

Huntington Parish Council
Goodrest Farm BESS Update 23rd February 2026

IMPORTANT UPDATE

1. NESO Connection Reform (G2TWQ)

The NESO reform document states that there won't be any new battery projects allowed until the current ones are ready, and the application window opens again. The document introduces "Gate 1" and "Gate 2" projects. The Gate 2 projects are those sufficiently advanced to proceed whereas Gate 1 projects are on hold. Firm connection offers will be issued to Gate 2 projects only.

On 2nd October 2025, NESO wrote to Ofgem stating that they would be *unable to comply with the Gate 2 to Whole Queue process*. There are 340 protected projects which are prioritised over all other Gate 2 projects. However, of these, 210 projects (62%) will be delayed, either due to network related issues or developer issues (the majority are network related issues). Furthermore, in order to comply with the process, some protected projects would have to be given connection dates in the past!

A response from Ofgem on 6th February 2026 has led to a recent full reassessment of the G2TWQ connection status. (see Postscript below). Gate 2 developers will have to give firm evidence against milestones to progress, and failure to do so will result in demotion to Gate 1 (or removal). It is anticipated that there will be a significant attrition rate for Gate 2 projects, and demotions to Gate 1 could result in Grenergy being pushed even further down the queue.

2. NGED Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) Request

In the light of above, NGED have responded to the Parish Council EIR request regarding the status of connections at Kitwell Green. Their database shows all 3 BESS sites (Illey Brook, Lowlands and Goodrest Farms) as **Gate 1** projects. Furthermore Goodrest, Lowlands and Illey Brook Farms have an indicated "Firm Connection Date" as 30/10/2037 (see postscript). In their response NGED also states that all projects are about to enter the offer stage which will last until at least 2027, and that once customers accept, they will be subject to contracted milestones. However, *this only applies to Gate 2 projects*.

Grenergy's own website shows a timeline with construction commencing Q2 2027 and a provisional operation date of Q4 2027. It also states that this is subject to network upgrade work from the local and national operators. In view of the fact that they are (a) Gate 1, and (b) have a firm connection date of 2037 this plan now seems highly unlikely. Particularly in the light of recent events:

3. Overall Grenergy Situation

The situation within the planning context has also to be considered. Grenergy have to satisfy a whole raft of planning conditions before construction can begin, and under the planning conditions they have only 30 months left to begin construction (14th October 2028). Furthermore, NGED have also pointed out that none of the Kitwell Green projects are at a stage where any surveys on cable routes or ecology reports have been carried out. In the light of this, and the fact that Grenergy is currently Gate 1, with a connection date of 2037, it seems unlikely that connection status will be granted in the next 12 months, and construction commencing before the 2028 planning cut-off date. is looking increasingly tenuous. NESO have also introduced a concept of "Opportunity for Acceleration," for Gate 1 projects to be accelerated

to Gate 2 phase 2, but the connection dates for this phase are still between 2031 and 2035.(see section 7.2 below).

It is important to recognise that this viewpoint represents a snapshot within a rapidly evolving delivery landscape for BESS in the UK. NESO has already acknowledged implementation difficulties with the Gate 2 to Whole Queue process, and further reassessment of milestones, attrition rates and protected projects is underway. Market conditions, policy decisions, financing constraints and regional network limitations could all materially affect how projects progress - or fail to progress - in the coming months and years.

4. **EIR Request to Grenergy**

The same EIR request has been submitted the Grenergy (via Jonathan Cooper), who have replied with a refusal to respond to the request. as they are a private company and are exempt from responding. Note that privatised utilities such as NESO and NGED are obliged to respond to EIR requests. In his response Jonathan Cooper stated that Grenergy are currently awaiting news from NESO regarding the outcomes of the connections reforms but didn't mention they are currently indicated as Gate 1.

5. **Letter to Bradley Thomas**

There has been no response from Bradley Thomas, other than acknowledgement of receipt. The letter raised the issue of planning Authorities such as Bromsgrove continuing to approve BESS applications without direct guidance from either NESO, the National Grid or central government.

6. **Communication with Residents**

In my January update I suggested that residents are made aware of the current situation, but I've not done so yet, in the light of these developments. It would be unwise at this point to state that the Goodrest Farm will never be built, but the current situation gives some hope. I suggest that this update is placed on the HPC website and a link provided to residents via the Facebook page and the WhatsApp group.

7. **Postscript – NESO connection timelines as of 13th February 2026**

7.1 Under the current NESO Connections Reform (TMO4+), a **firm connection date of 2037** would place a project outside the current prioritized delivery phases. The reform categorises projects into two main Gate 2 "firm" offer phases based on the [Clean Power 2030 Action Plan](#):

- **Phase 1:** Connections up to 2030.
- **Phase 2:** Connections between 2031 and 2035.

Note that Goodrest Farm has no indicated Phase, as their current planned connection date is 2037.

7.2 **Status for 2037 Connections**

If a project's current contracted date is 2037, its status in the reformed queue is as follows:

- **Gate 1 Designation:** Projects with dates beyond 2035 that do not meet the "Ready" and "Strategic" criteria for earlier acceleration typically receive a **Gate 1 offer**. This provides an **indicative** connection date rather than a firm, guaranteed one.
- **Opportunity for Acceleration:** Projects with late dates (like 2037) that can prove they are "Ready" (land rights and planning) and "Strategic" may be accelerated into Phase 2

(up to 2035) if *capacity is available* in their specific region or technology pot. Note that a significant number of the protected projects are delayed because of network related issues.

- **Phase 3 (Post-2035):** NESO has not yet issued a definitive firm offer timeline for a formal "Phase 3" (2036+). Current reform focus is strictly on securing the 283GW of capacity needed by 2035.

8. Glossary

NESO	National Energy System Operator responsible for planning, operating, and managing the nation's electricity and gas networks
Ofgem	The Office of Gas and Electricity Markets. The industry watchdog responsible for ensuring reliable, sustainable energy supplies.
NGED	National Grid Energy Distribution. Responsible for the Midlands, South West, and South Wales in the UK, NGED is responsible for the safety, maintenance, and operation of the local electricity distribution network.
G2TWQ	Gate 2 to Whole Queue. A NESO initiative to rationalise the connections pipeline and accelerate the connection of viable, high-value projects.
TMO4+	Replaces the old "first-come, first-served" system approved by Ofgem which has been replaced with a "First Ready, First Connected" model to clear the massive backlog of projects.
EIR	Environmental Information Regulations.

9. Connection Reforms Timeline (Gate 2 Offers) at 13th February 2026

- **2026/2027 Protected transmission and large embedded offers:** between 13 February 2026 and mid-April 2026
- **2026/2027 Protected distribution offers:** between early March 2026 and end May 2026
- **Gate 2 Phase 1 transmission and large embedded offers:** between mid-May 2026 and mid-September 2026
- **Gate 2 Phase 1 distribution offers:** between early July 2026 and mid-November 2026
- **Gate 2 Phase 2 transmission and large embedded offers:** between early September 2026 and mid-January 2027
- **Gate 2 Phase 2 distribution offers:** between mid-October 2026 and mid-March 2027
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Ian McGregor
Vice Chair
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