

Community Conversation March 2026 : Energy and Renewables

Great Massingham Village Hall 18:30 – 20:00

Meeting Notes and Feedback

Summary of proceedings

- A briefing from Jess Cunningham reported on the progress with the NDP so far & the next steps soon to be initiated. This community conversation is the 7th and last community consultation.
- An update of views & opinions offered so far, including the 2023 consultation results.
- National plans for renewable energy were briefly outlined & both the national plans plus assessments of possible energy sites within the surrounding area were explained.
- Maps were provided for all to study.

Note – Slide deck and narrative for the meeting are available online

<https://www.greatmassinghamndp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Renewable-energy-slides-notes.pdf>

Questions raised.

There was a query about the 'Green Energy' map "Clearing up nomenclature" UI - Unlikely, VUL – Very unlikely

Q: Are we considering only wind and solar energy sources? A: no, all green energy sources.

On the scope of the NDP JC reminded the audience NDP about planning policy. Should add value not just reinforce existing measures.

Q: A question about the installation of home wind turbines was A: answered that policies already exist to regulate them.

Benefits for the community? Reduced prices, a community fund that are grant accessible. The meeting felt strongly that any green energy initiative would, "need to benefit the whole village".

A question was asked about the benefits Castle Acre may or may not have received. As far as we know it has not been a discussion community benefit yet.

Q: It was suggested that neighbouring Weasenham get a rebate from their local wind turbines? We need to establish True or not. A: Yes they do, a community fund has been established and in 2025 over £12k was raised. More details available here

<https://www.weasenhamparishcouncil.org/solar-fund>

Q: The plan would need to consider the effect green energy sources might have on 'Views'.

A: Yes that is correct and any renewable energy scheme would need to consider all NDP policies including Views and Green Spaces

Q: How much energy does Massingham use? How many turbines worth? - A: Arthur Allen googled that "One turbine would do Massingham nicely".

Uneasiness about solar panels. The audience seemed wary after Castle Acre's experience

Q: Farm biodigesters feasible for Massingham? A: Wissington example was stated. It produces 5MW of power. It was highlighted smell can be an issue.

It was stated Biogas is produced on the Raynham Estate.

Retrofitting – home improvement. It was stated the Sunday Times had run an article on retrofitting listed buildings.

Q: A question was raised about Community buying power for green energy upgrades. A: Agreed it is 'doable' but not within the NDP.

Q: Should we attach strong conditions as to the benefit to the community and should any system ?

Storage facility would be required. Need to be community owned?

Community owned equals we get the costs. We would only get a small benefit from a commercially owned solar farm.

Are we welcoming our landscape being affected by unwelcome Green projects by being enthusiastic in our NDP for their inclusion.

Roof tile solar panels were cited as a more acceptable way of harvesting solar energy.

Q: Should householders be encouraged to fit solar panels? A: roof top solar panels are already covered and acceptable as part of the National and Local Planning policy.

Q: Where should any large system be located? A: Roofs of large buildings, e.g. barns & airfield hangars & the church roof were suggested.

Q: Could such a project be community-owned? A: Yes it could be if the community wanted to develop such a project

Q: Can we, as a village, design our own scheme? A: Yes we can design our own scheme

Statements and general discussions

- “We don’t want it to be unsightly. We want a say into how its put into our neighbourhood”.
- “We don’t want it to be unsightly. We want a say into how renewables are instigated”.
- Small local schemes only – one turbine equals lots of panels
- Wind turbines seemed more acceptable than solar panels. More designs of wind turbines against a background more efficient turbines being designed. Whether true or not it was suggested 40 or 50 acres of solar panel equals one wind turbine.
- The need for battery storage buildings within the parish – their size & location, should be considered. “Battery storage units are a coming thing, but they also take up space and can be unsightly.”
- Loss of agricultural land, The site to be built at Castle Acre was mentioned & briefly discussed.
- Freebridge are currently installing panels on properties in the village for the benefit of individual households.
- Some still think that they detract from the village.

- New technologies are evolving all the time & these were mentioned by one audience member.

Overall

The majority, who attended the meeting, are in favour of renewable energy if it benefits the community. There seemed little support for a massive national infrastructure-type scheme similar to that being proposed at Castle Acre.

General information

- 1MegaWatt of ground-mounted solar requires approximately 4-5 acres
- 1 MegaWatt can power between 200- 250 homes
- Swaffham Turbine has the capacity to generate 1.5 MegaWatts per year

References

<https://www.energea.com/understanding-scale-solar-projects/>

<https://www.windpowermonthly.com/article/963373/ecotricity-launches-new-green-product#:~:text=The%20start%20of%20work%20on,in%20favour%20of%20renewable%20energy.>