

## Notes for Permissive path management scheme

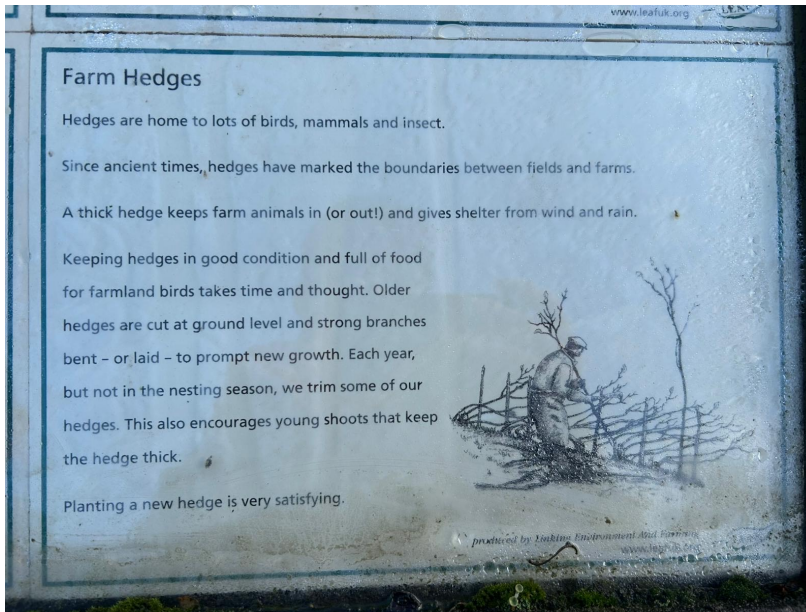
### Greenhill documents: GH7.10; APP-554.

1. The Plan for public rights of way (APP-554 1.3.1) sets out to provide “a framework for the management of PRoWs throughout the scheme. The key aim is to ensure that PRoWs remain open, accessible and safe at all times throughout the Scheme’s construction, operational and decommissioning phases”. Management of “permissive paths” during the operational phase is also included in the document.
2. A table of 23 footpaths, 11 bridleways and one BOAT (Byway Open to All Traffic) are outlined in that document.
3. Document GH2.6 was published alongside GH7.10 which provides maps without commentary.
4. In January 2026 a further document was published (GH8.2.8) pursuant to examination deadline 4, which was prepared “in response to matters raised by Interested Parties at Open Floor Hearing 2”. The document makes no reference to what specific points are being responded to, nor who raised the issues that gave rise to the document. However, efforts to clarify the full implications of the applicants’ plans are welcomed.
5. Two of the documents are prepared by Llanpro Services whilst document GH7.10 was prepared by KMC. Although these were – presumably – prepared by different authors, it is assumed that the documents can be taken together as a representation of those Public Rights of Way to be impacted by the scheme. However, it should also be noted that documents **do not** identify locations where PRoW’s are impacted but where no alternative is offered, nor does it provide meaningful information about the ways in which the proposed permissive paths substitute paths around solar arrays for footpaths across hitherto open fields.
6. It should be pointed out, first of all, that the nature and situation of the proposed solar farm, being across eight different locations plus either one or two BESS sites, means that more PRoWs are impacted than would be the case if the scheme had been designed to be more compact. More footpaths used by more walkers and horse riders will be altered and views removed than would be the case with a different design. It has already been pointed out that the search for brownfield sites – which

would have far less visual and amenity impact – was compromised from the beginning by the way in which land was sought for the scheme.

- 7.** It has been pointed out that the proposed permissive path (through AF17 to AF29) will result in an enclosed corridor. It would also result in a 60-year alteration to what has been open countryside for walkers and a prospect that is unattractive for recreational walkers. It appears to be a prime example of obliging walkers to go around an extensive plantation of panels.
- 8.** This is, effectively repeated at A2 where the proposed permissive path will presumably be impaired by the cable construction for an as yet unspecified period of time.
- 9.** At Greenhill D a permissive path is offered in addition to the retention of footpath NN/TN/3. This is an existing footpath and hence will not require any construction. However, it is not clear that the same is the case at Greenhill E where a new permissive path for pedestrians and horse riders to connect Wilby Road to Earls Barton is proposed. It is not made clear, within the documentation, what the current status of that route is, nor whether any construction will be required to ensure that it is properly instated as a usable path.
- 10.** Site F highlights the greatest amount of footpath disruption and alteration, exemplifying the replacement of what have been, for generations, open paths across fields. Their substitution with permissive paths requires walkers to walk around solar plantations. The suggestions that connections are improved is not accepted. Fields such as FF28 and FF33 will no longer be country routes.
- 11.** Lastly, there is an impact on walkers near to Lavendon with the creation of a permissive path around GF1 and GF6. Similar comments apply.
- 12.** The logic behind the provision of these alternative, permissive paths is not stated in GH7.10, nor in the other documents referenced here. It might be assumed that the developer is in fact under no obligation to provide any alternative or “permissive” routes. However, one reference to their provision is stated in GH6.2.18 where the applicant notes that permissive paths were included in the scheme as a result of consultation with public health bodies. Although there is no reason to doubt this, the interesting point that arises is that it appears in relation to discussions about human health and mental health. Therefore, public health bodies have intimated to the developer that removal of public rights of way would be detrimental to health. The question which then arises is whether and to what extent alternative paths will mitigate impacts on health.

- 13.** In various submissions the developer has pointed out that walkers will not see the solar panels because hedge planting will screen them from view. This will take some 15 years for the hedges to reach around 4.5 metres. Two points can be made about this: First, that 15 years is not a short duration for the impact of these new routes to be felt. Second, hedges require to be trimmed each year if their health is to be maintained. The documentation on hedges displayed at Castle Ashby refers to the need for annual cutting:



It is noticeable that each winter the hedges around local fields are indeed cut – to a height of perhaps 2 metres. This will mean that, to reach 4.5 metres, hedges will need to be little tended and allowed to grow higher, not only obscuring the views, but also being out of line with other hedges that have been pruned. The character of the landscape is therefore significantly altered for the lifetime of the scheme.

- 14.** It is understood that where crossing of footpaths is required for cable routing that there will be a requirement for temporary closure. This may apparently happen at night (GH7.10 para 3.2.15) or “in a short duration”. The noise of the work is not referred to.
- 15.** GH2.6 – the Public Rights of Way Plan references “TF/004”. Although “TF4” is referred to in GH7.10, there seems to be no further mention of this. The footpath referred to runs from the village of Grendon to the village of Castle Ashby. The key at the side of the map indicates that it will be “temporarily stopped up” at the point where it crosses a brook halfway between the villages. This blocking up of the path is

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due to the construction of a hard surface track to allow construction vehicles to move from Station Road to Compound 4 on Yardley Road.

- 16.** The temporary stopping up, in the case of TF004 or TF4 is for two years. Greenhill offered a compromise to Wellingborough Council for the Waendel Walk weekend each year. However, the needs and uses of the footpath for regular users is entirely ignored. There are not only dog walkers and other leisure related walkers who use this path. It also provides the nearest reachable shops (for example the food outlet at Castle Ashby) for anyone without a car. This closure, together with construction noise and heavy goods vehicles will cause a high degree of disruption and damage. An alternative to this, with a new permissive path, is requested if the project is to be approved.
- 17.** The conclusions of any review of the footpath schemes – those slated for closure, for alteration, for substitution, for traversing by trenches – is that local residents will be severely impacted both in the short and longer term.
- 18.** For any rating of the impact on local residents we request that it is viewed in light of the large numbers of local residents and non-local visitors who would be impacted. A more concentrated scheme would affect fewer people; a scheme focussed on brownfield sites would impact fewer people. This scheme, distributed as it is across such a wide area, has more impacts on more people than is necessary.

P. Anthony

February 2026.