

GRAVENEY with GOODNESTONE PARISH COUNCIL

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PRESS RELEASE

Graveney with Goodnestone Parish Council was made aware of the Cleve Hill Solar Farm proposal this week at a presentation made to the parish council as well as neighbouring parish councils, members and officers from Swale Borough Council. The broad proposals and consultation programme were outlined.

This is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and the process to obtain the required Development Consent Order does provide for wide ranging consultation prior to the submission of the application in about 12 months' time. The parish council looks forward to finding out more from the public information events due to be taking place in December and next year.

The parish council will be representing the interests of the local community throughout the process and ensuring that we maintain an active and positive dialogue with the joint venture company who are looking to develop the solar farm. The parish council will need to establish the most effective ways of keeping the parishioners informed at all key stages and also encourage them to share their views and concerns throughout the consultation process.

We will work closely with Swale Borough Council and other agencies to ensure that a comprehensive impact assessment on the scheme is drawn up. The scale of the project has surprised members of the parish council and although the presentation document is a fairly broad overview it has prompted questions regarding the boundaries of the solar farm, heritage and ecological considerations, and the potential impact on the small villages of Graveney and Goodnestone. We do have our experience of the London Array sub-station project to draw upon but are hopeful that the planning process that needs to be followed with the solar farm proposal will prompt an open and transparent debate.