

# Elwy Solar Energy Farm

## CONSULTATION STATEMENT

P19-2023 | JULY 2020

DRAFT



CONSULTATION REPORT

ELWY SOLAR ENERGY FARM

Prepared by Perkin PR for Solarcentury

July 2020

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared by Perkin PR for Solarcentury and Pegasus Group in support of the Development of National Significance (DNS) planning application that is being prepared for Elwy solar energy farm, near St Asaph in Denbighshire, Wales.

1.2 This report summarises the first phase of community engagement – the voluntary consultation stage – which took place between February 2020 and July 2020. It also describes the community engagement activity that is planned for the second phase – the formal pre-application consultation stage that will be carried out from August 2020 to October 2020.

1.3 When the second phase of public consultation is complete, further community analysis and information will be added to this report ahead of the DNS application submission.

1.4 The site for Elwy solar energy farm is located within the administrative boundary of Denbighshire County Council near to the city of St Asaph, c.2km east of Bodelwyddan and c.2.5km south of Rhuddlan. The southern portion of the site lies within the boundary of St Asaph City Council and the northern section of the site lies within the area of Bodelwyddan Town Council. The proposed grid connection route lies within the Cefn Meiriadog community area. The total site comprises approximately 170ha. Approximately 106ha of that agricultural land will be used for the solar energy farm – the remainder of the land will be retained for some grazing and the installation of the underground grid connection cable. It is in the Welsh Parliament constituency of the Vale of Clwyd in the North Wales political Region.

1.5 The site has been carefully chosen for its potential to deliver solar-powered electricity to the grid. With a solar project of approximately 62MWp proposed, the site would generate nearly 60 gigawatt hours of electricity per year, enough to power over 20,000 homes, via an array of solar panels mounted on the ground.

1.6 This report sets out the pre-planning application consultation that has taken place for Elwy solar energy farm so far – in the voluntary phase – and describes how feedback received from the community has helped inform the detailed planning documents that will be shared with the community in the formal consultation stage ahead of the planning application

being submitted. This report is set out as follows:

- Section 2 describes community engagement carried out in the voluntary stage.
- Section 3 lists the feedback from consultees during this voluntary stage.
- Section 4 provides detail about the project communications review due to Covid 19.
- Section 5 sets out the community engagement that will be carried out in the formal pre-application consultation stage.
- In Section 6 are the conclusions from the voluntary stage - including how feedback received so far has helped shape the detailed proposal.

1.7 Accompanying Appendices and Tables provide further information and are labelled and referred to in the text.

## 2. Community Engagement

### Consultation plan

2.1 The consultation plan for Elwy solar energy farm is informed by the Procedural Guidance for Developments of National Significance Version 2.2. October 2019 and by Denbighshire County Council's consultation advice to developers. It also reflects Solarcentury's own commitments regarding community consultation.

2.2 The Procedural Guidance for Developments of National Significance requests developers to carry out consultation in accordance with Article 8 and 9 of the Order. In summary to;

- Carry out *voluntary* and *statutory* pre-application consultation. As a minimum consult specific Community Consultees, Specialist Consultees and Relevant Persons as well as owners and occupiers of land adjoining the proposed development.
- Publicise draft proposals, engage the local planning authority, affected communities and statutory undertakers to identify issues and exchange views,
- Display relevant notices and
- Publish relevant documents on a website for not less than 42 days.

2.3 Denbighshire County Council's advice to developers is to have dialogue with communities and key stakeholders prior to a planning application being submitted.

2.4 Solarcentury's own commitments are to advise and inform local communities of their plans prior to a planning application being submitted, giving local communities the opportunity to feedback thoughts and comments via a variety of different communication channels. These include: by telephone, by letter, by email, via an online survey hosted on a project website and via an exhibition or resident information day. Thoughts and comments received then help shape the planning application.

2.5 The consultation plan for Elwy solar energy farm reflects this advice, giving those living and working closest to the proposed development the opportunity to feedback any questions or concerns ahead of the planning application being submitted. It is in two parts: the voluntary stage as described below and the formal pre-application consultation stage as described in Section 5.

## Community engagement - the voluntary stage

2.6 Planning and preparation for the voluntary pre-application consultation phase started in January 2020 with successful development of a project website, written information sent out to members of the community and a dialogue starting in the local press. The list below describes the activity that has taken place since January 2020.

- Launch of a project specific website and associated content <https://www.solarcentury.com/elwy/> to act as an information hub for the project. Live since Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020.
- Press releases and associated information sent to the local press including the Denbighshire Free Press, the Daily Post, the Rhyl Journal and later the Asaph City Times. First press release issued week commencing 17<sup>th</sup> February 2020 (Appendix iv).
- An introductory letter sent to key community stakeholder's week commencing 17<sup>th</sup> February 2020: 2 Ward Councillors, 1 Neighbouring Ward Councillor, 2 Community Council Clerks at Bodelwyddan and St. Asaph Councils, 5 Welsh Ministers and the Member of Parliament for the area (Appendices ii, and iii).
- An introductory letter sent to nearest neighbours living close to the boundary of the proposed development week commencing 17<sup>th</sup> February 2020 (Appendix i).
- An introductory leaflet sent to an additional 300+ people, including households, 2 schools and local businesses week commencing 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020 (Appendix vi).
- Setting up of an online survey – hosted on the project website – to give the communities of St Asaph and Bodelwyddan an opportunity to feedback comments early on in the process. The survey also has an area for potential suppliers to register their interest in bidding for any contracts of work that may be associated with the project in the longer term. Live since 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020.
- Setting up of a project telephone number, project email address and project address so that residents, businesses and interested parties could easily raise individual concerns. All available to use since 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

2.7 In addition two introductory information sessions were planned so that the communities of Bodelwyddan and St Asaph could see the outline plans for Elwy solar energy farm. The aim of these sessions was to help gauge local opinion in the early stages of the project and to discuss any areas of concern.

2.8. The information sessions were due to take place on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March at Bodelwyddan Community Centre from 4.00-8.00pm and Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March at St Asaph Cricket Club from 9.00am until midday but unfortunately had to be cancelled due to what was then a changing situation with Coronavirus – with Wales and England entering official lockdown on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. A copy of the press statement Solarcentury issued to postpone these events on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020 can be found in Appendix v. All the information that was going to be made available at the information sessions was immediately put online at the project website and has been available to download since mid-March 2020. This includes copies of the introductory set of information boards, press releases, outline drawings and answers to frequently asked questions as well as a link to an online feedback form.

2.9 Although the larger information sessions were postponed, Solarcentury did still manage to carry out smaller meetings with local residents before lockdown. These took place on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March in the local community ahead of nationwide lockdown. Feedback from these meetings can be found in Section 3 of this report.

2.10 Feedback was also received in response to the leaflets and letters sent out. Details of this feedback can be read in Section 3 of this report.

2.11 In summary, Solarcentury and Perkin PR have carried out a number of pre-application consultation activities in the voluntary phase. Since February 2020 details about the project have been shared with nearest neighbours, the wider local community, Ward and Town Councils, politicians and other interested stakeholders and community groups. Where people have wanted to provide early feedback, they have been given the opportunity to do so via a number of communication channels including an email address, telephone number, postal address and online feedback form.

2.12 Solarcentury has welcomed the feedback received and used it to help shape the more detailed plans. Section 3 describes the feedback received to date.

### 3. Community feedback from the voluntary consultation phase

#### Initial feedback

3.1 Initial verbal and written feedback has been broadly positive about the scheme, with the size and scale of the development and the impact on the environment being the main questions raised. From February 2020 to June 2020:

- Only 7 people have filled in the online survey so far – 3 were potential suppliers and 4 residents, councillors or community groups.
- 18 local residents living close to the proposal have written to, spoken with, or telephoned Solarcentury with their comments and concerns following the letter and leaflets being sent out. Anybody raising written questions or concerns has received a personal written response.
- The Ward Councillors who were sent the introductory letter have so far not raised any concerns, but have said they are mindful of the scale of the development. Those contacted by telephone were grateful for the information they had received.
- A St Asaph Town Councillor was interested and positive about the scheme.
- Local community groups have shown an interest in the associated community benefit fund, with two groups suggesting funds could be used to install solar panels on community building roofs.
- Friends of the Earth has commented on the proposal in the local press – they would like the solar farm to benefit the community if the idea gets off the ground.
- Local newspapers and magazines have been interested in communicating about the project including the Denbighshire Free Press, Rhyl Journal, Daily Post and the Asaph City Times. Articles have so far been balanced in their nature, with the scale, and impact on the environment the main topic of conversation.

3.2 Table 1 below summarises the main topics of conversation and concerns raised in letters and emails received and in the meetings carried out.

Table 1: Summary of verbal and written feedback so far

Questions or comments	From	Solarcentury response
What are the arrangements for access during construction?	Neighbour	Hope to have two entrances, one of which is the existing road. We are looking to come off the road at the first bend and have a temporary road across the fields to the farm yard. More details to follow.
What are we doing to protect existing wildlife – bats, deer, geese etc.?	Neighbour	Existing trees and hedges not being removed and plan to enhance the site for local wildlife including wildflower planting, resting the ground adding bird and bat boxes as appropriate.
Will there be any new overhead lines going in?	Neighbour	No. The connection to the grid will be an underground cable.
Concerns about visual impact and being surrounded by panels.	Neighbour	Talked about the proposed location of panels - that they would be set back from property boundaries to help minimise visual impact.
Safety issue on access road – issues over construction traffic.	Neighbour	Will manage this for the residents and community. Access tracks will be clearly signed and perhaps the speed limit can be reduced during the construction phase.
Positive about the scheme – would support wildflower area near entrance. Recommends making most of existing wildlife features onsite e.g. the pond and increasing biodiversity.	Neighbour	Welcomed comments. Will be retaining existing features and will seek to make improvements to existing features on the site too.
Asked about the screening work that had been done. Questioned whether it was going to be an overhead cable line connection to the substation. Pleased it wasn't. Preferred this idea to plans for a new residential area.	Neighbour	Site screening process explained and connection confirmed as underground.
Opposed to the scheme. Thinks it is too big and that it takes too much agricultural land out of production.	Local business	Explained why the site needs to be designed on this scale.
Thinks scheme is too big, however does see it as an efficient technology. Will be objecting and would rather have wind turbines.	Local resident	Acknowledged objections and explained reason for scale.
Supportive of the scheme – liked that green space will be protected. In favour of linking up local footpaths and gaining more access.	Local resident	Grateful for the positive feedback and will look into enhancing the footpaths.
Concerned about view of panels from her window. Concerned about the impact on wildlife.	Neighbour	Acknowledged concerns and explained layout and proposed design. Talked about trying to enhance the site for wildlife in the longer term.

3.3 In summary the main questions and concerns raised relate to the scale of the development, environmental impact, and visual impact for the nearest properties. Feedback also included comments about access to the site, comments about a usable footpath, minimising impact on wildlife and careful and considerate operations in the construction phase.

3.4 All of these comments have been considered and have been fed into the formal design stage. In the conclusions section of this report – Section 6 – there is a list of the changes made to the design as a result of the feedback received in the voluntary consultation stage.

## 4. Covid 19: Communications review

### Changing situation with Covid 19

4.1 In response to the changing situation in early March regarding people and travel, Solarcentury and Perkin PR decided to postpone its local information sessions at Bodelwyddan Community Centre and at St. Asaph Cricket Club due to concerns regarding Covid 19. A press release was issued on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020 with the following statement: (Appendix v)

*"Solarcentury has taken this difficult decision in light of the changing situation with Coronavirus. Bringing lots of people together in one place in the current climate does not seem a sensible thing to do when we can make information available by other means. Therefore we are taking the precautionary approach of cancelling these Information Sessions believing this to be the responsible course of action. We are sorry for any inconvenience caused but hope that everyone will understand".*

4.2 Solarcentury immediately put all the information day material online at the project website and investigated sending the printed information boards to local community centres and the local library but on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 the situation with Coronavirus changed significantly. Measures to contain the virus were no longer voluntary and the UK and Welsh Governments asked people to stay at home. Large gatherings of people were no longer permitted and people were asked not to travel, only being allowed out of their homes for essential medicine or food, for daily exercise, or for work – where it was not possible to work from home. Shops and services were closed unless selling essential items, as were all schools, community buildings and leisure facilities – so the information boards were not sent.

4.3 For Elwy solar energy farm this posed a number of challenges – especially for face to face communications and ongoing community engagement both in the voluntary and formal pre-application consultation stage. The original plan which included provision for face to face information days and exhibitions to be delivered in the St Asaph and Bodelwyddan communities in the spring and summer of 2020 therefore needed to be reviewed.

4.4 The result was a review of the project timings – delaying planning submission until November 2020 – and a review of how to deliver a full and useful consultation programme for the communities of Bodelwyddan and St Asaph without face to face meetings.

4.5 This review included seeking out advice from the Welsh Government and other bodies as to how to proceed as well as internal discussions between Pegasus Group, Solarcentury and Perkin PR on how best to make the consultation meaningful.

#### Review of planning and other advice

4.6 Advice from The Welsh Government Planning Directorate in a letter to their Heads of Planning Departments regarding pre-application consultation was as follows:

*"Developers are unable to fulfil a number of the requirements of the pre-application process. We are considering temporary amendments to the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 (DMPWO) to remove the need for site notices and making information available for inspection at a location in the vicinity of the proposed development. Similar changes will be considered for Developments of National Significance. All pre-application publicity and consultation should be undertaken online where the option of delaying until after the current emergency is not available. Legislation will be brought forward as soon as possible. In the meantime developers are encouraged to reach out to local communities using online services".*

4.7 Advice from other parties was similar – use online methods where possible – alongside existing and more traditional methods e.g. telephone and email so that people without access to online tools could comment too.

4.8 Solarcentury and Perkin PR re-wrote the community engagement plan to accord with that advice following a strategy of no face to face meetings, replacing them with online meetings supported by more traditional methods.

4.9 Section 5 describes the revised consultation plan – effectively bringing an end to the voluntary consultation stage and moving into the formal pre-application consultation stage. The revised plan was shared with The Planning Inspectorate for England and Wales and Denbighshire County Council for their views and comments. Comments received supported the use of online and offline communication methods.

## 5. Community engagement post Lockdown

5.1 The following lists the activity that will take place ahead of the DNS application submission in November 2020. This revised plan assumes no face to face meetings will take place and that no large gatherings of people will be allowed. If the situation with Coronavirus changes and movement restrictions are lifted significantly then Solarcentury, Pegasus Group and Perkin PR will decide whether it is appropriate to hold a face to face 'drop in session' event or similar in the community at a later date. For the foreseeable future, the project website [www.solarcentury.com/elwy](http://www.solarcentury.com/elwy) will continue to be the information hub for this project, and seeking feedback from the community will be done in the same way as previously planned before the Coronavirus outbreak – by letter and leaflets, by email, by phone call, via the project website, via local organisations and groups and via the online survey.

5.2 To replace the face to face events i.e. the community information days/exhibition and the stakeholder roundtable discussions Solarcentury will instead:

- Host a virtual exhibition space online where the community can view and download the plans and other material associated with Elwy solar energy farm. The space will include a live chat facility so people can ask questions in real time when the live chats are in session and leave messages at other times.
- Host online meetings to replace the roundtable discussions with key stakeholders using, for example, Microsoft teams.

5.3 Making the information accessible *to all age groups* is the main aim of this community engagement plan, so online communication tools will be used *in addition* to more traditional offline methods to ensure anyone without internet access can still submit feedback and give their views. Making the information available in both languages – English and Welsh – is also important for accessibility. Below are the communication channels that will be used to deliver the Elwy solar energy farm community engagement plan following Lockdown. The website, information boards, leaflet and online community hall will all be available in English and in Welsh.

Project Website [www.solarcentury.com/elwy](http://www.solarcentury.com/elwy)

5.4 The website hosts an introduction to the scheme, details about the location, the project schedule and a list of FAQ's. In addition press releases and relevant documents associated

with the scheme can be read and/or downloaded from it. Contact details are supplied – email, phone number and address – and there is a link to an online survey where people can give feedback all the time. The website has been live since February 2020, throughout the voluntary pre-application consultation stage, and will be there throughout the formal consultation stage too. Any enquiries received via the website will continue to be managed by Perkin PR and Solarcentury. The website is available in English and in Welsh.

5.5 The formal planning documents for the Statutory Pre-Application Consultation phase (DNS requirement) will be made available on this website during the consultation period.

#### Virtual Exhibition Space

5.6 Solarcentury already has some experience of using virtual exhibition space having used this method of communication for sites in the Netherlands. Their experience has been a higher than usual uptake of people choosing to participate in the exhibition which Solarcentury hope to replicate here.

5.7 A virtual exhibition space will be set up for people to visit as part of the formal pre-application consultation phase. The virtual space will replicate that of a community hall with information boards and take-away material for people to view, read and download. There will also be a chat room available for real time conversation – opened at advertised times. The Solarcentury team will be on hand during these advertised sessions to take calls and questions just like they would be at a drop in session or exhibition event.

5.8 A Welsh speaker will be available on the live chat facility – as they would have been at the drop in session event. The virtual space will be open from 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020 until 9<sup>th</sup> October 2020 with live chat sessions advertised and hosted in September 2020.

5.9 The virtual space will host:

- Information boards with details about the scheme e.g. site visualisations, photographs and viewpoints, timescales, the planning process etc. (available in English and Welsh)
- Detailed drawings and images associated with the proposal
- Draft planning application documents
- General information on solar farms and who Solarcentury is
- A live chat function

- Contact details – for email, telephone and written enquiries
- A feedback form – via a link to the online survey (available in English and Welsh).

5.10 Video pieces will be in the virtual space, welcoming people to the space, describing how a solar farm works and answering some of the most frequently asked questions.

5.11 The virtual space will be accessed via the project website. The community will be advised about the virtual space via letter and leaflets to their homes, via a press advert and via a press release sent to the local newspapers.

#### Offline material

5.12 At the start of the formal pre-planning application consultation stage letters and leaflets will be sent to members of the community including residents who live close to the site and in neighbouring communities. In those letters, members of the community will be advised that the formal pre-application consultation process is starting, that they can get information via the project website and that an exhibition will be held online via a virtual exhibition space. There will also be details about how to contact Solarcentury – live chat, telephone, email or letter – if they have any questions and they will be provided with details for completing the online survey.

- Letters will be sent to Ward Councillors, Town Councils, the MP, and Members of the Senedd, key community stakeholders and nearest neighbours. Letters will be written in English and translated into Welsh where individuals request it.
- Leaflets will be sent to the wider community – residents, businesses and community groups. The leaflet will be produced in English and in Welsh.

5.13 If anyone does not have internet access or is not comfortable downloading material to their devices to read, they will be able to request paper copies which can be sent to them by post. The project telephone number can be used for this.

#### Stakeholder Roundtable meetings

5.14 Ordinarily Solarcentury would offer round table meetings to key stakeholders and interested groups. In the past this has included discussions with local Councillors, community

leaders, community organisations and action or campaign groups. If any of these stakeholders would like to attend a meeting to discuss certain elements of the solar energy farm design then they can still do so. However instead of face to face meetings, these meetings will be organised using online meeting tools such as Microsoft teams. Stakeholders will be invited to the meeting, sent the relevant link and time of the meeting and given the opportunity to ask questions via a dedicated meeting Chair. Solarcentury, Perkin PR and Pegasus personnel will be available at the meeting to answer questions. Secretarial support will also be provided so that any feedback received can be documented. A Welsh speaker will be available for these meetings. These meetings will be offered in September 2020 if stakeholders would like them.

## Local Media

5.15 A series of press releases will be produced to let people know about the formal pre-planning application consultation process. These are likely to include;

- Information about when the formal pre-application consultation starts – explaining how people can give feedback
- Details about the virtual exhibition space
- Advertising of live chat rooms / exhibition sessions
- Community benefit, job opportunities and local spend
- Solarcentury and the Bumblebee Conservation Trust Partnership
- Details about the biodiversity management plan

5.16 An advert will be placed in the local press to meet the DNS requirement and any media enquiries will be responded to and statements given as required.

## Social Media

5.17 Relevant news produced for the press releases will also be shared on Solarcentury social media channels including the Twitter feed. The Solarcentury communications team will take the lead on this and decide what works best on their corporate channels.

5.18 Perkin PR will ask the Bodelwyddan and St Asaph community groups to share project updates and news on their local social media channels, including details about the formal consultation process starting, how people can make comment, how they can contact

Solarcentury and what the timescales are for giving feedback. Links to the online survey will also be provided. Pdf versions of the leaflet will be shared with these social media forums where appropriate.

#### Specialist and statutory consultees

5.19 Pegasus Group will be writing to relevant specialist and statutory consultees and sending and posting formal notices to owners and occupiers of neighbouring land. Pegasus Group will also be managing correspondence regarding any secondary consents as required by the DNS Procedure.

#### 5.20 In summary:

- Solarcentury recognises the sensitivities of the situation with Covid 19.
- Solarcentury respects that restrictions in place mean that community consultation cannot, at present, include face to face communications.
- Effective communication with the community can still happen using a mixture of online and offline tools, including a virtual exhibition space.
- Solarcentury has already used this method of communication for other sites in the Netherlands – with a higher than usual uptake of people choosing to participate in the virtual exhibition space and give feedback on the plans. We hope for the same levels of participation here.
- Solarcentury believe this combination of communication tools and channels can successfully deliver worthwhile community engagement for the St Asaph, Bodelwyddan and Cefn Meiriadog communities.

5.21 The formal stage will start on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020 and finish on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2020. When the formal phase of pre-application consultation is finished further community analysis and information will be added to this Consultation Report.

## 6. Conclusions

6.1 Feedback received in the voluntary stage has helped inform the Elwy solar energy farm proposal which will soon be open to more public consultation as we start the formal pre-application consultation stage.

6.2 Design changes have been made to the initial layout plans to incorporate comments received from the community so far. These include:

- Revisions to the layout of the solar panels – in some cases creating larger gaps between the edge of property boundaries and where the solar panels start, with additional hedgerow planting.
- A proposal for improving the footpath access across and around the site.
- A proposal for traffic calming measures along the main access route during the construction stage.
- Further plans to improve biodiversity and wildlife habitat at site.

6.3 Solarcentury is grateful for the feedback received to date and welcomes more feedback as the project moves from the voluntary to the formal pre-application consultation stage.

## 7. Contacts for further information

7.1 Further information on the above can be requested via the project email address and phone number or by contacting Perkin PR directly.

Email: [elwysolar@solarcentury.com](mailto:elwysolar@solarcentury.com)

Call: 0207 549299

Nicola Perkin at Perkin PR

Project Communication Lead

[nicola@perkinpr.co.uk](mailto:nicola@perkinpr.co.uk)

## Appendices

- i. Introductory letter to neighbouring properties
- ii. Introductory letter to local Councillors
- iii. Introductory letter to MP and Members of the Senedd
- iv. Press release introducing the project
- v. Press statement about the postponed information days
- vi. Copy of the introductory resident leaflet/mailshot

## Appendix i

### Introductory letter to neighbouring properties – sent week commencing 17<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Dear Sir or Madam,

#### **New solar energy farm proposal near St. Asaph**

We wanted to introduce ourselves and advise you about a new solar energy farm proposal that we are considering near St. Asaph.

Solarcentury is one of the UK's leading solar power companies and we are currently evaluating land to the north west of St. Asaph for the development of a new solar energy farm – Elwy Solar Energy Farm. The site has been carefully chosen for its potential to deliver high levels of solar powered electricity to the grid, and is expected to generate enough electricity to power the equivalent of 20,000 homes.

At present we are in the early stages of the project and are simply looking for initial feedback on our plans, but in the long run we hope to secure planning permission for, and build Elwy Solar Energy Farm on land between the A525 and A55 North Wales Expressway.

We intend to submit a formal planning application for Elwy Solar Energy Farm later this year, but before we do, we want to share information about our plans with residents and the local community. We are doing this in two phases. The first will be a set of information sessions sharing the outline plans in March 2020. The second a series of drop in sessions in the community in May/June 2020 to share more detailed plans, prior to the planning application being submitted. The enclosed leaflet invites you and your staff to the information sessions in March. If you would like to attend, please pop in at a time that is convenient to you.

More information is also available at our project website <https://www.solarcentury.com/elwy/> including a link to an online survey should anyone wish to make comment or give feedback.

We hope this letter and the information enclosed is a helpful introduction to our plans, but if you have further questions please do not hesitate to contact us via the details below. I have also enclosed a poster should you wish to share the details on your staff or community noticeboard.

Yours faithfully,

Chris Banks  
UK Business Development Manager, Solarcentury

Email [elwysolar@solarcentury.com](mailto:elwysolar@solarcentury.com) or call 0207 549 1299

## Appendix ii

### Introductory letter to local Councillors

19 February 2020

Dear Councillor,

#### **New solar energy farm proposal near St. Asaph**

We wanted to introduce ourselves and advise you about a new solar energy farm proposal that we are considering in your local community. As the Ward Councillor for Bodelwyddan we are writing to inform you about our plans and provide you with information about the scheme.

Solarcentury is one of the UK's leading solar power companies and we are currently evaluating land to the north west of St. Asaph for the development of a new solar energy farm – Elwy Solar Energy Farm. The site has been carefully chosen for its potential to deliver high levels of solar powered electricity, at a point at which it can be accepted by the national grid, and is expected to generate enough electricity to power the equivalent of 20,000 homes. Solarcentury is also proposing to install batteries at the site in order to store the electricity generated for use during the day or night.

At present we are in the early stages of the project and are simply looking for initial feedback on our plans, but in the long run we hope to secure planning permission for, and build Elwy Solar Energy Farm on land between the A525 and A55 North Wales Expressway. The map enclosed shows the approximate location.

We intend to submit a formal planning application for Elwy Solar Energy Farm later this year, but before we do we want to share information about our plans with the local community. We are planning to do this in two phases. The first will be a set of information sessions sharing the outline plans in March 2020. The second a series of drop in sessions in the community in May/June 2020 to share more detailed plans, prior to the planning application being submitted.

Members of the community will be able to feedback their comments throughout this time at the information sessions, drop in sessions, or via our project website. It is hoped that early feedback from the community will help shape the design.

Our first information sessions will be held in March. At these sessions we will have the outline details of the solar farm on display and members of our team will be available to answer any questions. If you would like to attend please pop in at a time that is convenient to you, or call us and we can arrange a separate meeting that day. We will be inviting local residents, businesses and community groups as well as Councillors, the local MP and Assembly Members. The session details are as follows:

- Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Afternoon and early evening session at Bodelwyddan Community Centre. We will be there from 4.00pm – 8.00pm.
- Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Morning session at St. Asaph Cricket Club. We will be there from 9.00am until midday.
- More information is also available at our project website <https://www.solarcentury.com/elwy/>

Included with this letter is a map showing the approximate location of the solar energy farm and an FAQ document addressing some of the questions we have been asked when we have developed other sites. We hope this letter and the information enclosed is a helpful introduction to our plans, but if you have further questions please do not hesitate to contact us via the details below.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Banks  
UK Business Development Manager  
Solarcentury

Email [elwysolar@solarcentury.com](mailto:elwysolar@solarcentury.com)  
Call 0207 549 1299

Enclosed  
Location map  
FAQ document

## Appendix iii

### Introductory letter to MP and Members of the Senedd (previously Assembly Members)

19 February 2020

Ann Jones AM  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Dear Ann Jones,

#### **New solar energy farm proposal near St. Asaph could power 20,000 homes**

We wanted to introduce ourselves and advise you about a new solar energy farm proposal that we are considering in your local community. As the AM for Vale of Clwyd, we are writing to inform you about our plans and provide you with information about the scheme.

Solarcentury is one of the UK's leading solar power companies and we are currently evaluating land to the north west of St. Asaph for the development of a new solar energy farm – Elwy Solar Energy Farm. The site has been carefully chosen for its potential to deliver high levels of solar powered electricity to the grid, and is expected to generate enough electricity to power the equivalent of 20,000 homes. Solarcentury is also proposing to install batteries at the site in order to store the electricity generated for use during the day or night.

At present we are in the early stages of the project and are simply looking for initial feedback on our plans, but in the long run we hope to secure planning permission for, and build Elwy Solar Energy Farm on land between the A525 and A55 North Wales Expressway. The map below shows the approximate location.

We intend to submit a formal planning application for Elwy Solar Energy Farm later this year, but before we do, we want to share information about our plans with the local community. We are planning to do this in two phases. The first will be a set of information sessions sharing the outline plans in March 2020. The second a series of drop in sessions in the community in May/June 2020 to share more detailed plans, prior to the planning application being submitted. Members of the community will be able to feedback their comments throughout this time at the information sessions, drop in sessions, or via our project website. It is hoped that early feedback from the community will help shape the design.

Our first information sessions will be held in March. At these sessions we will have the outline details of the solar farm on display and members of our team will be available to answer any questions. If you, or one of your representatives, would like to attend please come along at a time that is convenient to you, or call us to set up a separate meeting. We will be inviting local residents, businesses and community groups as well as local Councillors. The session details are as follows:

- Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Afternoon and early evening session at Bodelwyddan Community Centre. We will be there from 4.00pm – 8.00pm.
- Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Morning session at St. Asaph Cricket Club. We will be there from 9.00am until midday.
- More information is also available at our project website <https://www.solarcentury.com/elwy/>.

Included, for your information, is a map showing the approximate location of the solar energy farm and an FAQ document addressing some of the questions we have been asked when we have developed other sites.

We trust this letter and the information enclosed is a helpful introduction to our plans, but if you have further questions, or would like to meet with us to discuss this proposal further, please do not hesitate to get in touch using the contact details below.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Banks  
UK Business Development Manager,  
Solarcentury

Email [elwysolar@solarcentury.com](mailto:elwysolar@solarcentury.com)  
Call 0207 549 1299

Enclosed  
Location map and FAQ document

## Appendix iv

### Press release introducing the project

#### **Press Release – 20 February 2020**

#### **New solar energy farm near St. Asaph could power over 20,000 homes**

Solarcentury, one of the UK's leading solar power companies, is evaluating land to the north east of St. Asaph for the development of a new solar energy farm – Elwy Solar Energy Farm.

The land identified is north of the A55 North Wales Expressway and west of the A525 and has been carefully chosen for its potential to deliver high levels of solar-powered electricity to the grid. With a solar project of up to 62MWp proposed, the site would generate approximately 60 gigawatt hours of electricity per year, enough to power over 20,000 homes, via an array of solar panels mounted on the ground. Solarcentury is also proposing to install batteries at the site in order to store the electricity generated for use during the day and the night.

Solarcentury believes that solar energy farms like Elwy, are the clean, green key to fighting climate chaos. Generating electricity from solar reduces dependence on fossil fuels, gives us a simple low risk source of home grown energy with predictable annual performance, and allows large amounts of clean energy to be delivered to the national grid.

There are local benefits too. Subject to planning approval, Elwy Solar has the potential to create local jobs and numerous supply contracts during the construction, operation and maintenance phase of the build, and contribute business rates to the local council. In addition the variety of dry and wet and shaded and sunny areas on a solar energy farm, once properly planted and managed, can support a wide variety of wildlife, including birds, bats and bumblebees; making this a great opportunity for wildlife locally.

Chris Banks, UK Business Development Manager at Solarcentury said:

“We are excited about the economic and environmental benefits that Elwy Solar Energy Farm could bring to the local community, while supporting both Denbighshire County Council and Wales to achieve their renewable energy targets”.

“We want the local community to be involved in the process leading up to any planning application being submitted and we will be asking for their feedback and views. We look forward to sharing our plans with the community, at our first information sessions, which we plan to hold locally in March 2020”.

**Ends**

## Appendix v

### Press release postponing the information days

#### **Press Release – 10 March 2020**

#### **Local information days for Elwy Solar Energy Farm postponed**

Solarcentury has decided this morning to postpone its Local Information Days at Bodelwyddan Community Centre and at St. Asaph Cricket Club this week due to concerns regarding Coronavirus.

The information sessions were organised by Solarcentury to share plans about their proposed solar energy farm near St. Asaph – Elwy Solar Energy Farm.

Chris Banks, UK Business Development Manager at Solarcentury said:

“Solarcentury has taken this difficult decision in light of the changing situation with Coronavirus. Bringing lots of people together in one place in the current climate does not seem a sensible thing to do when we can make information available by other means. Therefore we are taking the precautionary approach of cancelling these Information Sessions believing this to be the responsible course of action. We are sorry for any inconvenience caused but hope that everyone will understand”.

The Local Information Sessions were due to take place on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March at Bodelwyddan Community Centre from 4.00-8.00pm and Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March at St. Asaph Cricket Club from 9.00am until midday. They will now be postponed until further notice.

However residents and businesses will still be able to view the information that was going to be presented at the project website [www.solarcentury.com/elwy/](http://www.solarcentury.com/elwy/). Any questions people have can be sent via email to [elwysolar@solarcentury.com](mailto:elwysolar@solarcentury.com) or people can call us on 0207 549 1299 to speak to a member of the project team.

Chris Banks, UK Business Development Manager at Solarcentury said:

“Please be reassured that we want the local community to be involved in the process leading up to any planning application being submitted and we welcome feedback and views. We look forward to sharing our plans in person with the community at a later stage. In the meantime our project website can be used as an information source, where there is also an online feedback form and our contact details”.

Ends

## Appendix vi

Copy of the introductory resident leaflet/mailshot sent out weeks commencing 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

### ELWY SOLAR ENERGY FARM Local Information Day

#### **New solar energy farm proposal near St. Asaph**

Solarcentury is one of the UK's leading solar power companies. We are currently evaluating land to the north west of St. Asaph for the development of a new solar energy farm – Elwy Solar Energy Farm. The site has been carefully chosen for its potential to deliver high levels of solar powered electricity to the grid and is expected to generate enough electricity to power the equivalent of 20,000 homes. At present we are in the early stages of the project and are looking for initial feedback and views, but in the long run we hope to secure planning permission for and build Elwy Solar Energy Farm on land west of the A525 and north of the A55 North Wales Expressway.

We intend to submit a formal planning application for Elwy Solar Energy Farm later this year, but before we do we want to share information about Elwy Solar with the local community. We are planning to do this in two phases.

- The first will be a set of information sessions sharing the outline plans in March 2020.
- The second a series of drop in sessions in the community in May/June 2020 to share more detailed plans, prior to the planning application being submitted later this year.

This leaflet invites you to the **first information sessions** being held in March – the details of which are explained below. We hope to meet you there.

#### **Information session details:**

Please pop in at a time that is convenient to you to view the information boards and speak to one of our team.

**AFTERNOON AND EARLY EVENING SESSION:**  
**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at Bodelwyddan Community Centre, Ronaldsway Bodelwyddan, LL18 5TE.**

We will be there from 4.00pm until 8.00pm.

**MORNING SESSION:**  
**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at St. Asaph Cricket Club, Elwy Grove Park, St. Asaph, LL17 ONE.**  
We will be there from 9.00am until midday.

If you cannot make the information sessions but would like to find out more about Elwy Solar Energy Farm you can do so at our project website where you can also give feedback.

[www.solarcentury.com/elwy/](http://www.solarcentury.com/elwy/)

You can also email us at:  
elwysolar@solarcentury.com.

No internet access? Then you can write to us at:

Elwy Solar, Solarcentury, 90 Union Street,  
London, SE1 0NW or call us on 0207  
5491299.