### Haile and Wilton Parish Council’s Statement on the Proposed Cobra Castle Solar Farm

**Introduction:** The Haile and Wilton Parish Council acknowledges the community's concerns about the proposed Cobra Castle solar farm by Belltown Power. While we recognise the importance of renewable energy, we believe the location of this project is not in harmony with our local rural landscape at the foothills of the Lake District fells. We advocate for an alternative site within West Cumbria to be sort for the project that is less intrusive and situated in a more industrialised area. Positioning it on naturally elevated area of a well-known fell, which forms part of Wainwright’s Coast-to-Coast walk is not the right location for this development.

**Key Concerns Raised Include:**

* **Impact on Local Landscape:** The proposed solar farm, spanning approximately 200 acres, will significantly alter the natural beauty and character of our local landscape, particularly affecting views of Dent Fell and the surrounding areas.
* **Heritage and Community Connection:** Residents are deeply concerned about the potential loss of heritage and the community's connection to the land. For centuries, our community has enjoyed the lanes for work and leisure. The construction phase, with its heavy traffic and plant movements, threatens to disrupt this cherished tradition.
* **Insufficient Community Engagement:** Many residents feel that the initial consultation process lacked thoroughness and transparency. At the recent Egremont event, Belltown Power representatives appeared unprepared, presenting poor and misleading information and photography. Additionally, the limited availability of paper consultation forms added to the frustration.
* **Impact on the Natural Ecosystem:** There are serious concerns about the potential negative effects on local wildlife and natural habitats. This land is vital for biodiversity and should be preserved for future generations.
* **Traffic and Noise Pollution:** Increased traffic and noise pollution during and after the construction phase are major worries for the community, especially those households situated directly on the proposed construction access route via Little Mill.
* **Access Road Suitability:** The current access road is an untarmacked track, raising significant concerns about its suitability for the increased heavy traffic associated with the project.
* **Use of Productive Farmland:** The proposal to use productive farmland (Green Belt) for an industrial project for the next 40 years is concerning, especially considering the UK's food production needs.

**Conclusion:** The Haile and Wilton Parish Council is committed to ensuring that all voices are heard and that any development in our community is approached with the utmost caution and consideration for all stakeholders. We will continue to advocate for solutions that respect our heritage, environment, and community values.