

POLICY ON THE ERECTION OF SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAICS (PV)

Bodicote Parish Council understands the importance of using low carbon and environmentally sustainable sources of energy /power generation. However, we are also very concerned about the visual impact the panels can have on the built environment of the village and the very attractive surrounding countryside.

The erection of solar photovoltaic panels on roofs and buildings is a fairly new phenomenon, but the panels are becoming increasingly common features as people realise the environmental and cost benefits. In some cases the appearance of the panels can be intrusive where they are erected on very prominent roof elevations but this may be a price we have to pay for the environmental benefits they offer. However, where the potential intrusion is likely to cause a significant change to the historic character of the village the Parish Council will take a strong line in raising objection. In reaching a decision on whether to raise an objection the Parish Council will take a more positive position with alternative systems such as Solar Tiles and Slates that are generally less obtrusive and may be more acceptable on less prominent roof elevations. The Parish Council will therefore wish to be consulted on Planning applications for the erection of solar photovoltaics on any building within the Bodicote Conservation Area and on any Listed Building within the village.

The Parish Council is also concerned about the larger scale erection of solar photovoltaic panels in the field systems surrounding the village. Commonly referred to as Solar Farms the panels can cover large acreages and although they may be less prominent than very tall wind turbines, they can also be visually intrusive where they are sited on prominent hill sides and on lower slopes. It is often the reflection and shining glint from the glazed panels that is the most evident and intrusive feature. Therefore, when applications are made for the erection of solar photovoltaic panels in the field systems around the village the Parish Council will consider their visual impact and will raise objection if the visual impact is considered to be intrusive and harmful to the character of the countryside. In reaching a decision on whether to raise an objection the Parish Council will consider the possible visual mitigation that could be achieved by earth mounding and planting native hedgerows and trees. Where planting could easily form a successful screen the Parish Council will ask for adequate landscaping to be made a condition of the planning permission being granted.

The Parish Council's main concern will be to protect the historic character of the village and surrounding countryside and any aspect from a public right of way or vantage point within the Parish area of Bodicote. We will also support objections from other Parish Councils and community groups in the locality where the panels would have a detrimental impact on the local landscape.