

## **Landscape Appraisal Study for the Supply and Installation of a 20.8kW Solar Photovoltaic System at Birling Manor, Birling Gap, Sussex**



**Produced on 06th October 2023  
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## **Introduction**

In line with the climate change strategy of the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) and the aim to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions by 2040, a proposal for the installation of a 20.8kW solar panel system at Birling Manor is presented. This appraisal study ensures alignment with the Technical Advice Note (TAN) to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage of the National Park.

## **Renewable Energy Initiative**

The proposed solar panel installation is an initiative to ensure local engagement and benefits. The project aims to reduce the carbon footprint of the parish, supported by IMPACT tool assessments, and promote energy self-sufficiency in alignment with SDNPA's Climate Change Action Plan.

## **Appropriate Renewable Energy Selection**

The proposal adheres to the principles of landscape-led design, respecting the sensitivities and characteristics of the National Park's landscape. The 20.8kW solar panel system is ground mounted on low profile renusol console trays, mitigating landscape character change, and aligning with the indications provided in the TAN.

## **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**

### **Landscape Character**

Utilizing the South Downs Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), the Birling Manor site's landscape character and sensitivities have been assessed to ensure the solar panel installation conserves the intrinsic beauty of the environment.

### **Visual Impact**

The ground mounted solar panels are designed to minimize visual impact, conserving the visual integrity of the landscape. The panels are low-reflective and integrate seamlessly with the existing built environment.

## **Biodiversity and Cultural Heritage Conservation**

### **Biodiversity**

An ecological survey and assessment will be conducted to ensure the protection of wildlife and habitats. The installation will adhere to stringent measures to prevent and mitigate any potential adverse impacts.

### **Cultural Heritage**

The solar panels' installation respects the cultural and heritage assets of the area, ensuring no adverse impacts on the visual and aesthetic qualities of historical sites.

## **Benefits and Contributions to SDNPA's Goals**

### **Carbon Emission Reduction**

The project contributes to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, aligning with the Net Zero 2040 target. The initiative is evidence-based, and the IMPACT tool will measure its effectiveness in reducing the parish's carbon footprint.

### **Community Resilience**

By contributing to energy self-sufficiency and reducing energy bills, the project supports local communities in combating fuel poverty and enhances resilience against unpredictable weather events due to climate change.

### **Educational and Awareness Opportunities**

The initiative offers educational opportunities, raising awareness about renewable energy, and promoting sustainable practices within the community and beyond.

### **Conclusion**

The proposed 20.8kW solar panel system at Birling Manor aligns with the SDNPA's climate action goals and respects the landscape character and cultural heritage of the South Downs National Park. This renewable energy initiative is designed to balance the urgent need for carbon emission reduction with the preservation and enhancement of the Park's natural beauty and biodiversity.