Broughton Community Energy Proposal Survey Report

January 2026

The Survey

- On 2 December 2025, Broughton Community Energy presented its proposal to generate our own sustainable electricity combined with a low-cost community electricity tariff (broughtoncommunityenergy.org/documentlibrary).

- The proposal was well received at the meeting, but the audience was likely weighted towards people predisposed to supporting the scheme.

- To ensure a more representative view, a survey was issued to the entire village on 7 December 2025 and closed on 18 January 2026.

- The following digital channels were used to ensure broad engagement:

    - Broughton email distribution list
    - Broughton Facebook group
    - Various village WhatsApp groups

- Hard copies of the survey were available at the village shop, and a flyer was included in the January issue of the Forum Magazine, which is delivered to all residents.

- The response rate was encouraging, with 192 people completing the survey in a village of 450 households.

- This report summarises the survey findings.

Key findings

- Residents are concerned about high energy prices (90%) and the impacts of climate change (94%), both of which the proposal seeks to address.
- Overall, there is **very strong support for the proposed scheme**.
- Solar PV and battery storage have strong support, though concerns about potential environmental impacts and the use of farmland must be addressed.
- People understand the importance of a wind turbine for year-round generation; most respondents support its inclusion (80%), but a significant minority oppose it (10%), mainly on grounds of visual impact and potential harm to birds.
- People would like more details on the financial model and a clearer explanation of the mechanisms that enable a low-cost community electricity tariff, to better demonstrate the scheme's viability.
- Several respondents already have their own solar panels, batteries, and electric vehicles, and 16% have an air-source heat pump, which is significantly higher than the estimated UK average of 1-2%.
- It’s encouraging that approximately 40% of respondents are interested in becoming involved in the project as it progresses.

Actions

Based on the responses to the survey, we will take the following actions:

- Compile and publish an FAQ document to answer the questions and address the concerns raised.
- Follow-up with the small number of respondents who raised specific questions and/or concerns that can't easily be addressed in the FAQ.
- Given the level of support expressed for the proposal, submit the Pre-Planning Application to Test Valley Borough Council.

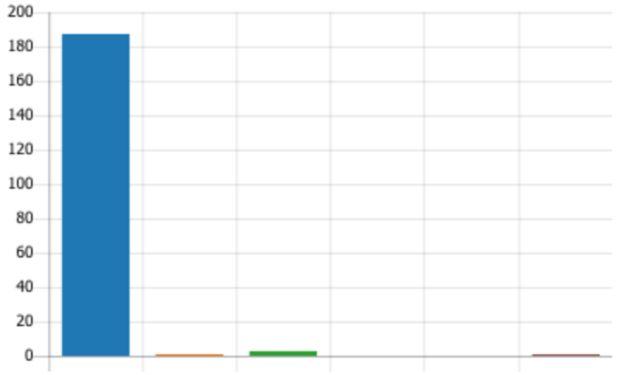
It should be noted that we still have significant planning application risks associated with the potential impacts of the proposed wind turbine on local MoD radars and the weather research radar at Chilbolton Observatory. We have engaged with both organisations to better understand their concerns and mitigate the risks. The wind turbine and the community electricity tariff are both key to the scheme's financial viability.

Survey Questions & Responses

Survey questions and responses*

1. *What is your primary connection to Broughton?*

I live here	187
I work here	1
I visit for social or leisure purp...	3
I have friends or family here	0
I live in a neighbouring village	0
Other	1



2. *How concerned are you about the impacts of Climate Change?*

Very concerned	107
Concerned	73
Neutral	9
Not Concerned	3
Not at all concerned	0

192 responses
94% Concerned

3. *How concerned are you about the increases in your energy costs over the past few years?*

Very concerned	88
Concerned	83
Neutral	16
Not Concerned	5
Not at all concerned	0

192 responses
90% Concerned

4. *Did you attend the Future Energy Landscapes Workshop at the village hall in November 2024, where attendees shared their thoughts about possible renewable energy solutions for our village?*

Yes	49
No	143

5. *Did you attend the recent meeting on 2 December 2025, where BCE explained their electricity generation proposal?*

Yes	41
No	150

* Where percentages are stated, these are the percentages of respondents to the specific question. Not all respondents answered all questions.

7. *Has BCE provided enough information to explain their proposal at this early feasibility stage? If not, please specify any additional information that would be helpful.*

129
Responses

Summary of responses

Most respondents feel that BCE has put significant effort into engaging the community and keeping them informed. Several people praised the quality of the information provided to date.

Among the comments, the most common requests are for:

- More detail on the financial viability of the proposal, including the build costs, where the capex investment will come from, and the ongoing costs of the loan and dividend payments.
- Information about the sustainability of the construction materials and the future challenges of decommissioning the site, especially the recycling/disposal of batteries, turbine blades and solar panels.
- Further details about what other renewable options were considered and why they were discounted.
- Better visualisations of the development from additional viewpoints.
- More details on how the required 10% Biodiversity Net Gain will be delivered and maintained.
- Clarification about site ownership and who stands to gain financially from the project, including the landowner.

8. *How supportive are you of the proposal to offer a low-cost community electricity tariff to reduce energy bills in our community?*

Strongly support	126
Support	47
Neutral	7
Oppose	2
Strongly oppose	2

184 responses
94% In favour

9. *If you'd like to give us any further information to help us understand your answer to Q8, please add it below.*

38
Responses

Summary of responses

Most respondents are very supportive of reducing electricity costs in our village. One person stated, "It's not just reducing the cost of our electricity for me, it's the idea of being independent from the big companies and supporting those in our community where higher energy prices have a bigger impact." A recurring request is for a clearer explanation of how it's possible to achieve a low-cost tariff and how it would work in practice. Several comments also raise concerns about reliability and year-round supply, questioning how intermittency will be managed and what will happen during outages. Others highlight that households already using solar panels, batteries, heat pumps, or green tariffs may see less personal benefit (even if they support the wider community and climate goals). Overall, the tone is very positive, but with questions about the tariff mechanics, practicality, and deliverability.

A selection of verbatim responses

"It's a no-brainer - if financially viable."

"I do support low-cost electricity, but I already have an air source heat pump and solar panels, so I'm not sure the savings could be applied to me."

"It is not at all proved that the marginal savings in electricity bills would be adequate compensation for the visual and environmental damage that would be caused to our village environment."

"I can see how beneficial reduced tariffs would be to the village."

"I especially like the idea of communities getting together and helping themselves and each other within a national strategy for UK energy resilience."

"What percentage take-up of the village do you envisage would be required to make the scheme viable?"

"There appears to be a lack of understanding of how the UK energy generation, pricing and distribution all function."

"Don't believe your concept will result in reduced bills."

"I'm not convinced that although producing our own, we won't be at the hands of the energy company that in the end still has the control over it as it goes through them."

"Electricity Bill is not our largest monthly expenditure. Prefer to concentrate on the biggies."

"The devil is in the detail: will people be required to sign up to a particular supplier for the balance of their energy or remain free to switch for the best deal across the market?"

10. *Would you support using a mix of technologies (wind, solar, and battery storage) to help ensure the community can maximise energy generation and savings throughout the year, improve energy resilience, and help reduce our dependency on imported energy?*

Strongly support	129
Support	45
Neutral	9
Oppose	5
Strongly oppose	3

191 responses
91% In favour

11. *If you'd like to give us any further information to help us understand your answer to Q10, please add it below.*

43
Responses

Summary of responses

The respondents generally support the idea of using a mix of technologies because it improves resilience and enables more consistent electricity generation and supply across the seasons. However, support is often qualified by concerns about the wind turbine, particularly its visual impact.

A selection of verbatim responses

"Strongly support, but subject to protecting the countryside and area we treasure"

"I do support but am concerned about the visual impact of the wind and solar farm."

"The success of this scheme will depend upon a mixture of generating technologies."

"I strongly agree with small scale, sustainable & local energy systems."

"I support using a mix of technologies but I would like to understand if other options, such as Rooftop & Brownfield Solar (Instead of Open-Land Solar) or Ground-Source or Air-Source Heat Pumps (Community-Scale), would provide options whilst preserving the aesthetics of our village."

"Short of a pocket-sized nuclear plant I think you have it covered!"

"This will produce an unsightly mess in beautiful valley as you approach Broughton from Stockbridge,"

"Wind and solar are complementary in the English climate, but without battery backup they will have insufficient impact on peak demand, especially in colder winter periods"

"A mix is wise. Short hours and bad weather in winter mean solar is more suited to summer , and wind power all year round but especially winter. You need the mix."

"Your proposal and its supporters appear to lack knowledge of how your scheme achieves its "religious" objectives."

12. *Based on the information provided, how supportive are you of the proposed solar field?*

Strongly support	119
Support	53
Neutral	8
Oppose	4
Strongly oppose	7

191 responses
90% In favour

13. *If you'd like to give us any further information to help us understand your answer to Q12, please add it below.*

35
Responses

Summary of responses

The dominant responses are supportive, with people seeing solar as a sensible, relatively uncontroversial part of the overall mix, especially when combined with battery storage.

A recurring theme is land use, with people wanting reassurance that the target land is low-grade to limit any impact on food production. There is some concern about the visual impact across the valley, even if it is seen as an acceptable trade-off.

A smaller set of respondents asks why BCE is not prioritising rooftop solar on homes over using farmland, although the point is made that many properties are unsuitable for solar installations.

One respondent stated, "I am surprised how small [the site] is and feel it is important for the village as there are many houses that are unsuitable for solar on their roofs."

A few suggest expanding the solar component of the proposal if wind power proves difficult to deliver.

A selection of verbatim responses

"I am surprised how small it is and feel it is important for the village as there are many houses that are unsuitable for solar on their roofs."

"I think it will impact on the view across the valley as one travels along the road into Broughton (from the Stockbridge Road) but also appreciate that this is a necessary consequence of such a project and is a small price to pay."

"I think each house should have them on the roof to reduce impact rather than using whole fields."

"Personally, I think that if all suitable properties in the village installed solar panels and battery systems, then the village would rely a lot less on fossil fuel generated power."

"I strongly support the Solar field."

"I believe the proposal will have minimal impact on the visual landscape from most key points."

"Preference would be the higher panels / flexibility for grazing underneath."

"I strongly support it, but it must be unobtrusive if possible."

"I'm worried about the cumulative effect of solar panels on farm land. Not just in Broughton but in the whole country. Who is going to grow our food and where can they grow it?"

"There is enough ugliness in the countryside without planting a whole load more panes around Broughton."

"...the sighting of alternative energy infrastructures is not an eyesore if done sympathetically."

"We already have a massive eyesore of a Solar farm in the parish."

14. *How supportive are you of the proposed wind turbine?*

Strongly support	103
Support	49
Neutral	20
Oppose	8
Strongly oppose	12

192 responses
79% In favour
10% against

15. *If you'd like to give us any further information to help us understand your answer to Q14, please add it below.*

43
Responses

Summary of responses

Many respondents support wind generation because it complements solar and helps provide year-round generation, with several explicitly saying a wind component is "vital" to cover periods when solar output is low.

However, the comments also show that wind is the part of the proposal that a significant minority object to, with repeated concerns about visual/landscape impact ("eyesore", "imposing", "ugly"), noise and potential effects on wildlife (especially birds). A smaller number raises feasibility issues related to aviation/radar/MOD constraints.

There are practical suggestions aimed at reducing impact, such as using several smaller turbines instead of one larger turbine, or siting/design choices to minimise harm and disturbance.

Overall, wind remains acceptable to most respondents, but only if BCE can demonstrate clear benefits and convincingly address potential visual, noise, and ecological impacts.

A selection of verbatim responses

"The wind section concerns me. At some 350ft high for the turbine I would think that this maybe too high to be accepted in The Middle Wallop MATZ (Military Air Traffic Zone). It may have to be positioned outside it."

"The wind component is vital as it offsets the low period of solar generation."

"As you explained at the latest meeting the solution isn't viable with the solar wind turbine combination. I just hope that those potentially affected radar sites give permission."

"Wind turbines, especially onshore, are nasty, visually aggressive, can be noisy, and kill birds etc."

"Not suitable for this area. Aviation and ornothogically, there is a huge impact. We are so lucky to have owls, bats, kestrels, kites and buzzards living around this village."

"I Strongly support the Wind turbines especially for the winter months as Solar doesn't work very well at the moment. Quite happy to see them work from my house."

"Is would be an appalling eyesore. I can't believe you can think this would be worth a few pence off your electricity bills. It is a shocking suggestion. Don't you have any aesthectic qualities?"

"I believe the wind turbine will quickly become an accepted and approved landscape feature, as has happened elsewhere."

"The turbine would be geo-mapped as well as carrying the statutory warning lamp, and low-flying military aircraft crew are by their scope of operations used to avoiding such obstacles."

"I think the mix of wind and solar is important. As well as producing a lot of power it would also stand as a symbol of intent."

"I do not mind seeing them working, better than electric poles etc."

16. *How supportive are you of the proposed battery storage system?*

Strongly support	117
Support	53
Neutral	12
Oppose	4
Strongly oppose	4

190 responses
89% in favour

17. *If you'd like to give us any further information to help us understand your answer to Q16, please add it below.*

29
Responses

Summary of responses

Many respondents see storage as essential to make the system work—helping to smooth peaks and troughs, balance supply and demand, and enable a low-cost tariff more often—with several explicitly describing the battery as "vital" or "essential".

However, a significant minority expresses uncertainty or scepticism, mainly due to a lack of detail on overall costs and environmental impact. Some question whether the proposed capacity is sufficient for low-generation periods or extreme weather events. A smaller but important set of comments raises safety concerns, including the potential for fire/toxic fumes, as well as security, theft, or damage.

A selection of verbatim responses

"The battery is vital as it does more than smooth the day night issues with solar, it can be used to import energy in low tariff times. I question whether we don't need more battery capacity."

"If the wind turbine proves to be impossible to implement because of objections, could the battery provision be increased to store more solar power or could the solar panel provision also be expanded ?"

"There would need to be a safe system of work, and secure and safe processes in place to protect against wildlife damage, environmental impact, theft and deliberate / malicious damage."

"Battery backup is essential to smooth out peaks and troughs in supply and demand, and to minimise export to the grid for economic reasons."

"May be a silly question, but are these safe?"

"I have my own battery so know how important this part of the overall proposition this is."

"Prefer alternative power supply from grid."

"It will better match supply and demand and allow a low-cost tariff more often."

"Significant Fire hazard with toxic fumes if not maintained to grid-level standards."

18. *How supportive are you of the proposed location of the site?*

Strongly support	83
Support	59
Neutral	38
Oppose	1
Strongly oppose	7

188 responses
76% In favour
4% against

19. *If you'd like to give us any further information to help us understand your answer to Q18, please add it below.*

32
Responses

Summary of responses

Overall, respondents are in favour of the proposed site. However, opinions are often conditional: people accept the site's logic and are broadly supportive, but worry about it being too conspicuous, affecting key views (especially from the Down and on entering the village along Broughton Road from Stockbridge), and potentially spoiling the rural character.

Some suggest mitigation, such as planting/screening, while others ask whether alternative, less visible sites have been explored (e.g., siting on the other side of the road).

A smaller number raises wider concerns about protecting prime farmland for food production and sensitive local landscapes (Test Valley / Wallop Brook), and a few highlight practical considerations, such as access routes and disruption.

One respondent questions whether impacts on nearby residents have been fully assessed—particularly Chattis Hill and Darfield Farm.

A selection of verbatim responses

"I think it's a sensible location - it's close to the existing solar farm, so the impact to residents is negligible."

"I understand the logic of the location, it is a little more visible than I would have hoped."

"Totally inappropriate in a rural village setting and anyway far too near the existing village. Would lead to suburbanisation round it."

"It would spoil the wonderful view from the Down however carefully the installation is done."

"Are there alternative sites for a wind turbine should the preferred one not be possible?"

"Ideally placed, according to proposed site."

"Why not use land adjacent to the existing solar farm which has great access and be less conspicuous?"

"The road is suitable for access as has previously been used and there are alternative routes to the village for residents."

"Questions about who profits from these deals need to be answered comprehensively."

"North Wiltshire experience shows that if the community accepts one renewable project, other developers on adjacent sites arrive as "me-to" applicants, and so gain default planning approval."

"I am supportive. It is a key view into the village, so we should explore how we screen from the road as we enter the village with planting. But I am supportive."

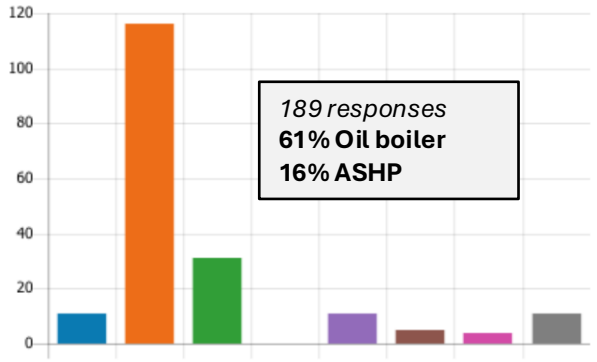
"Perhaps consider the other side of the road as well."

20. *What type of home do you live in?*

Detached	128
Semi-detached	41
Terrace	17
Flat	2
Other	1

21. *What is your primary source of heat?*

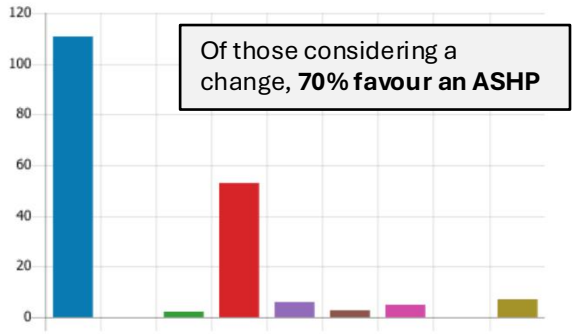
Gas boiler	11
Oil boiler	116
Air source heat pump	31
Ground source heat pump	0
Storage heaters	11
Other electrical heaters	5
Coal/wood	4
Other	11



189 responses
61% Oil boiler
16% ASHP

22. *If you are considering changing your heating system, which do you think you'll switch to?*

Not applicable	111
Gas boiler	0
Oil/kerosene boiler	2
Air source heat pump	53
Ground source heat pump	6
Storage heaters	3
Other electrical heaters	5
Coal/wood	0
Other	7



Of those considering a change, **70% favour an ASHP**

23. *If the project progresses beyond this feasibility stage, how interested would you be in getting involved (e.g., joining the working group, volunteering, sharing ideas)?*

Very interested	18
Quite interested	57
Neutral	80
Not very interested	25
Not interested at all	12

192 responses
39% Interested