

WEST WICKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on Sunday 5th October 2025 at 4pm.

Those present at the meeting were Vice Chairman Cllr. Sargeant who chaired the meeting, Chairman Cllr. Schuilenburg, Cllrs. J. Copas, G. McNeillie & R. Temple. There were 3 members in the audience and the Parish Clerk.

The purpose of the meeting was to consider the following :planning applications received from South Cambridgeshire District Council (1) (and any others received prior to the meeting): and (2) The Parish Council's consultee response to the proposal by Kingsway Solar.

1. 25/03677/FUL – 111 High Street –Erection of 2no 4bed self-build / custom build dwellinghouses with garage and cartlodge.

Prior to discussing this case Cllr. Copas declared an interest as she lives opposite this proposed development. Cllr. Sargeant spoke about the proposed development of two detached four bedroomed houses on part of the plot on which 111 High Street is built. He had spoken to several residents and there was concern about the size of the proposed houses on a fairly small site, and proximity to 3 listed buildings. A question was raised from the audience about infill and protected frontages but was told this would not apply as the development of gardens is not banned and is within the 50m infill policy limit.

Cllr. McNeillie believed that the Neighbourhood Plan stipulated that smaller dwellings were more acceptable than large. Cllr. Sargeant confirmed this and said priority should be given to the building of smaller properties. The question of Social Housing was raised but this only applies where a larger development of several houses is proposed. Cllr. Copas had obtained more details about the height of the houses from the road level and they would be higher than her property opposite 111 High Street. The two driveway widths of 2.7m to look out onto the village green outside her property would mean the removal of hedging. There were no Landscaping or Water plans included in the planning application. Cllr. Sargeant will check if the hedging is recorded as ancient in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr. Sargeant proposed that the Council object to this application and this was agreed by Council. The reasons for objecting were:

The proposed houses were too big and set amongst much older property which would impact on the character of this part of the High Street and be against the Neighbourhood Plan policy to encourage smaller houses to be built. The footprint needs reducing and one driveway would be preferable to two, which would mean moving the footpath, but this has been done before.

2. EN010165 – Land between Burwell and Balsham – Kingsway Solar Farm Project

Cllr. Sargeant asked if the Council wished to respond to the consultation and the answer was yes. He then spoke about his concerns regarding the application.

- a. He is very concerned about the battery storage facility. If a fire should occur the water borehole is just a couple of fields away and could be contaminated by the run-off from the storage, which would be highly toxic. There are no details about water storage or containment of run off. Cllr. McNeillie said this could be engineered out. Cllr. Copas said two other similar developments have had problems with fire.
- b. Cllr. Copas had asked Kingsway about this being “the biggest in Europe” - this is true, however they have 25 similar projects ongoing which could end up with over-producing electricity.
- c. Cllr. Copas spoke about the farmland being proposed shown on the map as dark areas where the solar panels will go but there is nothing to stop them adding more panels using more farmland in revisions to the proposal.
- d. The Council believes the loss of agricultural land is to the detriment of the nation's food security and the environment. Significant amounts of ‘best and most versatile’ agricultural land are consumed by this proposal.
- e. It was agreed that the scale of the proposal is far too large and in order to get the power to the grid there is an enormous financial cost but also visual cost regarding the landscape, impact on the villages, noise from inverter units running continuously. The scheme is much too large.
- f. Regarding 40 years onwards - they say that the land can be returned to its current use however the small print says that they could renegotiate a further period of time. It is perceived to be highly unlikely the land will return to agricultural land and the area would be permanently industrialised.
- g. There are no acceptable plans for traffic management.

The council agreed their unanimous opposition to this development in its current form. Cllr. Copas agreed to start work on a draft response with assistance from Cllr. Sargeant.

It was agreed that the Council would benefit from registering as an ‘interested party’ with the Planning Inspectorate in order to get much more information and this was agreed. The end of the consultation period is 29th October 2025.