



**CLEVE HILL**  
SOLAR PARK

# **Cleve Hill Solar Park**

## **Community Newsletter**

August 2023

## Progress Update

Since the last issue of this newsletter, work has continued both on and off site as construction work has stepped up. The first phase of wetland works have been completed and planning permission for the new HGV marshalling area has been granted. Construction of the electrical compound area including the flood protection bund is well advanced and the Battery Safety Management Plan has been submitted to Swale Borough Council, following consultation.

## Construction Works

Construction work on the substation site next to the existing National Grid Cleve Hill substation and London Array substation commenced in late February.

With increasing construction activity, HGV movements quickly rose to the agreed maximum of 40 return trips (80 movements) per day. These movements are compliant with the Development Consent Order (DCO) Requirements, including the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and Construction Noise Management Plan (CNMP).

Over the past four months work on the substation site has seen a lot of progress, including fencing, ground preparation, kerb laying, and drainage works. Construction of roads on site includes a temporary haul road to allow for heavier vehicles to access the site smoothly. Work on the flood protection bund around the electrical and battery compound is also underway.

Material for this earth bund has been taken from a borrow pit on the south side of Cleve Hill, and these works will be completed in early September. We have significantly reduced the amount of aggregate coming into the site by using this borrow pit.

The land south of Cleve Hill will be landscaped and restored to wildflower meadow when the earth works are complete. In total, there will be 13 hectares (32 acres) of dedicated wildflower meadow on the completed solar park site.

The boundary fence is due to be completed by mid-September.



*Electrical area within bund*

## Battery Safety Management Plan

The Battery Safety Management Plan has been developed by the project team and submitted to Swale Borough Council, following consultation required by the DCO (Development Consent Order). It is available to view on the council's online planning portal (<https://pa.midkent.gov.uk/online-applications/>) and we have provided paper copies to the Parish Council.

Before submission, the project team held a series of meetings with community groups and two drop-in sessions for the general public.

The following community groups and representatives that attended these meetings where the project gave a presentation on the Battery Safety Management Plan were:

- Graveney with Goodnestone Parish Council
- The Faversham Society
- Faversham Town Council
- GREAT (Graveney Rural Environmental Action Team)
- Councillor Rich Lehmann (Kent County Council and Swale Borough Council)

The project team were on hand to answer questions at two drop-in events held at Graveney Village Hall on 8th and 9th August. Around 45 members of the public visited the events to discuss battery safety planning, general construction progress, traffic management and various other topics.



*Village Hall drop-in event*

## Wetland Creation and Ecology Works

Under the guidance of Natural England, we have completed the first phase of the wetland creation works on the eastern side of the site. This included the creation of wetland scrapes, shallow water drains and bunds, and was completed in February.

The second phase of wetland creation, anticipated for this winter, will connect the new wetland features to the existing drains onsite, improving the habitats for birds and other wildlife.

Ecology works have included the creation of displacement areas across the site for water vole and other local species.

The solar park project will deliver a 65% net gain in biodiversity across the site.

This includes a Habitat Management Area of 56 hectares (138 acres) for over-wintering birds and an additional 3.64km of native hedgerow, on what was previously arable land.

## Public Rights of Way

We are committed to protecting public access through the site by maintaining and protecting the Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) throughout the lifetime of the solar park. All PRoWs passing through and close to Cleve Hill Solar Park will remain open during construction.

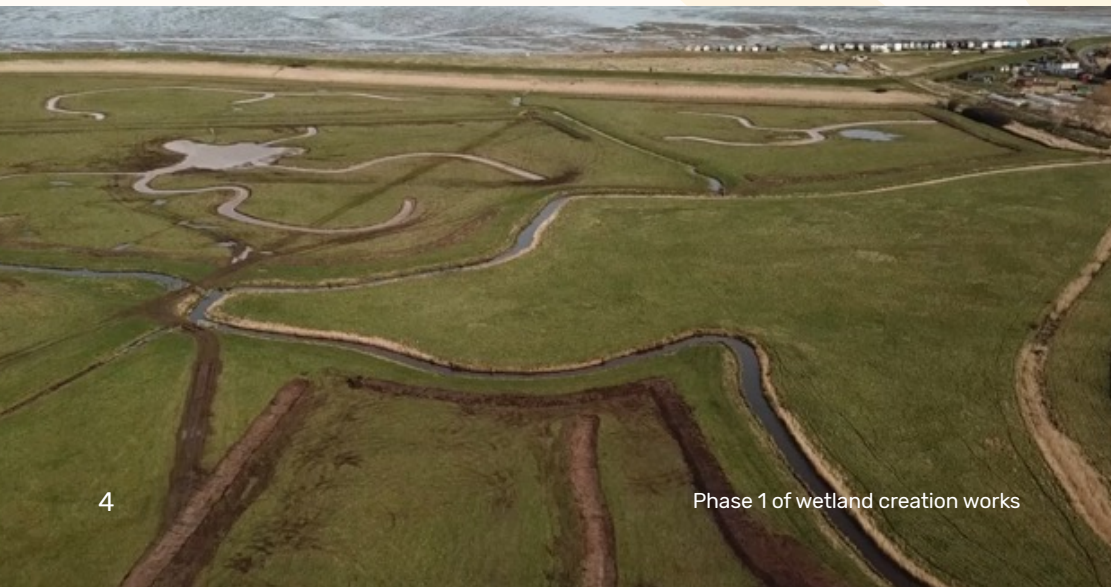
When the site is complete, there will be a new permissive footpath facilitating a circular walk from Seasalter Road.

The status of all the PRoWs in/near to Cleve Hill Solar Park are detailed in the Public Right of Way Management Plan which is a DCO document. As construction works are now increasing across the site, we are in the process of improving signs along the PRoWs with visitor information about accessibility and safety.

At times we may need to hold up walkers on the PRoWs to allow construction traffic to pass. This will be managed by a marshal and will only be for brief periods of time.

Whilst using PRoWs through the solar park, please keep dogs on leads and take extra care when crossing the site access road.

Our core site working hours are **07:00 – 19:00** Monday to Friday, **07:00 – 13:00** Saturday.



Phase 1 of wetland creation works



KCC PRoW map

## Traffic Management Group

Fortnightly Traffic Management Group meetings remain a productive forum, allowing our team to understand ongoing local concerns throughout the construction phase of the project.

Currently HGVs travel in and out of the site in convoy, with trackers in the lead vehicles to ensure compliance with the requirements set out within the CTMP. We are working with the Traffic Management Group to ensure that any concerns are dealt with as quickly as possible.

Construction of the new holding area is complete, and we expect it to be operational by mid-September. Each individual lorry will carry a tracker and escort vehicles will no longer be essential, however the existing convoy system may continue while the new arrangements bed in.

A specialist logistics company will be managing the holding area and HGV movements on behalf of Cleve Hill Solar Park.

We welcome suggestions for improvements to traffic management issues during the construction of the Cleve Hill Solar Park. Please get in touch with the project team who will give feedback on all ideas, both to you and the Traffic Management Group.



Holding bay construction

## Community Engagement



Jackie Hall has joined the Cleve Hill Solar Park project team as a Community Liaison Officer. She is working to build on the existing relationships between the solar park development team and the local community.

Jackie is the main point of contact for any queries or concerns. You can email her on [jah@private-energypartners.com](mailto:jah@private-energypartners.com), [info@clevehillsolar.com](mailto:info@clevehillsolar.com) or call on 07766 408840. Jackie's usual working days are Monday to Wednesday, and she will respond to any voicemails/emails received outside these times as quickly as possible.

Jackie and the project team are attending regular meetings with the Graveney with Goodnestone Parish Council, where all aspects of the project are discussed.

We are working with the Parish Council to explore potential community benefits to enrich the area surrounding the Cleve Hill Solar Park. We have worked with Kent County Council to facilitate a feasibility study for the proposed Solar Cycleway. Updates will be provided in these areas once any information becomes available.

# Contact Us:

*If you would like to be kept updated via email, please get in touch with the project team via the communication channels below:*



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