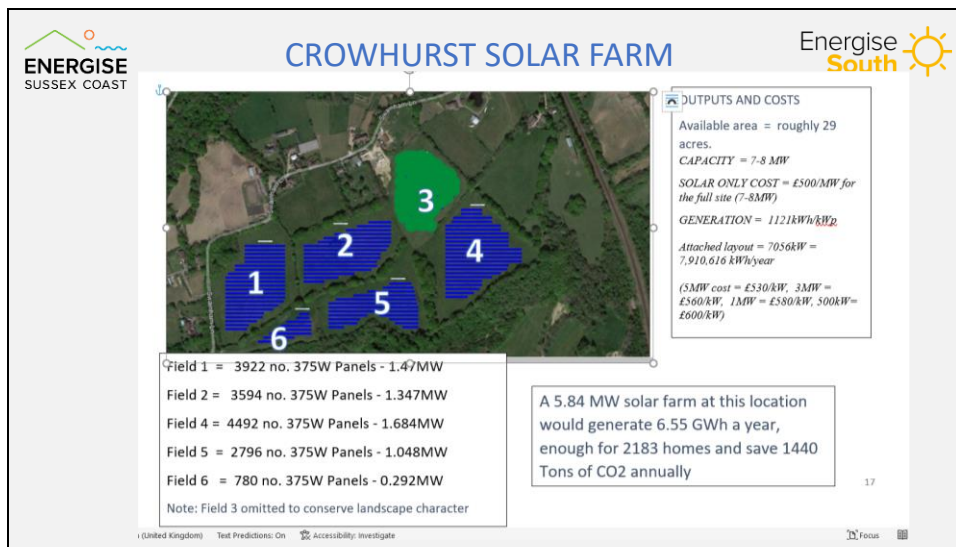
Slide 8



SLIDE 8

- The kind of project that the solar farm community fund could support would be to install solar on local roofs.
- In this case study from Craig close the roof could have 8 panels, or just under 3 kW. It would save the homeowner £ 496 a year - £ 11,400 over 25 years - with a 9.7 year payback.
- If 100 homes in Crowhurst want solar panels, but not everyone has the upfront capital cost, the solar farm could install the panels for free and maintain them, charging a discounted price for electricity, after raising the capital cost by community shares at the start of the project. Or if there was a sufficient community fund after a few years and the village steering group chose, it could gift the panels to villagers.

Slide 9



SLIDE 9

- Here are the output details from the proposal. Ideally we would like to be able to supply local homes directly at discounted prices but it's complicated and depends on the grid capacity...there are innovative ways we can get the electricity to people virtually.