

**PROPOSED SOLAR FARM
LAND NORTH AND EAST OF
GREAT WYMONDLEY,
HERTFORDSHIRE**

**AGRICULTURAL EVIDENCE
ON BEHALF OF
THE APPLICANT
BY**

TONY KERNON BSc(Hons), MRICS, FBIAC

VOLUME 3: SUMMARY OF PROOF

LPA Reference: 21/03380/FP

PINS Reference: APP/X1925/N/23/3323321

August 2023





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Authorised By APK 08/23

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CONTENTS

Volume 1: Text

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Planning Policy and Guidance of Relevance
- 3 Land Quality and Agricultural Circumstances
- 4 LPA Assessment
- 5 Land Quality Assessment
- 6 Land Use Assessment
- 7 Summary and Conclusions
- 8 Declaration

Volume 2: Appendices

- KCC1 Curriculum Vitae
- KCC2 Natural England's Technical Information Note TIN049
- KCC3 Extracts from the ALC Methodology (1988)
- KCC4 Extracts from the ALC Report (2021)
- KCC5 Description of the Installation Process
- KCC6 Appeal Decision 3315877
- KCC7 Cereal and Oilseed Production 2022
- KCC8 Analysis of UK Food Security
- KCC9 Defra Press Release 6th December 2022

Volume 3: Summary of Proof of Evidence

S SUMMARY OF PROOF OF EVIDENCE

- S1 My name is Tony Kernon. I am a Chartered Surveyor and a Fellow of the British Institute of Agricultural Consultants with 35 years' experience.
- S2 The proposal relates to the installation for a temporary period of a solar farm. On decommissioning the land would be left as it is now.
- S3 The site comprises generally clayey soils with varying amounts of generally calcareous stone. The site is a mixture of Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Grade 2 and Subgrade 3a, and is therefore of the Best and Most Versatile (BMV) quality.
- S4 The Proposed Development is recommended for approval by the local planning authority.
- S5 There is agreement that panels and the related fixed infrastructure can be installed, and subsequently removed, without causing downgrading of the land quality or any permanent sealing-over of agricultural land. The ALC resource, in this case Grade 2 and 3a BMV land, is not affected or lost.
- S6 Recent development management decisions have confirmed that there is no planning policy reason to refuse development because of the reduced flexibility of the land for food production during the operation.
- S7 That notwithstanding, the Council has accorded moderate weight to the reduced food production consequence.
- S8 In my view only limited weight should be accorded to food production issues, as a matter of principle and as a matter of analysis of harm:
- (i) there is no planning policy to require land to be used for food production;
 - (ii) there is no food security crisis or concern;
 - (iii) Government funds arable land conversions to grassland and is clearly not seeking increased food production;
 - (iv) the actual implications are miniscule: 120 tonnes per annum from a national production of 24 million tonnes of cereals;
 - (v) there will be benefits in terms of carbon sequestration, organic matter, reduced erosion, reduced compaction, and improved biodiversity.
- S9 Overall no more than limited weight should be accorded to these matters.
- S10 There are no agricultural reasons to refuse the Proposed Development.



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