

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT PROPOSED GROUND MOUNTED SOLAR PANELS

PYTHOUSE FARM
NEWTOWN, TISBURY



Design & Access Statement

Planning Application for Ground-Mounted Solar PV Installation Location: Land at Pythouse Farm, West of Tisbury, Wiltshire

Applicant: Nadder Community Energy Group

Introduction

This statement accompanies a planning application for the installation of 416 ground-mounted photovoltaic (PV) panels at Pythouse Farm. The proposed 262kWp system will form part of a community energy initiative to generate sustainable electricity for the local community at a competitive price and the National Grid.

The site has an existing array of 188 PV panels, providing energy to operations on the farm, including energy for heating and lighting to the chicken shed business, and the surrounding Pyt House Estate.

The application is submitted by Nadder Community Energy Group (NCE), a Community Benefit Society serving villages between Salisbury and Shaftesbury, including areas on the Dorset border. This document outlines the site context, design rationale, planning policy alignment, and community benefits.

Site Description

The site consists of an area of land, north of existing farm buildings at Pythouse Farm. The site is bounded on the west by a lane designated as public highway with woodland beyond, and to the east by a line of mature native hedge, providing screening to the site.

The development site is within the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).



Existing buildings at Pythouse Farm

Proposal Details

The proposed solar array will form part of a local energy scheme due for commencement at the end of the year.

The 262kWp installation will be arranged in a cluster of 416 PV panels in 13 banks of 32 panels in seven staggered rows.

These will be situated to the north of the existing two rows of solar panels, concentrating the arrangement in the single field currently occupied as a foraging area for chickens produced on the Pythouse Estate

Underground cable linking to a grey GRP enclosure cabinet close to the chicken shed will then connect to an existing nearby pole mounted transformer connecting to the grid.



Image of typical GRP electrical enclosure

Pre App

A pre app enquiry was submitted ENQ/2024/01105. The general conclusion was that subject to additional plans and information, that in principle the scheme raised no planning concerns.



View of existing chicken house and solar array to left of image

Community Energy Context

Nadder Community Energy (NCE) promotes locally owned renewable energy projects with profits reinvested into the community.

Benefits for the Community and the Generator

- Households save money on their electricity bills—typically between 10% and 30%.
- The community benefits from increased energy resilience, reduced carbon emissions, and local economic stimulation.
- Generators earn more per unit of electricity than they would through conventional routes, keeping more money in the local economy

How It Works in Practice

- Electricity use and generation are matched in real-time via smart meters.
- Households pay a lower rate (e.g. ~13p/kWh) when their usage matches local generation.
- Any additional electricity needed is supplied by a partner energy supplier at a variable “Time of Use” tariff, which is cheaper during off-peak hours.
- Members can monitor their usage and generation forecasts via an online dashboard.



View of proposed site to the north of existing ground mounted solar panels

Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Sections 97–98 support small-scale renewable energy developments.

Encourages local authorities to adopt positive strategies for low-carbon energy.

Cranborne Chase AONB Management Plan

Policy PT14 supports renewable technologies that:

Integrate with the landscape

Avoid visual intrusion

Protect wildlife and significant views

Are appropriately scaled

Wiltshire Core Strategy (CP42)

Supports standalone renewable energy installations.

Requires consideration of landscape, ecology, access, and amenity impacts.

Design Considerations

Use of Site

The proposed field offers a discreet location with minimal public visibility.

Layout

416 panels arranged in seven groups, spaced to avoid shading and to maximize solar exposure.

Surrounding land remains in agricultural use.

Scale

A modest installation, which benefits the local community

Designed to empower local energy generation without impacting the wider AONB landscape.

Landscaping

Existing woodland, hedgerows, and farm buildings provide natural screening.

Ecology

The application site lies within a core buffer zone for Barbastelle bats associated with the Chilmark Quarries Bats special area of conservation (SAC).

Enims Environmental Consultants have been appointed to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Transect Survey for the site. The results conclude that the proposed development will not have any adverse effect on bat roosts, foraging or commuting. The complete report forms part of the application documentation.

The proposed solar panels will provide additional shelter during inclement weather and shaded areas during the summer for the foraging chickens on the site.

Appearance

Panels are non-reflective and visually unobtrusive.

Access

Via existing farm infrastructure.

Minimal maintenance access required post-installation.

Conclusion

This proposal represents a low-impact, community-driven renewable energy project that aligns with national and local planning policies. The site is well-screened, appropriately scaled, and sensitively located within the AONB. It offers tangible environmental and community benefits without compromising landscape character or ecological integrity.