

Congresbury Parish Council

Orchard House
The Old School Rooms
Station Road
Congresbury
BS49 5DX

Chair: Councillor Jane Clarke
Parish Clerk: Nicky Andrews
RFO: Gemma Palmer
Administrator: Catrin Lewis

Tel: 01934 838802
www.congresbury-pc.gov.uk
Email: clerk@congresbury-pc.gov.uk
Email: admin@congresbury-pc.gov.uk
Email: admin@congresbury-pc.gov.uk

Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting of Congresbury Parish Council, which was held in the St Andrews Room, The Old School Rooms, Congresbury on **Monday 19th May 2025 at 7:30pm.**

Present: Councillors Hill, Clarke and Holland

In attendance: Nicky Andrews (Clerk).

As the Chair of the committee was absent, Cllr Clarke agreed to act as Chair for this meeting.

There were no members of the public present.

25000 Public Participation.
None

25001 Apologies for absence
Cllrs K Razzell and T Griffiths

25002 Declarations of Interest
None

25003 Minutes of the previous meeting
The minutes of the Planning Committee held on 28th April 2025 were agreed and signed.

25004 To consider the following planning applications:

- a) 25/P/0753/FUH - 31 Venus Street Congresbury BS49 5HA - Proposed installation of a 14no. PV solar panel array to the South facing roof of an existing outbuilding.
Resolved – That the Planning committee recommends approval of this planning application.
- b) 25/P/0754/LBC - 31 Venus Street Congresbury BS49 5HA - Listed building consent for the proposed installation of a 14no. PV solar panel array to the South facing roof of an existing curtilage listed outbuilding.
Resolved – That the Planning committee recommends approval of this planning application.
- c) 25/P/0809/FUL - Land to The West and East of The Strawberry Line Brinsea Road Congresbury - Ground mounted photovoltaic solar farm together with Battery Energy Storage, associated equipment, infrastructure and ancillary works with new substation off Drove Way
Resolved – That the Planning committee recommends refusal of this planning application. Congresbury Parish Council wishes to object to this planning application. The proposed solar farm is too large and will significantly and

adversely impact on the local rural environment and will have a detrimental impact on Congresbury and the surrounding area.

Congresbury is in a beautiful location, an area of outstanding beauty, at the foot of the Mendip Hills.

There are already several solar farms in the area which have affected the scenery but nothing of this magnitude and it is in a hugely visible location either side of the Strawberry Line.

There are already several existing ground mounted solar PV developments in the vicinity of the site (See list below).

13/P/2382/F - Land at Stock/ Iwood Lane, Congresbury.

14/P/2283/F - Land at New Orchard Farm, Puxton Lane, Hewish, Puxton

14/P/1666/FUL (18/P/3540/FUL) - land at Bowerhouse, Banwell.

14/P/1938/F (19/P/2738/FUL) - Wick Lane, W Hewish, Puxton

14/P/1319/F - Land SW of Carditch Drove, Congresbury.

14/P/1842/F - Land at Towerhead Farm, Banwell.

20/P/0620/FUL - Bowerhouse, Havage Drove, Puxton.

22/P/1450/FUL - Yanel Farm, Churchill

23/P/2159/FUL - Land at Brinsea Green Farm Brinsea Lane Congresbury

The scale of this site is too large and paired with the other local solar farms the whole area will become one super solar farm. There is no need for more solar farms in this area, there are plenty of solar panels already installed and grouping them together in one area seems undesirable.

North Somerset Council will need to ensure they consider, in conjunction with this application, the potential impact on the local environment, including cumulative landscape impacts with the other solar farms in the area. Residents have voiced concerns about the noise and light pollution from the "ancillary structures." Local communities have chosen to live in a quiet, peaceful environment, where they and their families can enjoy nature. Allowing a large solar farm to go ahead will just be a gateway to other landowners following suit. What will be the limits on future development if one of the smaller "solar farms" wishes to expand to adjacent fields. In an area already prone to flooding, will solar panels make the land more predisposed to flooding, as water may not be able to soak into the fields. Will water be channelled into the rhynes and streams, this could lead to a massive and dangerous impact on property. Fields that are waterlogged even with natural drainage; artificial structures could only make this worse.

Solar energy is valuable, but a solar farm is not an efficient use of land. They should be installed in the right place on industrial sites(brownfields) and residential homes (rooftop revolution) rather than covering large swaths of our countryside. Putting solar panels on rooftops across the country can help us to generate clean electricity whilst cutting our carbon emissions and sparing land for food, farming and nature. Local planning policies should clearly set apart land that is suitable for producing decent quality crops, from inadequate quality fields that could be used for solar farms. We need our best land to be productive. The amount of arable land in the UK is in decline and we cannot afford to lose further parcels of arable land.



The erection of the Solar farm and its associated maintenance and infrastructure represents severe habitat destruction, soil degradation and destroying the beauty of nature.

Transitory animals have their traditional routes blocked and deer are often diverted onto roads. Bird and bat deaths are common as they mistake the glass for water. Although the plans claim they will be inclusive of wildlife; the sheer size of this development will wipe out a vast number of animal homes and natural infrastructure. Deer, hares, foxes, bats and other animals will be forced to find new habitats when the surrounding countryside has been destroyed. The area currently supports a multitude of species which need to be protected. The impact of the Solar Farm will be catastrophic given the changes to the environment with a huge structure.

The land will have little potential for biodiversity as half of it will be in permanent shadow and rainwater run-off creates set channels without proper dispersal. Topsoil is removed and cleaning materials can contaminate the soil. Boundaries are defined by security fencing and intrusive CCTV. The land in warmer months under the panels often looks dry and dying.

The main roads leading to and from the planned solar farm are already heavily congested with vehicle traffic. The junction of the A370 and B3133 at Congresbury traffic lights is the funnel neck to the motorway and every route is already overburdened, often backed up in all directions. The B3133 is narrow and congested, especially at peak times. The increased traffic would not only deteriorate road conditions but could put emergency support services at risk, potentially leading to severe consequences.

d) 25/P/0897/EA1 - Land to the West and East of The Strawberry Line Brinsea Road Congresbury - Screening Opinion request to determine as to whether proposed development is EIA development. Works proposed, Ground mounted photovoltaic solar farm together with Battery Energy Storage, associated equipment, infrastructure and ancillary works with new substation off Drove Way. THIS IS NOT A PLANNING APPLICATION


e) 25/P/0899/FUH - Church House Mews Broad Street Congresbury BS49 5DG - Proposed erection of a single storey front extension.

Resolved – That the Planning committee recommends approval of this planning application.

25005 Oldbridge Solar Farm – To discuss reply to anticipated planning application.
The Clerk had checked North Somerset Council website and plans had not yet been submitted. The planning committee agreed that the solar farm would be preferable to the other site as it is much smaller but if they both go ahead it would look like one exceptionally large solar farm.

25006 Planning Decisions
Members to note the summary of decisions taken by North Somerset Council since the last meeting.

25007 Date of the next meeting
The date of the next meeting 30th June 2025 at 7.30pm



Meeting ended 8.15pm

Signed: J A Clarke Date: 30 June 2025