

Court Barton Solar Farm – Visual Impact Assessment

Introduction

Windel Energy and Canadian Solar have given notice via Sirius Planning that they intend to apply for planning consent to construct a 20MW solar farm on 25 hectares (62 acres) of farmland at Court Barton Farm within the parish of Coffinswell and Dacombe. The proposed solar farm would be the first of its kind to be constructed in the parish. It will cover a significant area of farmland in a designated Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). The Parish Council will be required to provide Teignbridge Council Planning Department with the views of the parishioners with regard to either supporting or opposing the planning application. The Parish Council anticipates that the proposed development could give rise to a number of concerns from parishioners. In order to make a fair and balanced response to the application the Parish Council needs to understand fully the impacts of the development on the parish and its members. The Parish Council has therefore set up a working group to manage the interface between the members of the Parish, the land owners and the project developers.

As part of this impact assessment a survey has been carried out on the potential visual impact of the solar farm. All public roads, bridleways, footpaths and permissive footpaths have been walked and photographs taken from many viewpoints. This document is intended to show the results of the survey.

Notes

1. The survey was done in early April 2022 when there was little foliage on the trees and hedges. It is possible that during the summer months that increased foliage may reduce some of the visual impact, as will the growth (or cutting back) of hedges.
2. All photos were taken from publicly accessible places. It is possible that some parishioners may have views from their properties or land where the solar farm will be more visible than it is from the road or footpath. In this case it will be for those parishioners affected to make their own comments to Teignbridge Planning Dept.
3. The developers have said that steps may be taken to provide screening of the site where possible by e.g. allowing hedges to grow taller, planting more hedges etc. The possible effects of this screening have not been taken into account in this impact review.
4. Over 100 photographs were taken for the survey. It is not practical to include them all in this document so only the relevant photos have been included. If anyone would like to see the other photos then this can be arranged by contacting the author at nick.b.orchard@gmail.com.
5. The photos were taken using an 18-200mm zoom lens and the 35mm equivalent focal length of the lens used for each photo is included in the caption. The published photos are all around the standard 50mm focal length which is roughly equivalent to the field of view of the eye. This should give a reasonable impression of what you would see. The apparent visual impact could be lessened by using a short wide-angle lens or increased by using a long focal length telephoto lens.
6. Each photo has a 'V' number. The position from which the photo was taken is shown on one or more of the maps with a purple pin and the corresponding V number.
7. The areas in the photos showing solar panel modules are the author's simulations and the appearance of the actual modules may be somewhat different, but they are intended to show the approximate areas that will be covered.
8. The visual impact indicated does not include the location of any control building, transformer, inverters, substation units, storage, safe site access etc.

9. The visual impact is based on information provided by the developer for the Screening and Pre-application Request submitted to Teignbridge District Council, and the Zoom Online Public Consultation. The finalised planning application is yet to be submitted.

Survey results

Maps 2-5 show the apparent visual impact from all the local roads and footpaths. The roads have been coloured to indicate the possible visibility of the solar farm from each point on the road. The colours indicate:

Green = no part of the solar farm visible

Purple = some of the solar farm visible but less than 25%

Red = a significant part of the solar farm visible – more than 25%

Initial survey conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn by the author. They are offered as a first draft of the views of the Parish Council for discussion and comment by the parishioners of Coffinswell and Dacombe. These conclusions may be amended following feedback.

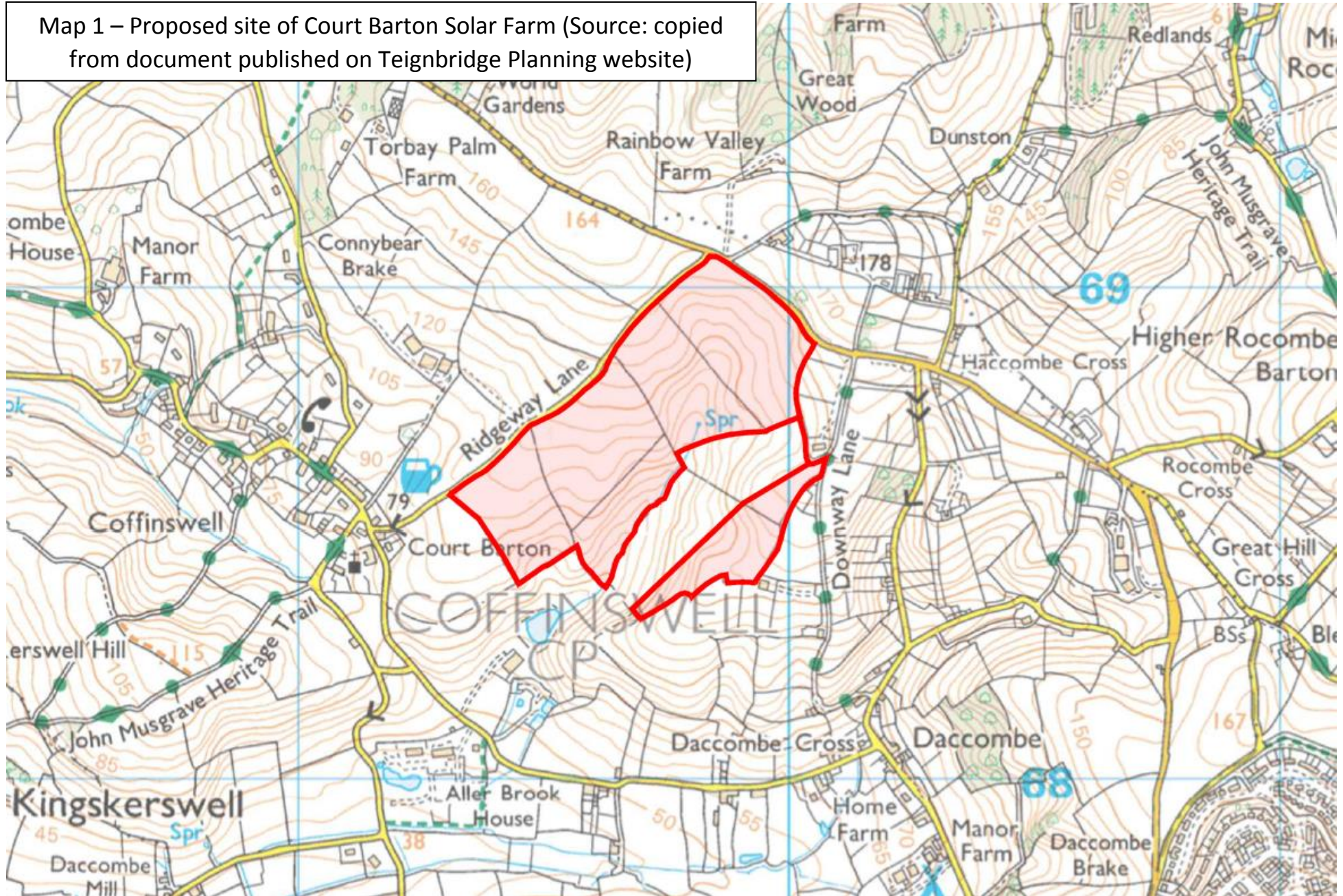
1. The solar farm will not be visible from most of the roads and footpaths in the parish.
2. Some distant views of the solar farm will be seen from Orestone Lane and Kingskerwell Road.
3. Closer views will be seen from some parts of Willowpark Lane and from the Big Wheaton permissive footpath.
4. The greatest visual impact will be seen from the Big Wheaton permissive footpath (the path across the field at the top of Kerswell Hill joining the Churchway and Kerswell paths/tracks). The solar farm will form the backdrop to the view over the area of Coffinswell surrounding the Grade I listed church. Of the 18 listed buildings in Coffinswell 10 will be in the same field of view as the solar farm when viewed from Big Wheaton permissive footpath (see photo V221 below). In addition to the listed buildings visible in V221, most of the other buildings visible in the photo are within the Coffinswell conservation area.
5. The effect of reflective glint or glare from the solar panel modules is not part of this assessment, but the developers have given assurances that this will be minimal. We intend to review this aspect of visual impact with previously installed solar farms if possible.

Report produced by Cllr Nick Orchard on behalf of Coffinswell Parish Council

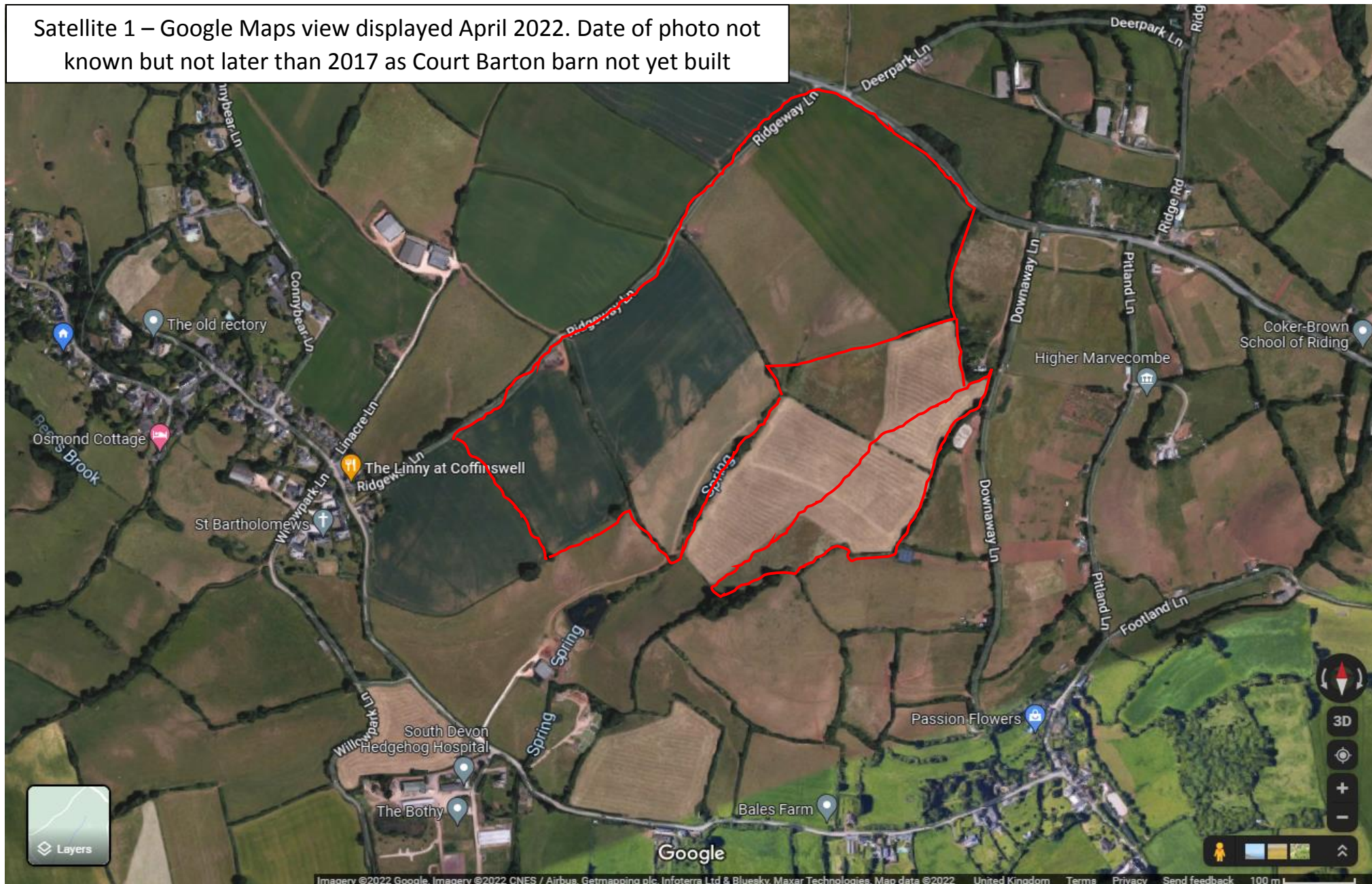
Issue 1: 11 May 2022

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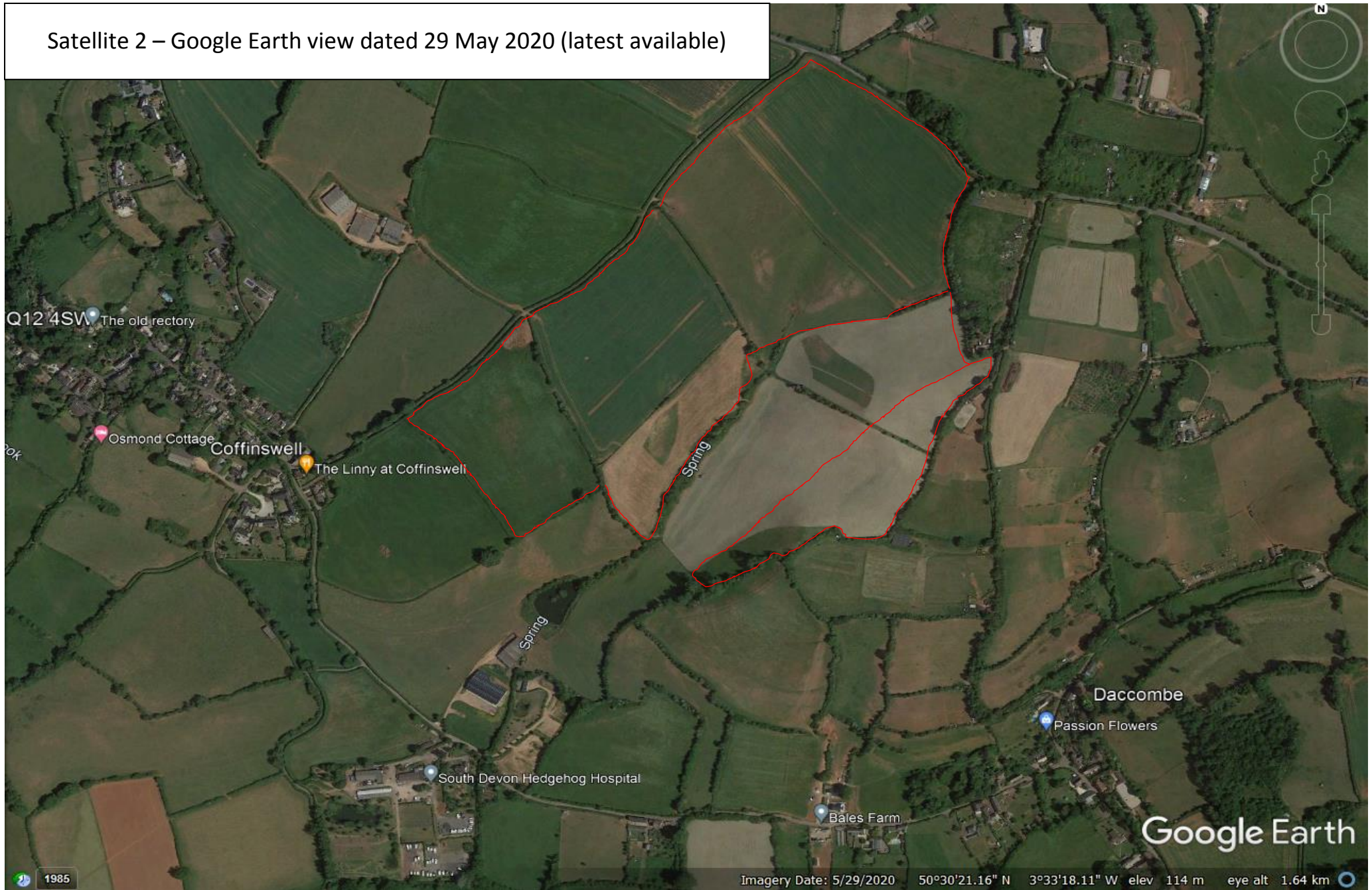
Map 1 – Proposed site of Court Barton Solar Farm (Source: copied from document published on Teignbridge Planning website)



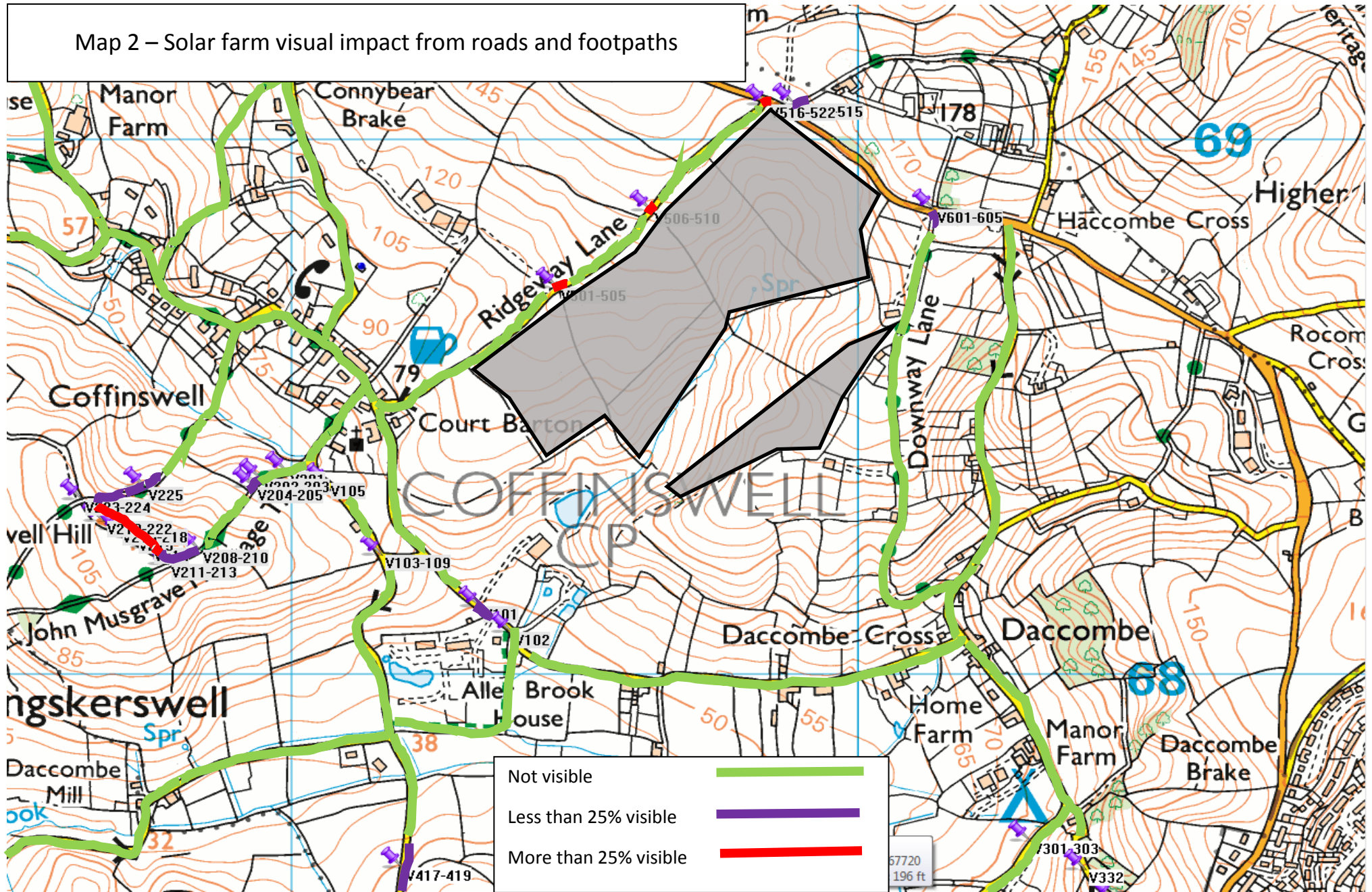
Satellite 1 – Google Maps view displayed April 2022. Date of photo not known but not later than 2017 as Court Barton barn not yet built

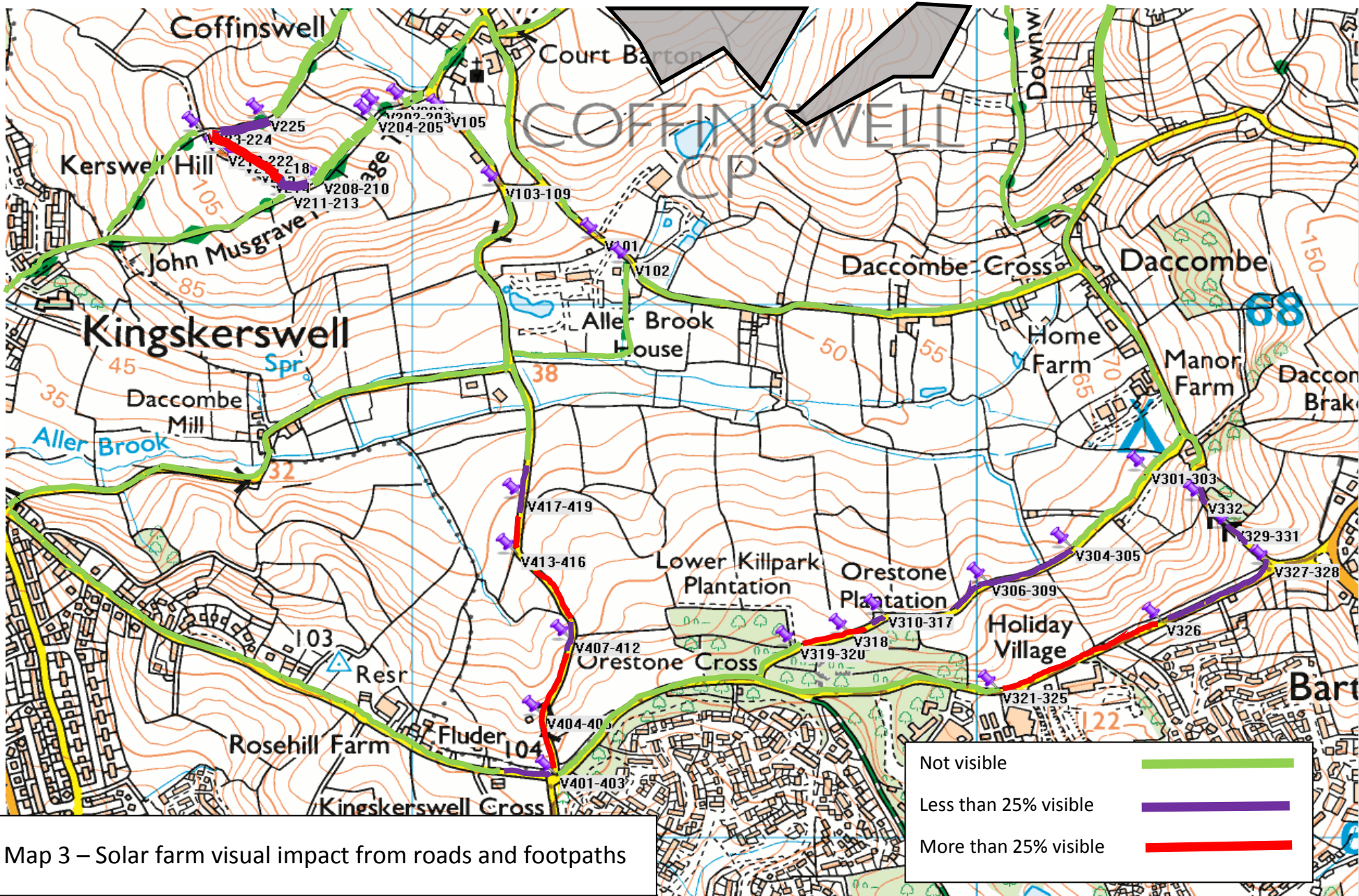


Satellite 2 – Google Earth view dated 29 May 2020 (latest available)

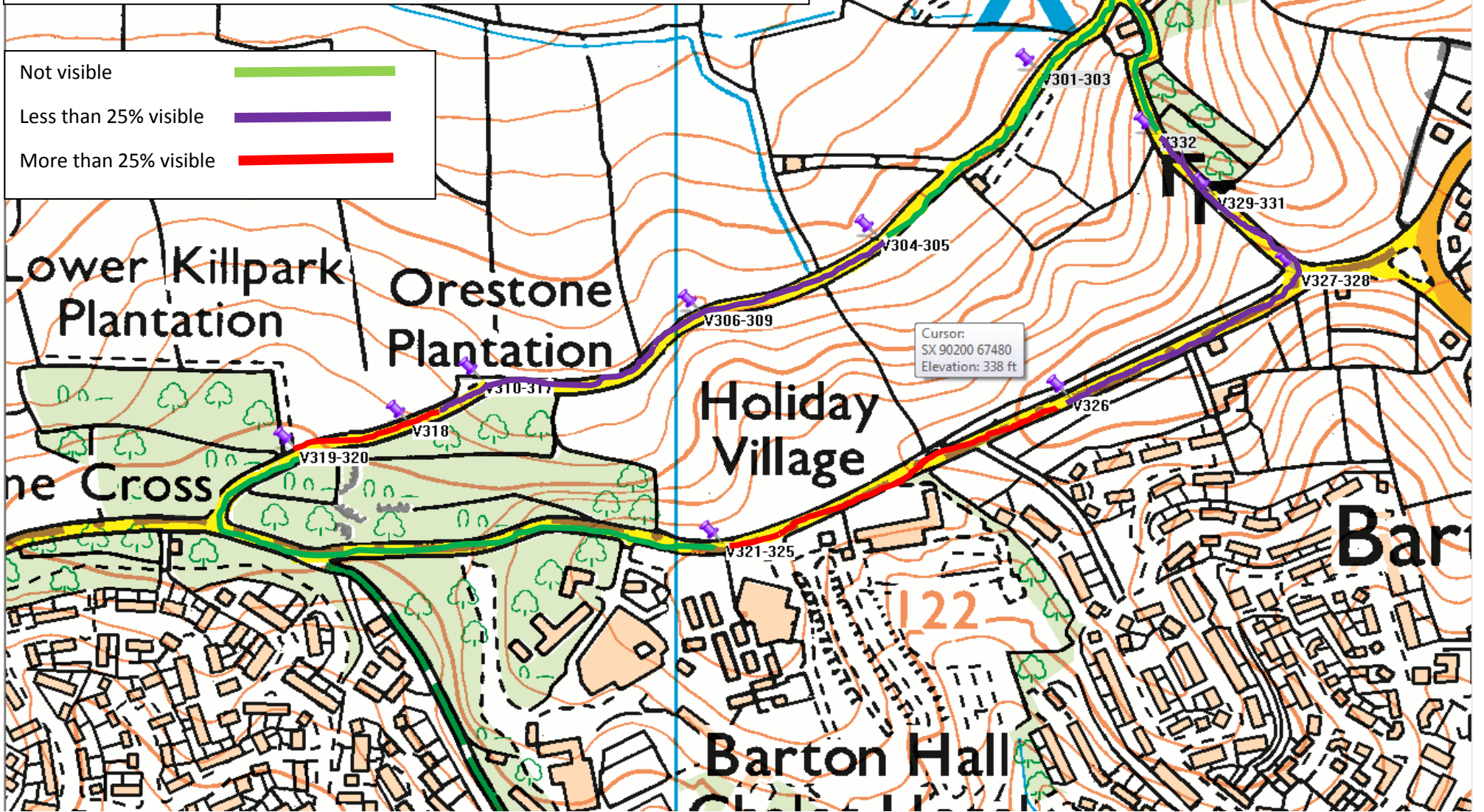


Map 2 – Solar farm visual impact from roads and footpaths

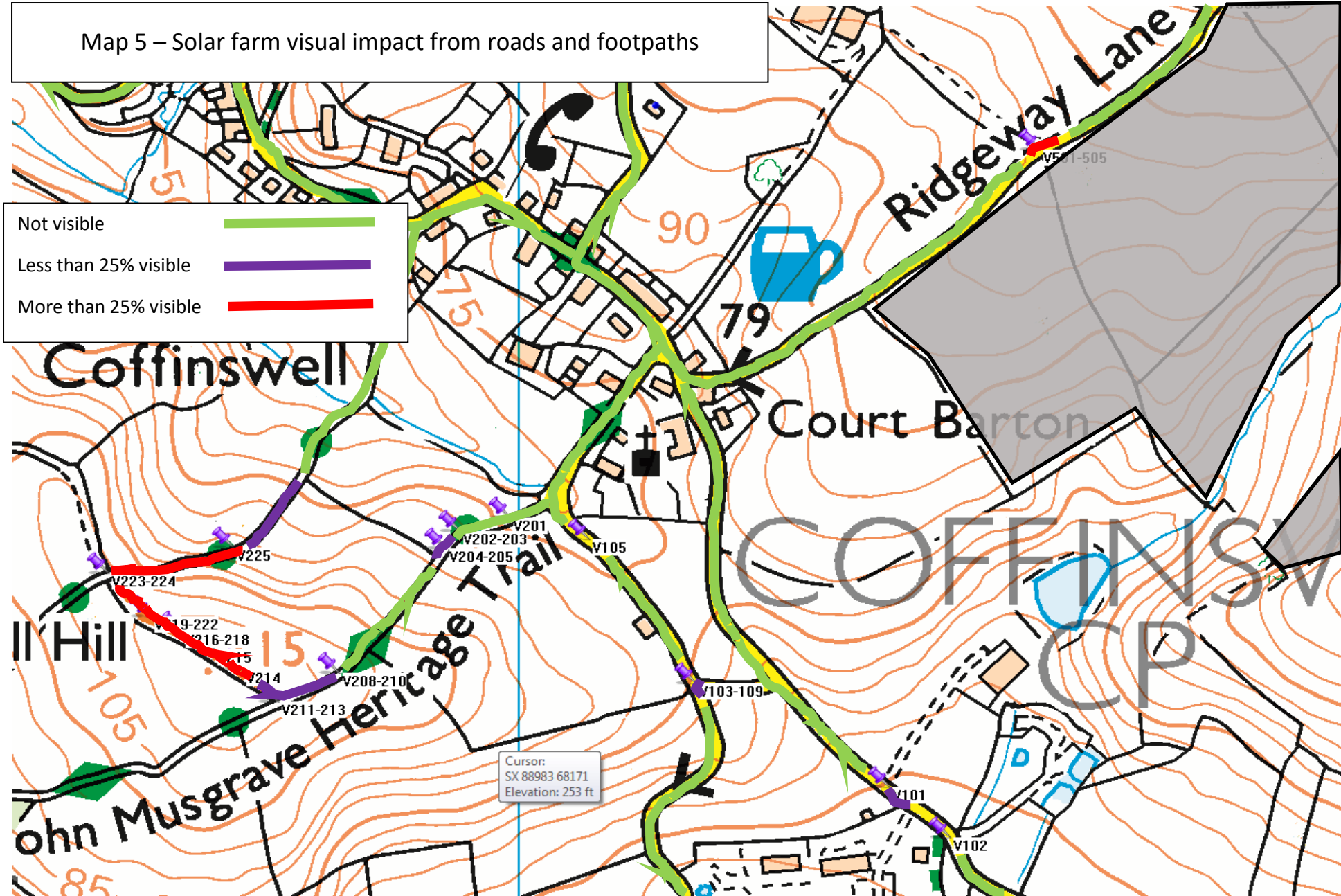




Map 4 – Solar farm visual impact from roads and footpaths



Map 5 – Solar farm visual impact from roads and footpaths



V403 – View from upper Willowpark Lane (FL 48mm)



V321 – View from Kingskerswell Road (above Orestone Lane) (FL 34mm)



V309 – View from Orestone Lane (FL 32mm)



V217 – View from Big Wheaton permissive footpath (FL 46mm)



V221 – Wide angle view from Big Wheaton permissive footpath (FL 22mm) showing Listed Buildings



**PARISH SUMMARY LIST OF BUILDINGS OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORICAL INTEREST FOR:
COFFINSWELL CONSERVATION AREA**

Ref. No.	Grade	Date of Listing	Item	Visible in Photo V221
84790	II	1987	Rock Cottage, Blackenway Lane	
84791	I	1955	Church of St Bartholomew	⑨
84792	II	1987	Churchyard cross 11m south of Church	⑩
84793	II	1955	Court Barton inc. farm buildings to north and courtyard wall to west-north-west	⑧
84794	II	1987	Rose Cottage	
84795	II	1982	Old Well House	
84796	II	1987	Littlecroft Cottage	
84797	II	1987	Pitt Cottage	
84798	II	1987	Manor Cottage	
84799	II	1987	Barn 60m east-north-east of manor House with attached Engine House	
84800	II	1987	School House including garden boundary wall to east and Linhay to north west	①
84801	II	1987	Hillside and Cherang Tuli	②
84802	II	1987	Thorn Cottage and Appledore Cottage	④
84803	II	1984	Wayside Cottage	⑤
84804	II	1987	Orchard Way and 2 Court Barton Cottage	⑥
84805	II	1955	Willa Cottage and Court Barton Cottage	⑦
84816	II	1955	Osmond Cottage	③
506628	II	2009	K6 Telephone Box	

Source: Teignbridge District Conservation Area Character Appraisals – Coffinswell 22 March 2010

Map 6 – Location and field of view of photo V221 showing Coffinswell conservation area and solar farm

