

Mathurst Solar Farm

A proposed new solar farm up to 18MW near Staplehurst, Kent

Renewable Connections

is investigating the potential for a solar farm up to 18MW on land to the south of Staplehurst, Kent. Once operational, the project will supply enough power for up to 5,000 homes annually, and will make a valuable contribution towards tackling the climate emergency in Kent. Maidstone Borough Council, who declared their own climate emergency in 2019, has acknowledged that urgent action is required to limit the environmental impacts caused by climate change.

Mathurst Solar Farm will help to support the delivery of urgent national and local climate objectives to generate more renewable energy to support the move away from fossil fuels.

As we prepare a planning application for submission to Maidstone Borough Council, Renewable Connections is undertaking public consultation to inform local communities of our proposed plans and to invite any feedback.

More information on the project, our plans and how you can consult with us is provided on our website at: www.mathurstfarmsolar.co.uk

Have your say

We are inviting members of the community to provide any comments you have on the proposal either via the project website, or by email or post using the details provided. Comments provided by the local community will be taken into account in shaping the final planning application submission.

T - 01233 801 740

E - mathurstfarmsolar@renewableconnections.co.uk

A - Mathurst Solar Farm,
3rd Floor, 141 - 145 Curtain Road,
London, EC2A 3BX



Proposed timeline

Site selection
Summer 2021

Preliminary surveys
Spring 2022

Pre-application
Spring 2022

Community Consultation
Summer 2022

Submission
Autumn 2022

Determination
Early 2023

Construction
2024+

Quick facts



Equivalent of up to **8,800 tonnes** of CO₂ annually**



up to **20,000 MWh** supplied each year



Equivalent annual energy needs of up to **5,000 homes***

The proposed site

The proposed Mathurst Solar Farm comprises approximately 27 hectares of land and is located to the south of Staplehurst, in Kent.

The site comprises agricultural fields and is primarily used for sheep grazing. The proposed solar farm development would allow sheep grazing to continue amongst the solar arrays and would therefore retain an agricultural use whilst contributing to the fight against climate change.

The proposed development would include a package of landscape, ecological, and biodiversity benefits that could include the installation of barn owl boxes, bird nesting boxes, bee hives, log piles, restoration of traditional field boundaries, and other hibernacula such as small buried rubble piles suitable for reptile species, amphibians and insect life. Any existing hedgerows would be bolstered with additional hedgerow and tree planting, where required, in addition to potential new mitigation planting around the boundaries of the Site, in order to provide natural screening where appropriate. Land between and beneath the panels can be used for biodiversity enhancements.

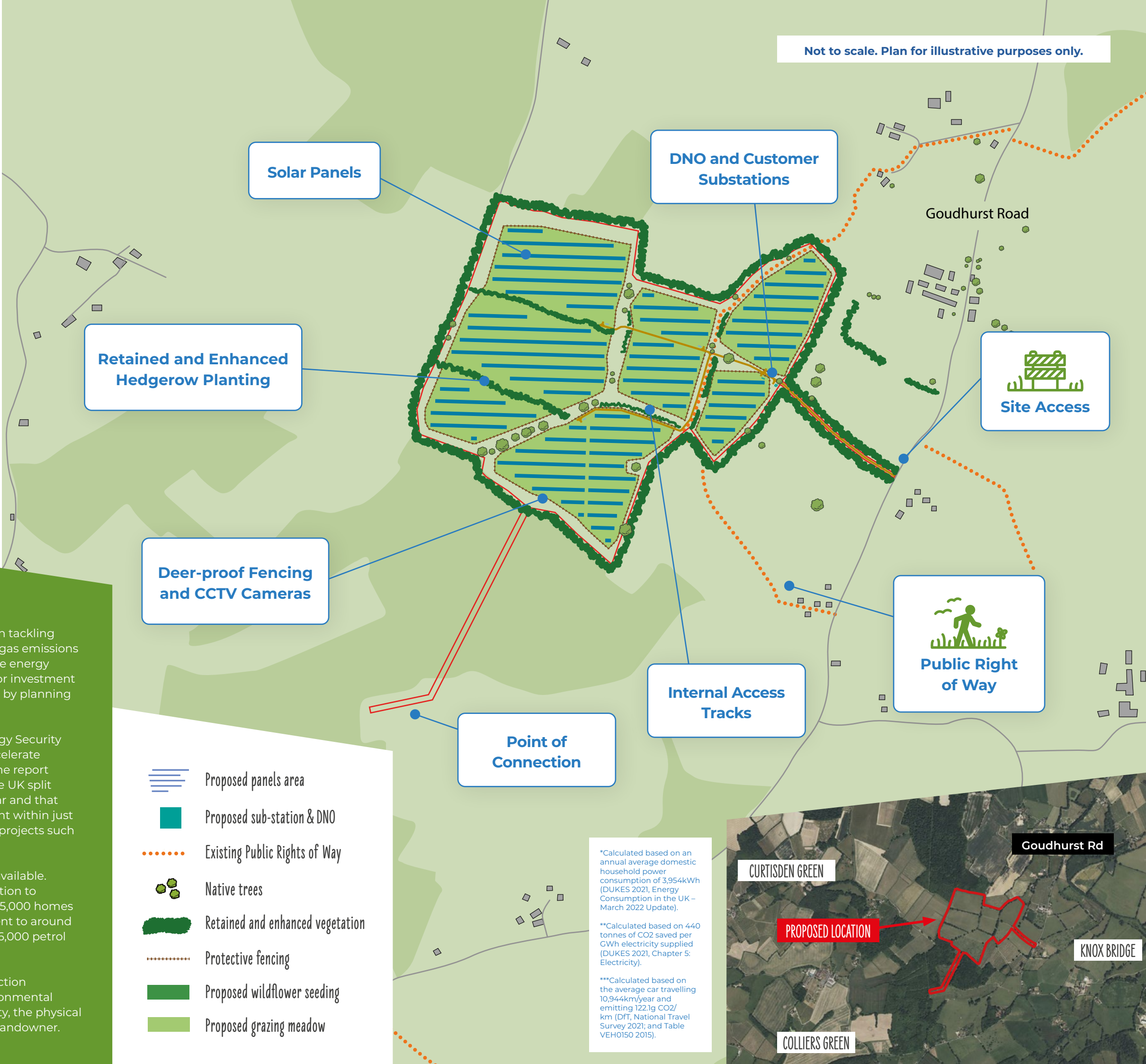
Why here?

In June 2019 the Government raised the UK’s ambition on tackling climate change by legislating for a net-zero greenhouse gas emissions target for the whole economy by 2050. Decarbonising the energy sector is integral to achieving this goal and requires major investment in proven technologies, such as solar, which is supported by planning policy at local and national level.

More recently, the Government released the British Energy Security Strategy (2022) which sets out “how Great Britain will accelerate homegrown power for greater energy independence.” The report states that there is currently 14GW of solar capacity in the UK split between large scale projects to smaller scale rooftop solar and that the Government expect a five-fold increase in deployment within just 13 years, by 2035. This demonstrates the urgent need for projects such as Mathurst Solar Farm.

Solar is one of the cleanest, lowest cost forms of energy available. Mathurst Solar Farm would make a meaningful contribution to Kent’s energy needs by delivering green energy to up to 5,000 homes annually*. Over the lifetime of the project, this is equivalent to around the same reduction in carbon emissions as taking up to 6,000 petrol and diesel cars off UK roads.***

This site has been identified following extensive site selection process across the region, which took into account environmental designations, local electricity network access and capacity, the physical characteristics of the site, and the need for a supportive landowner.



Have your say

Please provide any comments you have on the proposal either via the project website, or by email or post using the details provided. Comments provided by the local community will be taken into account in shaping the final planning application submission.

If you are a shielding or unable to attend the consultation event please feel free to contact us directly and we can arrange a one to one briefing.

Public consultation event

Tuesday 26th July 2022
2.30 - 6.30pm

Takes place at North Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre, High Street, Staplehurst, Tonbridge, TN12 0BJ

FAQs

Why solar?

Solar is one of the cleanest, lowest cost forms of energy available. Mathurst Solar Farm will make a meaningful contribution to Kent's energy needs.

Does solar pose a health risk?

No - solar doesn't produce any harmful by-products.

Are solar farms noisy?

No – there is no appreciable noise from solar farms beyond the site boundary in most cases.

Will there be any permanent impact?

Solar farms are temporary and the land will be fully reinstated to farmland once the equipment is removed at the end of the project life.

Will there be any impacts on local roads?

For a period of approximately six months during construction, there will be deliveries of equipment to site. Renewable Connections will put in place measures to manage impacts of construction traffic and these measures will be included in a Construction Traffic Management Plan that will be submitted with the planning application. There will be infrequent maintenance visits to the site during operation.

What are the benefits to the local community?

Renewable Connections is committed to maximising benefits for the local community. As well as providing wildlife benefits across the site, Renewable Connections will establish a Community Benefit Fund to support local causes and is inviting feedback from local charities and groups.

What happens to the panels after decommissioning?

During decommissioning, all panels will be checked to ensure they do not have further opportunity to be reused in other installations elsewhere before being recycled. The recycling of the silicon-based solar panels that we use starts with disassembling the actual product to separate the aluminium and glass parts. 95% of the glass can be reused or recycled, whilst 100% of the aluminium can be reused for re-moulding in cell frames for new solar panels or recycled. The remaining materials are treated to be used again for manufacturing new silicon modules, resulting in an 85% recycling rate of the silicon material.

About us

Renewable Connections is one of the UK's leading solar and battery developers. We deliver highly innovative renewable energy developments across the UK and take a responsible, community-led approach to the planning and design of our projects.

With an outstanding success record of achieving project consents, the Renewable Connections team are unlocking hundreds of megawatts of solar and storage, increasing energy independence in the UK, and supporting the Government to reach its net zero targets. We are committed to developing high quality projects which see benefits delivered to local residents and the natural environment.

Contact us

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