



Planning Meeting

Present: Cllr Maughan (DM) Chair, Cllr Causton (TC), Cllr Moreton-Ford (JMF) and Cllr Williams (DW).

Also present: 20 members of the public and guest Kevin Ray for Energy Alton.

Planning Meeting of Farringdon Parish Council held on Thursday 10th July 2025 at 7pm at All Saints Church, Upper Farringdon

Minutes

*** Cllr Maughan acted as Chair of this meeting.**

181/25. Apologies for Absence: **Cllr Doherty and Cllr Clegg**

182/25. To receive and approve disclosable pecuniary interests and non-pecuniary interests from the Clerk (Local government act 1972 s117). **None**

183/25 - To receive and approve dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests from the Councillors. (S33 of the Localism Act 2011). **None**

184/25 - To receive resolution to suspend standing orders to allow public question time. **Proposed DM/ Seconded JMF**

Public Question Time

To adjourn the meeting for 20 minutes to allow public questions. Members of the public are invited to speak for up to 3 minutes each.

Questions and Answers on the proposed planning application - EHDC-25-0716-FUL - Land Off Gaston Lane, Upper Farringdon, GU34 3HW – see below

185/25 -To receive resolution to resume standing orders. **Proposed DM/ Seconded JMF**

186/25. Planning applications:

Notification of Full Planning application Proposal: The construction and operation of a 44MW solar PV farm, 2MW BESS and other associated infrastructure Site: Land Off Gaston Lane, Upper Farringdon, GU34 3HW – documentation provided. **Decision: The Parish Council will object to this application and will draft a document to be added to the planning portal.**

Meeting closed at 19.40

Questions from the Public.

Where are we in the application process - The planning application is in the consultation period which ends Friday 11th July 2025.

Where will we find the application - On the EHDC planning site: Ref: EHDC-25-0716-FUL - Caker Stream Solar Farm, Land Off Gaston Lane, Upper Farringdon, GU34 3HW.

Will The Caker Stream Bridge be repaired by the time the site is built? Hopefully, the repair is due to be completed by 1st November 2025. The Solar Farm is due to commence in late 2027/28. Cllr Maughan explained that she had written to HCC asking about the weight limit for the bridge due to the HGV's that will be transporting the equipment and solar panels. Still awaiting a reply.

Will the roads be repaired after all the HGV's etc have used the road? - The Developers have said they will make any necessary repair to verges etc on completion of project. They will take before and after photos.

Questions on the route the lorries will travel – The Parish Council are awaiting confirmation from the planning applicants, please note that everyone is worried about the wear and tear to the roads and the proposed one-way system. The traffic management will be handled by Hampshire Highways. Currently the B3006 is not included in the traffic management plan, and the traffic management data was collected when Gaston Lane was closed which does not reflect true picture. There are also major concerns about HGVs turning left at Hall Lane onto the B3006.

We are worried about the size of the plan – we need to object to the whole plan. It is totally out of proportion, the panels will be 4 meters high, we have a duty to protect the South Down National Park, and the setting of a national park. The Defra policy changed the duty of care for all Councils, 2026-31 new plan, they will support small local initiatives – this is not small.

Is there any money coming to Farringdon from it – There will be a Community Benefit around £20,000 per year, for the three parishes combined. Each parish would have to apply for a grant to a group consisting of: Energy Alton, the Developer and a representative from each Parish Council (Worldham / Farringdon and Selborne) for any funds they require.

Can we change the allocation of the Community Benefit Fund? From Energy Alton: This is still in discussion we understand that everyone feels that this is unfair and the administration of it seems unfair. Worldham has the most land affected, but Farringdon will see the most impact of the Solar Farm.

Farringdon Parish Council was NOT a Consultee, all we could do was comment. Below is our response.

Farringdon Parish Council Objection – EHDC-25-0716-FUL Land off Gaston Lane, Upper Farringdon (Solar PV Farm Proposal)

While we support renewable energy, Farringdon Parish Council objects to the proposed 44MW solar PV farm, 2MW battery storage, and associated infrastructure for the following reasons:

1. Excessive Height and Visual Impact

- Proposed panels reach 4m, exceeding nearby solar farms (max 3m), disrupting the rural landscape.
- The terrain and proximity to homes and public paths make screening ineffective and it will take a long time for the screening to mature to the appropriate height
- Rural character would be profoundly altered.

2. Overdevelopment and Cumulative Impact

- This site creates a cluster of four solar farms within 1.5 miles, the largest being this one at 68 hectares.
- CPRE research highlights the harm of such concentrated energy developments.
- The site's location near the South Downs National Park contradicts its purposes to conserve and promote public enjoyment.

3. Loss of Countryside Buffer

- The development threatens the natural separation between Alton and nearby settlements including Farringdon, breaching EHDC Local Plan policies and Farringdon's own priorities.

4. Impact on Wildlife Habitat and nearby Equestrian Centre

- Panels border an active equestrian field with no buffer.
- Lack of green corridors endangers local wildlife mobility and ecosystem health.

5. Unsuitable Agricultural Use

- Site is greenfield, not brownfield, contravening government guidance.
- Long-term grazing under panels degrades soil and threatens food-producing land.
- CPRE notes that solar farms pose risks to soil fertility, biodiversity, and land productivity.

6. Breach of NPPF Section 15

- The development undermines protection of landscape, biodiversity, and soil quality, failing to recognise the countryside's intrinsic value and wider ecological benefits.

7. Major Traffic Concerns

- Farringdon Parish Council are concerned about the amount of industrial transportation that is needed for this development. We are especially concerned about the proposed shortened one-way system on Hall Lane and Gaston Lane and how it will affect residents. We are also exceedingly worried about the HGV's turning out of Hall Lane on to the B3006, they will need to cross both lanes to negotiate a left turn, this is a 60mph road and potentially there could a fatal accident. We strongly urge Hampshire Highways look in depth at this application.

Conclusion

While renewable energy is supported, this proposal is excessive, poorly located, and inconsistent with local and national planning policy. We urge its refusal.