



Mallard Pass

Solar Farm

Mallard Pass Solar Farm

**Stage Two Statutory Consultation
Community Consultation Leaflet**

May 2022

Our Stage Two consultation

Windel Energy and Canadian Solar are proposing a new solar farm near Essendine called Mallard Pass Solar Farm.

We introduced our initial proposals during our Stage One, non-statutory phase of consultation held between 04 November and 16 December 2021. By considering community and stakeholder feedback received during Stage One, alongside the results of the work undertaken to date on our environmental assessments, we have evolved the design for Mallard Pass which we are now sharing for this Stage Two Statutory Consultation.

This community consultation leaflet has been produced to inform you of our upcoming Stage Two Statutory Consultation for Mallard Pass, which is running for ten weeks, from **26 May 2022 to 04 August 2022**.

During our Stage Two Statutory Consultation, we want to hear your feedback on how our proposals for Mallard Pass have developed since Stage One.

We want to hear your comments and ideas on:

- Our developed concept plan, design and layout for Mallard Pass, which have had regard to the comments received during Stage One. This includes how the project could look to local residents and visitors.
- Our suggested mitigation measures to address issues raised through consultation and identified through our preliminary environmental assessment work.
- Our proposed improvement measures to deliver benefits, such as new recreational connectivity and ecology habitats across the Site.
- The information presented in our Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) and PEIR Non-Technical Summary (NTS).

You can find out more about our proposals by reading our Main Consultation Document and PEIR, visiting our website, attending one of our upcoming events, or by contacting the team using the details on the back of this leaflet.

Our proposals

We are proposing a new solar farm with infrastructure to connect to the national grid, along with putting in place mitigation measures, ecological enhancements and opportunities for improved recreational access by the local community.

If approved, Mallard Pass will deliver in the region of 350 megawatts (MW) of solar energy. The total proposed area ('the Site') equates to approximately 906 hectares (ha). The developed area containing solar photovoltaic (PV) arrays (PV site) and infrastructure to connect to the grid will be located on approximately 463 ha. Areas allowing for access to the PV site, including potential highway improvement works during construction, are proposed to cover 23 ha.

Mallard Pass also includes areas for mitigation, ecological improvements and 'buffer zones', as well as areas that will be retained as woodlands, hedgerows and agricultural land. These areas amount to 420 ha of the Site. In these areas, we are proposing new enhancements to the local area, such as creating additional publicly-accessible routes, introducing new wildflower and wetland habitats to improve biodiversity, and strengthening connections between different habitats, which would also link to the wider landscape. We also propose to provide new planting which would provide wildlife and environmental benefits, and to improve some retained agricultural land with plots for ground-nesting skylark.

The plan on the following page is indicative and shows our current proposals for the design and layout of the solar farm. We are also exploring whether minor highway improvement works within the adopted highway boundary are required in a limited number of areas to allow large vehicles to access the Site during construction. This includes a small area on the A1 (at the junction with Grantham Lane). This area is not visible on the following plan due to its scale and focus on the Solar PV Site. Our full Site location plan is included in our Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) as Figure 1.1.

Our Vision for Mallard Pass Solar Farm is to support the urgent need to decarbonise our electricity system, deliver reliable and sustainable low-cost energy, enhance the local environment and to be a responsible neighbour.

Proposed layout



Proposed hedgerows and tree belts will be located within the proposed buffers and potential mitigation and enhancement areas.



Approx. 4.7 km of new permissive paths have been introduced across the Site. These connect to existing paths within and beyond the Site area.



Panels will be set back by a min. distance of 15 m either side from any PROWs (which will also apply to new permissive paths), Ancient Woodland and woodland, Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).



The area for solar development has decreased from approx 570 ha at Stage One to approx. 463 ha. Around 420 ha of the Site area will be for ecological mitigation and enhancement or retained as woodlands, hedgerows and agricultural land.



Some areas of road have been identified where improvement works may be required to allow Site access.



Areas for solar development along the West Glen River corridor have been removed to reduce development within the flood plain.



Panels will be set back by a min. distance of 10 m from the Site boundary, hedgerows, the West Glen River and ponds. Veteran trees will have a min. offset of 15 times the width of the diameter of the stem.



The updated design supports the West Glen River in its vital role as an ecological corridor. This will conserve and enhance its biodiversity and strengthen it as a link between habitats for different species.



Fields identified as consisting entirely of Grade 2 agricultural land will not be used for solar panels.

Key

- Site boundary
- Railway line
- Existing National Grid Ryhall Substation
- Potential substation area
- Potential solar development
- Existing woodland, hedges, trees, field boundaries and ditches
- Potential mitigation and enhancement areas
- Proposed buffers to woodland, trees, hedgerows, ditches, utilities and PROWs
- Existing PROWs
- New permissive paths

What has changed since Stage One?

Our developed proposals for Mallard Pass have been informed by the feedback we received at Stage One, our environmental assessment and our project design principles. These were presented at Stage One and were informed by the National Infrastructure Commission's design principles of Climate, People, Place and Value.

We have sought to evolve our vision for Mallard Pass in three key ways to address the feedback we have received.

1. Reducing impacts to residential properties and higher quality agricultural land

- While we have slightly increased our overall Site boundary to include sections of local highway that might require improvement during construction, the area proposed for solar panels has decreased from approximately 570 ha at Stage One, to approximately 463 ha.
- Approximately 420 ha of the overall Site area will be for ecological mitigation and enhancement or retained as woodlands, hedgerows and agricultural land.
- We have reduced the total area for solar panels by removing panels from fields which are entirely Grade 2 agricultural land and also by increasing the distance of the proposed solar panels and infrastructure from people's homes. We are also proposing additional tree and hedgerow screening to protect residential amenity.
- In addition, new hedgerow planting, tree belts and woodland blocks have been introduced to limit any potential visual impact from particular public vantage points throughout the Site.

2. Supporting recreational and amenity opportunities

- We are supporting the recreational and amenity opportunities by retaining all Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) within the Site.
- We have introduced approximately 4.7 km of new permissive paths across the site.

These permissive paths include:

- Essendine to Carlby Road link: an approximate 1.2 km route linking Essendine to Carlby Road providing a new off-road route;
- West Essendine Link Loop: an approximate 1 km link creating a loop running northwest of Essendine linking back to the existing bridleway, and;
- West Glen River Corridor: an approximate 2.5 km link from Stamford Road south-eastward along the river corridor to join the Macmillan Way.

3. Enhancing biodiversity and ecological connectivity

- Our updated design will enhance biodiversity and ecological connectivity across the Site through the creation of new habitats, including wildflower and grassland, improving the connectivity of existing habitats through new native tree and hedgerow planting, and allowing existing hedgerows to grow out more fully to the benefit of a wide range of local wildlife species.
- The development proposals include 420 ha of land outside of the solar array area to deliver mitigation and enhancement to the local landscape, this includes:
- The Drift Wildflower Grassland Corridor and Little Warren Valley Wildflower Grassland: creation of over 30 ha of wildflower grassland with calcareous species.
- West Glen Wet Woodland: creation of 3.7 ha of riparian habitat which could include wet woodland or carr planting in areas with no development along the river corridor.
- Sitewide wildflower and tussock grassland planting: creation of over 108 hectares of this habitat across the Site.
- We are also adopting skylark plots, grazed grassland, hedgerows and woodland belts, bird, owl, and bat boxes, and otter holts/layup areas at appropriate locations.

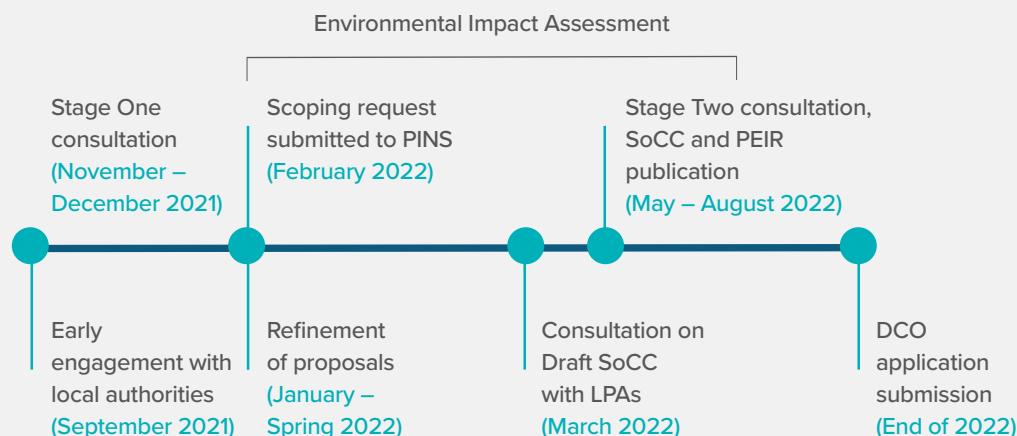
Our consultation timeline

Mallard Pass Solar Farm is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) as it is proposed to have a generating capacity exceeding 50 MW.

This means we are applying for a Development Consent Order (DCO) through the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). Our application will be determined by the Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). To find out more about the planning process, please visit: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/the-process/>.

We are now undertaking our Stage Two (statutory) consultation, and recently published our Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) confirming how we would do this.

Following our consultation, we will be updating our plans and then submit our application. This will include a Consultation Report setting out how we consulted with the public and how the feedback we received was taken into consideration. After the application is accepted, members of the public will be able to register their interest in the application, submit representations and take part in the examination.



*All future dates are indicative and subject to change.

Why we need Mallard Pass

Large-scale solar is being developed in the UK to play a critical role in the fight against climate change while delivering energy security and affordability.

The UK will decarbonise by increasing low carbon electricity generation and by using that electricity to displace fossil fuels. Electricity demand is expected to double by 2050, with this demand being met with clean energy produced through a mix of wind and solar (HMG Energy White Paper, December 2020). The recently published Energy Security Strategy now sets an ambition for solar of 70GW by 2035 – a five-fold increase on current provision. Mallard Pass has the potential to power in the region of 92,000 UK homes¹ by generating low-cost renewable energy, while increasing the reliability of our national grid and our own electricity supply.

Many characteristics are considered in the selection of appropriate locations for large-scale solar. The Site for Mallard Pass performs well against these considerations.

These include:

- **Connection to the national grid** – There is sufficient capacity at the existing nearby Ryhall substation.
- **Planning and environmental considerations** – The Site is not subject to any protected landscape or spatial designations and is well located in relation to sensitive heritage and ecological assets.
- **Availability of land** – The Site has individual landowners, who were agreeable in principle to leasing their land for solar.
- **Topography** – The Site has a gently undulating topography which makes it particularly suitable for solar.
- **Proximity to people's homes** – Although relatively close to Essendine and some individual homes, there are limited residential properties in the immediate proximity. Through design, the impact on those properties can be effectively mitigated through sensitive landscaping and the location of panels.
- **Accessibility** – The Site has good connections to the Strategic Road Network.

¹Our calculation for estimated homes powered can be calculated as follows:
349,524,000 kWh (annual production (kWh)) / 3,760 kWh (average household consumption) = 92,958.51 = 92,000 homes powered. This is further explained in the FAQs section of our website.

Stage Two Events and Webinars

Our Stage Two consultation will begin on Thursday 26 May and finish on Thursday 04 August 2022.

During this time, we plan to hold a series of public drop-in sessions in locations across our consultation area, as well as online. Our events will be an opportunity to see the project team and view our full suite of consultation materials on the detailed proposals for Mallard Pass.

During Stage Two, we will hold four in-person public exhibition events:

- **Saturday 25 June 2022** – 11 am to 5 pm – Essendine Village Hall, Bourne Rd, Essendine, Stamford, PE9 4LQ.
- **Wednesday 29 June 2022** – 3 pm to 8 pm – Stamford Town Hall, St Mary's Hill, Stamford, PE9 2DR.
- **Thursday 30 June 2022** – 3 pm to 8 pm – Greatford Village Hall, Carlbby Road, Greatford, PE9 4PR.
- **Friday 1 July 2022** – 12:30 pm to 4:30 pm – Ryhall Village Hall, Church St, Ryhall, Stamford, PE9 4HR.

Webinar events

- **Friday 17 June 2022** – 11 am to 1 pm.
- **Tuesday 05 July 2022** – 6 pm to 8 pm.

A detailed step-by-step guide for how to access our community webinars, along with webinar links and telephone dial-in details, are available on our website:

www.MallardPassSolar.co.uk/have-your-say.

If you are unable to attend our in-person events or prefer to work online, please view our virtual exhibition that contains all the same information as will be at the consultation events at: **www.MallardPassSolar.co.uk/virtual-exhibition.**

Have your say

We want to hear your feedback on our updated proposals.



To find out more about our proposals, you can:

- Join us at our consultation events and webinars to learn about our proposals, meet the project team, and provide your feedback.
- Visit our dedicated project website to view the latest project information and submit feedback: **www.MallardPassSolar.co.uk**.
- View our virtual exhibition for those who cannot attend our in-person events, or prefer to participate online: via our project website.
- Contact our communication lines via phone, post or email.



To have your say, please:

- Complete our online feedback form at **www.MallardPassSolar.co.uk**.
- Return a written feedback form to **FREEPOST Mallard Pass Solar Farm**.
- Tell us your comments by contacting us by **email**.



Community Access Point (CAP) sites:

Visit our CAP sites to read and collect consultation materials. Please see below for details.

- **Essendine Village Hall.** Bourne Rd, Essendine, Stamford PE9 4LQ.
- **Stamford Arts Centre.** 27 St Mary's St, Stamford PE9 2DL.
- **Ryhall Village Hall.** Church St, Ryhall, Stamford PE9 4HR.

All documents are available on our project website (**www.MallardPassSolar.co.uk/documents**) to view, print and download.

Should you require documents in hard copy (including in large print, audio or braille formats), please contact us at the details provided on the back page of this leaflet.

Contact us

We want to keep you informed and hear your views on Mallard Pass Solar Farm.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to find out more information about Mallard Pass Solar Farm and our associated consultation programme.

You can contact members of our stakeholder engagement team and find out more using any of our project-dedicated communications lines listed below.



Email:

info@MallardPassSolar.co.uk



Freephone information line:

0808 196 8717



Freepost*:

FREEPOST Mallard Pass Solar Farm *There is no need for a stamp.



Visit our website:

www.MallardPassSolar.co.uk



Sign up to our digital mailing list:

www.MallardPassSolar.co.uk/contact



Follow us on Twitter:

[@MallardPass](https://twitter.com/MallardPass)

Our communications lines will remain active for the duration of our consultation on Mallard Pass Solar Farm.