

West Wratting Parish Council's feedback to Kingsway Solar Ltd. on Targeted Consultation, January 2026

1. Overall Position

The overall position of West Wratting Parish Council is unchanged from what was stated in our statutory consultation feedback from October 2025¹:

- There is still no justification for a solar farm of this scale being placed in such close proximity to a rural village community.
- There is a significant and widespread risk to human health posed by building a Battery Energy Storage (BESS) facility above a principal aquifer and a major drinking water protection zone.
- The proposed solar farm would result in considerable adverse impacts on the landscape, visual amenity, and heritage in the area around West Wratting.

Several of the changes proposed in the targeted consultation documents make the proposal worse for the residents of West Wratting and our community in the surrounding villages. This increases our opposition to the proposed solar farm and BESS facility.

One of our objections to the targeted consultation is that it is being used to increase the panel area by about 30% from that proposed in the PEIR, with the loss of areas that were previously identified for environmental mitigation and biodiversity net gain, and using areas of agricultural land classified as grade 2 and grade 3a.

2. Changes Proposed in the Targeted Consultation Documents

The targeted consultation describes six changes. These will be dealt with in turn:

2.1 Change 1: Solar panels in Development Area A

Adding more panels in area A contradicts Kingsway's earlier assessments and ignores their own ecological surveys.

Area A was already the most densely covered by photovoltaic (PV) panels, with only two areas left unused. The targeted consultation shows that both of those areas will now be used for panels. These two areas were (and still are) marked on Kingsway's interactive map of the development with "*No development is proposed in this location to reduce potential landscape and visual effects from the A11. There is the opportunity to use this area for environmental mitigation to support biodiversity net gain*". It is very disappointing, therefore, not to see any explanation in the targeted consultation documents about how the developer will compensate for the reduction in environmental mitigation and BNG caused by using those areas for PV panels, as proposed by change 1.

¹ West Wratting Parish Council's Statutory Consultation feedback to Kingsway Solar Ltd. October 2025.
<https://bit.ly/49YYyXB>

Area A was described in the ecological survey presented in Kingsway’s own PEIR documents² as being “the most suitable areas for breeding birds. This is reflected by the species diversity and abundance recorded during the surveys for breeding birds undertaken in 2024. The majority of breeding corn bunting, grey partridge, linnet, stock dove and yellowhammer territories were present in this area, as was the turtle dove territory and possible quail territory”. Kingsway did not seem to have understood this ecological advice, writing in their [Stage two consultation information booklet](#) that “Infrastructure is proposed as much as possible within land parcel A because of the *limited potential effects on receptors* such as local communities, PRoW and *local wildlife*”. Even worse, Kingsway now intends to leave no part of Area A unused. The dense placement of solar panels in area A already risks adverse effects on ground-nesting birds, barn owl foraging and nesting behaviour, and the displacement of turtle doves through construction disturbance and the enclosure of nesting habitat. By proposing to add more panels in this area, leaving no unused land, Kingsway continue to ignore their own ecological survey results.

2.2 Change 2: Solar panels in Development Area B

The proposed change 2 exacerbates the problem that West Wrating Parish Council highlighted as issue 2.1.1 in its statutory consultation feedback, namely the effect on landscape character and visual amenity of panels that can be seen from the historic Ickneild Way footpath.

The two fields of panels that are proposed to be added to Area B are justified in the targeted consultation documents by saying they have “limited constraints”. Not only does this contradict Kingsway’s previous assessment of this area (see below), but it disingenuously downplays the visual impact, which will be striking because the land is on a slope that rises up from the Ickneild Way which immediately borders the southern edge of field B2. The lie of this land means that the adverse visual effect from the added panels cannot be mitigated by planting and will be visible for miles, including from the nearby Fleam Dyke and Harcamlow Way footpaths.

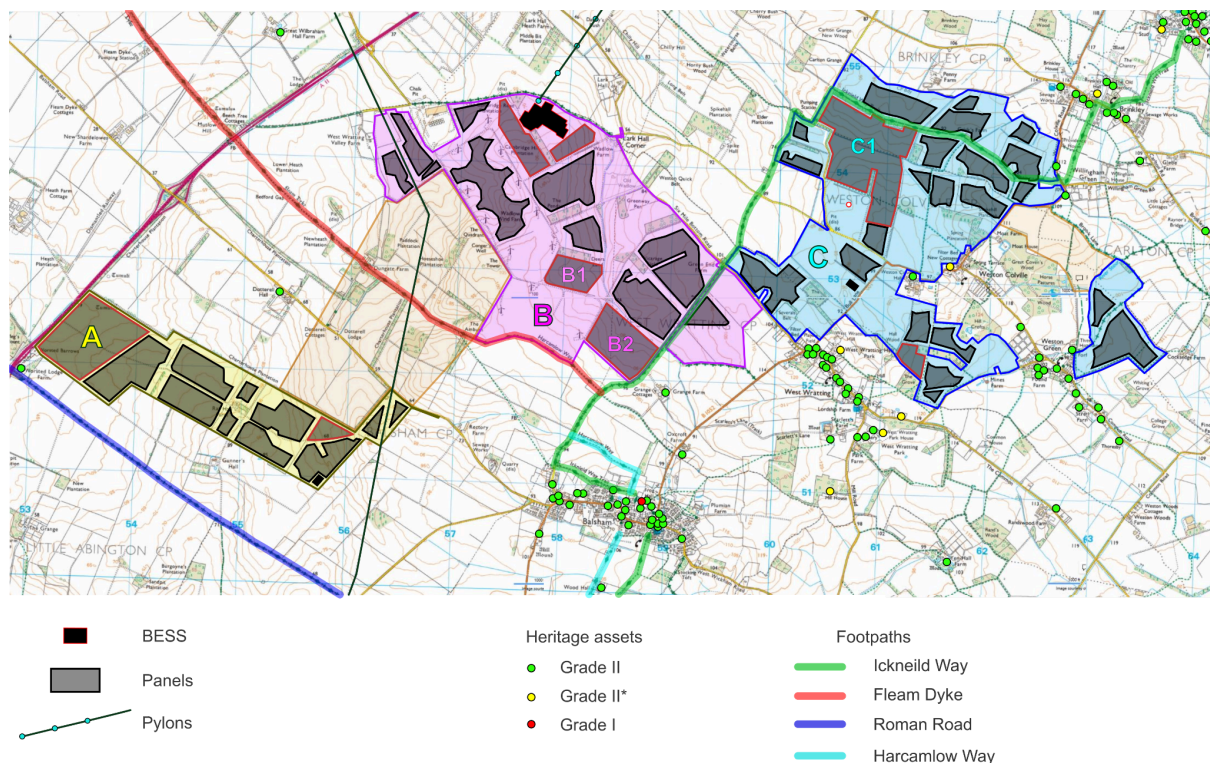


Figure 1. Change 2 proposes adding panels to fields marked B1 and B2

² See Paragraph 5.6.6 of the [Breeding Bird Survey report](#), <https://bit.ly/4a7P5gZ>

Adding panels to fields B1 and B2 will also have a significant ecological impact; they are open areas that are enjoyed by skylark, lapwing, golden plover and brown hare in particular, all of which will be adversely affected, particularly by the larger block of solar panels formed by adding B2 to the two panelled areas just to the north east. Badgers are also often seen around the Ickneild Way near B2.

The proposed changes in area B again contradicts Kingsway's previous assessment of the area. On Kingsway's interactive map the area is still labelled: "No infrastructure is proposed in these locations due to the land being on a ridgeline and visible from local properties, to reduce the potential effects on PRow in the area, and to avoid grade 2 agricultural land that has been identified through surveys. There is the potential to use part of this area for environmental mitigation". Again, It is very disappointing not to see any explanation about how the developer will compensate for the reduction in land available for environmental mitigation.

2.3 Change 3: Solar panels in Development Area C

West Wrating Parish Council welcomes the proposed removal of three small areas of solar panels from near Weston Colville Hall and Church. However that improvement is overshadowed by the addition of the large area of panels in area C1 that again has impacts on the Ickneild Way and ecology.

The proposed new area of panels C1 immediately borders the Ickneild Way for over a kilometer, and for a long stretch causes that footpath to be enclosed on both sides by solar panels, and presumably fencing. Area C2 will also blight a popular stretch of local footpath between West Wrating and Weston Colville.

The area of panels in C1 covers land that was previously identified for new planting and landscape enhancement, and again the targeted consultation documents do not explain how this loss will be compensated.

2.4 Change 4: 132kV substation in Development Area A

No comment

2.5 Change 5: 400kV substation and BESS compound

Change 5 refers to changes to the BESS compound in Area B. The statutory consultation feedback from West Wrating Parish Council³ explained in detail why we think the entire area of Kingsway solar farm is unsuitable for BESS due to its high sensitivity to groundwater contamination from firewater that must be used in the event of an unlikely but possible BESS fire. We agree that the likelihood of a BESS fire is low, but it is not negligible, and the potential impact of groundwater contamination is so severe that the overall risk is high. We stand by that assertion, and by our belief that it will not be possible to put in place mitigation measures that can for the entire lifetime of the solar farm be guaranteed to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. This issue was highlighted as a major concern by almost all consultees, but for some reason Kingsway Solar Ltd. still believe they can include a BESS in their DCO application.

The changes described in this section more than double the area of the BESS compound. The reason for this increase is not explained, but our own calculations suggest it is needed so that the 300 proposed BESS containers can be spaced as recommended by the National Fire Chiefs Council to

³ Section 2.4 Health and Safety: Risk of BESS Fire to Groundwater, <https://bit.ly/4bZZiOR>

mitigate the effects of a BESS fire⁴, and so that the compound can accommodate a supply of water to use in a BESS fire, and containers to hold that water once contaminated. Engineering design changes to increase public safety is obviously welcome, but the poor level of understanding at the Statutory Consultation stage highlights Kingsway's lack of understanding of this subject, which is deeply concerning. Despite all the statutory consultation feedback they still don't appreciate the severe and widespread impact that contamination would have on drinking water for possibly 350,000 people in Cambridgeshire, and they do not understand the technical challenge of putting in place a guaranteed firewater containment strategy.

2.6 Change 6: 132kV substation in Development Area C

No comment.

History

29 January 2026	First draft completed by Simon Chandler. Shared for comment to WWPC and solar farm working group.
4th February 2026	Submitted to Kingsway and receipt acknowledged

⁴ National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Guidance on Grid Scale Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), <https://nfcc.org.uk/consultation/draft-grid-scale-energy-storage-system-planning-guidance/>