



GASCOYNE
ESTATES



RESPONSIBLE RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

PUBLIC CHARRETTES
SEPTEMBER 2025



INTRODUCTION

Over two evenings in September, Gascoyne Estates hosted a public charrette at Cuffley Camp to discuss renewable energy. Gascoyne Estates has used the charrette format for almost 20 years to involve our neighbours in developing our plans, whether for housing developments such as Ascots Green and the redevelopment of Old Hatfield, or in this case, the principle of renewable energy development.

As discussed at the events, Gascoyne Estates is frequently contacted by renewable energy developers proposing projects on our holdings in Hertfordshire. At this point there are no specific sites in question. We have not signed any contracts or planned a project in detail. The purpose of the charrette was to understand the key issues as seen by the community on landscape, food security, biodiversity and local benefits among others so that any plans which do come forward can be better informed.

More than 12,000 invitations were distributed to households in South Mimms, Potters Bar, Cuffley, Wildhill, Northaw, Newgate Street and Essendon. Gascoyne Estates has holdings near these

communities and is conscious of the impact that development may have on them. This is why it is critical that these communities were invited to have their say.

Any future proposal which may come forward will be informed by the feedback gathered, which has been summarised in this paper.

I very much hope that you will continue to take part and share your feedback, as we continue to explore renewable energy opportunities and their suitability on our holdings in Hertfordshire.

Jorge Mendonça
Chief Executive Officer
Gascoyne Estates



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THE CHARRETTE

OVERVIEW OF EVENTS:

TUESDAY 23RD SEPTEMBER, 4PM – 9PM

The first event involved a series of presentations and opportunities for thematic discussions covering: the role of a landowner in the green transition; criteria for a good site; land for food production; as well as the relationship with tenants and the community.

TUESDAY 30TH SEPTEMBER, 4PM – 9PM

The second event started with a drop-in session followed by a review of the previous week's discussions drawing on the emerging themes and considerations going forward.

Discussions across both events covered six themes: proximity; landscape;

community benefit; nature; food security; and construction. In the days between the first and second charrette, the Gascoyne Estates team reflected on the feedback and pulled together the principles associated with each theme to inform the Estate's thinking.

This post-charrette paper summaries the points raised and the Estate's reflections.

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PROXIMITY

Discussions from the first charrette demonstrated that in considering any type of development, Gascoyne Estates need to think about what a reasonable proximity is to people's houses and settlements, to heritage assets such as churches, and to places people enjoy. This is to ensure that the experience of these places is not unduly or excessively harmed.

Interestingly, discussions at the first charrette also raised the question about the proximity to existing infrastructure and whether this should be taken into consideration when selecting locations of renewable energy infrastructure. For example, siting of developments closer to road infrastructure or existing electricity pylons.

Reflecting on the discussions and feedback received regarding proximity, Gascoyne Estates:

- Reminded attendees that the maps on display outlined Gascoyne Estates' ownership and not a red line for a planning application.
- Committed to visit the homes of residents who expressed concerns about the potential of a renewable energy project to impact their views if a scheme were to come forward.
- Will consider what an appropriate buffer is to existing settlements and heritage sites, based on technical studies.



LANDSCAPE

A key theme which emerged in discussions was landscape. This took into consideration the technical perspective as well as the more subjective experience of enjoyment when moving through the landscape. It is clear that both of these considerations hold weight, and should be carefully balanced in the development of any scheme.

At the first session it was evident that the farmers in the room had a preference for wind turbines to be explored instead of solar, while the views of the wider community appeared to differ. This was largely due to the land use efficiency of wind, which allows for the continuation of cropping underneath. In the days between the two events, the Gascoyne Estates team reflected on the comments and explained that the topography of the landscape being discussed meant a wind project was unlikely, but it was too early to rule it out entirely.

In addition to the technical considerations and topography, conversations also



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touched on the need for proper screening and advanced planting to be taken into account for any possible renewable energy scheme.

While reflecting on the themes and implications that emerged, the Gascoyne Estates team were explicit in their commitment not to pursue any potential renewable energy proposal that is not deemed suitable by a professional and independent landscape consultant.

In summary, the key takeaways on landscape matters include:

- Maintaining and enhancing screening and advanced planting.
- Carefully considering the topography in question and whether any development project is in keeping with nearby landscapes.
- Being led by the advice from an independent expert landscape consultant on whether a project is technically sound.

NATURE

The next theme that was apparent from discussions was the desire shared by the community and the Estate to protect mature trees and hedgerows. Peter Mitchell, Gascoyne Estates' Head of Sustainability and Innovation, explained that the Estates spent a lot of time protecting and improving hedgerows across Hatfield Park and the other Estates managed by Gascoyne Estates and had no intention to change this approach.

However, some members of the community expressed concerns about farmland biodiversity if a renewable energy project were to be delivered on land that was originally farmed.

In between the first and second charrettes, Gascoyne Estates had reflected on these concerns and reassured attendees:

- The Estate is committed not only to delivering biodiversity net gain at its minimum requirements but is looking to go further and increase it over a wider area.
- The Estate is the lead partner in the Hertfordshire Nature Recovery Partnership, which seeks to identify opportunities to improve and connect natural habitats.
- There was a commitment to retaining and maintaining mature trees and hedgerows.



FOOD SECURITY

The fourth theme that emerged, which often arises in conversations about the use of land for renewable energy, was food security. It was clear that this was an important issue for many and was shared by the representatives from Gascoyne Estates.

WHAT IS FOOD SECURITY?

"All people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient and nutritious food that meets dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."

UK Food Security Strategy

The impact of renewable energy developments on food production was discussed in detail. However, the primary concern voiced was about the potential impact on tenant farmers.

The recent appointment of a Tenant Farmer Commissioner by the UK Government was referenced as a positive step for safeguarding tenants' rights. Peter Mitchell commented that the compensation for tenant farmers in previous energy developments was inadequate, and fails to recognise the

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role of tenant farmers as enablers of development.

He reiterated the Estates' commitment to making sure that tenant farmers were partners in any scheme. In the time since the charrette, Gascoyne Estates has visited all the tenant farmers whose land may be affected, and they have engaged openly and constructively about the future.

The key takeaways and commitments from Gascoyne Estates include:

- Continuing to value the relationships with tenant farmers, and work with them constructively.
- To ensure that tenants are the first to know of any progress made towards a development.
- To work with tenants as partners in a development, and work to find agreements which suit the tenants' businesses and livelihoods.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT

While there is more to be discussed in terms of community benefit - a key component of any development project - the discussions at the first charrette focused on opportunities to enhance nature, reduce local energy bills and create and improve public access. The latter sparked much conversation during one of the workshops as participants took the opportunity to map out their routes across the three landholdings.

"IT IS OUR COMMUNITY AS MUCH AS IT IS YOUR COMMUNITY"

Reflecting on the community benefits suggested at the first charrette, Gascoyne Estates committed to:

- Seek further insight from the community through continued engagement and dialogue.
- Explore the opportunity of replicating the community energy scheme at Cranborne Estate, which is part of Gascoyne Estates.
- If a scheme comes forward, it should be exemplary. For that to be the case, community benefits needed to be part of the scheme.



CONSTRUCTION AND DECOMMISSIONING

The final recurring theme from discussions involved concerns about possible implications of lorry movements, as well as the access and disruption to the local road infrastructure in the construction and decommissioning phases of a renewable energy proposal.

Gascoyne Estates reflected on the concerns raised on this phase of a potential project and committed to:

- Investing in the access for any site and ensuring that access is minimally disruptive, which includes seeking underground cable connections.
- Provisions to minimise disruption that could arise from the development of a scheme.
- Ongoing engagement with the local community, decision makers and stakeholders throughout any possible scheme that is brought forward.

WHAT NEXT?

This paper summarises the key themes which emerged and were discussed at the two charrettes.

Residents were engaged throughout the process and shared their opinions on what needs to be taken into account for a renewable energy project.

Gascoyne Estates has a history of open and transparent discussions with its communities and intends to continue the conversation with tenants and neighbours with a further drop-in charrette to be held in February 2026.

However, if you have specific questions you'd like to raise, please contact us via the details below.

For more information, please contact:

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