

# COMMUNITY SOLAR FARM



# What is a solar farm?

- Electricity-producing solar panels
- Mounted on frames on the ground rather than roofs
- Larger scale than roof-mounted arrays (several acres)
- Panels can be tilted at best angle to sun – more efficient



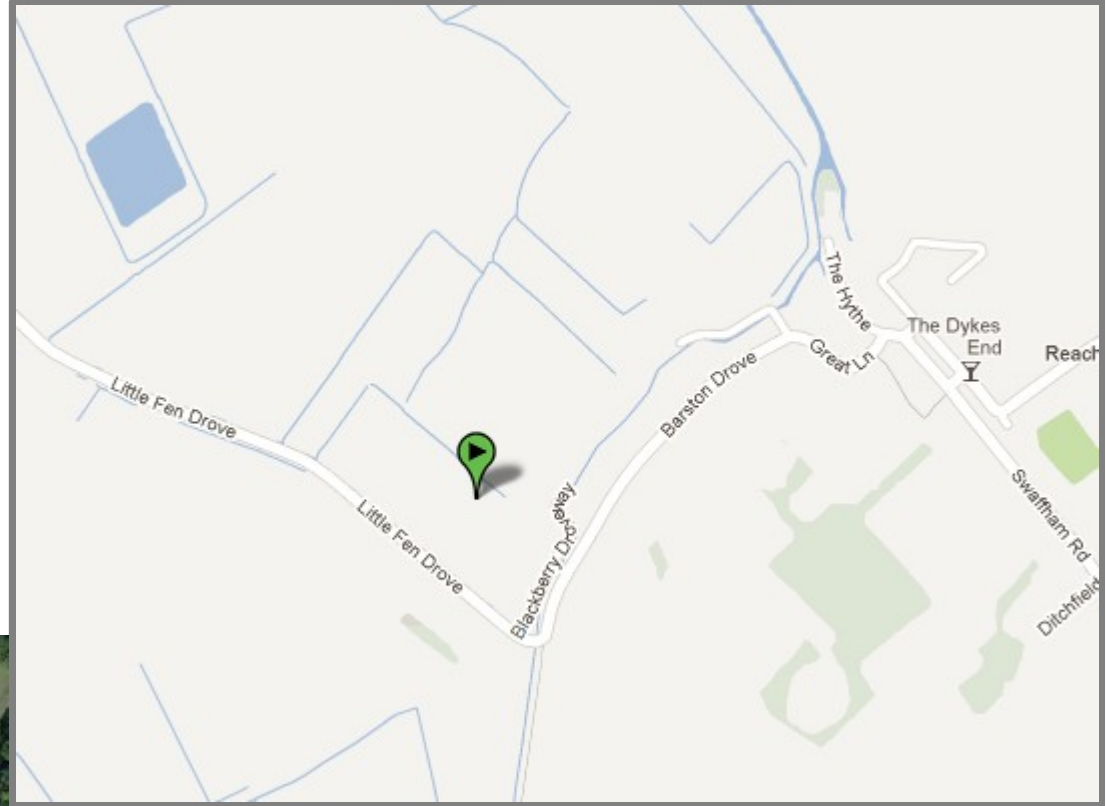
# Why?

- We need to move to sources of energy that don't produce CO<sub>2</sub>
- Wind and solar are effective choices in the fens
- Solar is quiet and unobtrusive



# Proposed site

North-west of Blackberry Drove  
Drove



- 500 kW
- 2000 panels
- Approx 5 acres
- Around 2m high
- Screened by hedges

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# Clean electricity

- The 500kW array should generate around 460,000 kWh of electricity per year
- Equivalent to the annual usage of 115 typical homes
- Could put Reach well on the way to being carbon-neutral!

# Community ownership

We propose setting up a community-owned company to own the array

- not-for-profit
- Co-operative ownership
- Pays lease to landowner
- Pays interest to investors
- Other profits returned to community





# Community ownership

- Local individuals and businesses can benefit, rather than big corporations
- Reach already has several community-run projects
  - eg village center, RaSP broadband
- Any excess profits can go into a community fund (any ideas?)

# Local examples

- Gamlingay Community Turbine
- St Paul's Community Center, Cambridge
- Possible Cambridge Community Renewables company



# Further afield

- Westmill Solar Coop – 5MW
- In Germany and Denmark around 25% of renewable energy generation is owned by community groups.



# Doing the sums

- Build cost will be around £650,000
- Money will come from selling shares in the company and from loans.
- Expected life of the farm is 20 years or more

# Income

- The company receives income every year from the feed-in tariff
- Also benefits from the sale of electricity
- Income should be at least £50,000 per year (more if we can negotiate a good price for electricity)

# Outgoings

- Lease of the land
- Maintenance
- Interest on loans / shares
- Repayment of loans / shares
- An interest rate of around 4% should be possible
- Any additional profit goes to a community benefit fund

# What is needed?

- Offers of help – especially knowledge of setting up companies
- Investors – sign up if interested!
- Support for planning application

# Summary

- A solar farm could provide a significant proportion of the electricity used in the village
- The project should benefit the local economy by returning income to local investors – rather than lining the pockets of big corporations
- Any excess profit would go to a community fund
- If it's going to happen, it needs the support of the community!