# Egremont community rejects second renewable energy bid despite £700,000 offer



In the picturesque Cumbrian market town of Egremont, the sight of Dent Fell has long been cherished by locals. This iconic landmark is not only a popular destination for church services during Easter but also a backdrop for cherished family moments and memorials. However, when a farmer proposed the installation of a 48-metre wind turbine on the fell in 2015, it sparked widespread community outrage, leading to a firm rejection by local authorities and organizations, including the National Trust. Fast forward to 2025, the same farmer, Terry Dixon, now 79, is back with a proposal for a 200-acre solar farm – a project that has rekindled community objections, despite the offer of nearly £700,000 from the energy company Belltown Power for local initiatives.

Residents took to the town meeting to express their frustration, with one particularly striking response recorded: “Just f\*\*\* off.” This reaction encapsulates the sentiment of many Egremont inhabitants, who have so far expressed a willingness to rigorously oppose the application. In recent years, the number of solar farm applications has surged dramatically, from just 343 in four years to a staggering 3,644, covering an area larger than Birmingham and Liverpool combined. This influx highlights a growing tension as rural communities grapple with the pressures of energy demands and agricultural interests, alongside governmental efforts to reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels.

Dixon's original wind turbine plan had met significant opposition on the grounds of its visual impact, particularly as it would have scarred the scenic landscape near the Lake District National Park. Now, he presents a solar farm plan, which promises potential earnings of nearly £200,000 annually, crucial for the future viability of his dairy farm. Belltown Power has assured the community that, beyond financial contributions, the project will incorporate ecological enhancements, such as wildflower meadows and improved habitats for local wildlife.

Local concerns, however, remain intense. Residents like Ian McIntyre and Fiona Emerson, who envision idyllic lives entwined with nature on their smallholding, have voiced fears that the solar farm would irrevocably alter the landscape they treasure. Emerson articulated the devastating impact that such a development would have on her life, reflecting the deep emotional connection that locals hold for their surroundings. This opposition is echoed in other regions of the UK, where communities successfully fought against solar farm proposals due to their implications for both visual and ecological landscapes.

In other instances across the country, we see mixed responses to similar developments. Farmers in the Somerset Levels have found financial reprieve by leasing land for solar farms, whilst others express alarm over proposals that threaten their best agricultural land. For example, in North Yorkshire, a couple lamented the approval of a solar project covering prime farmland, noting that governmental planning appears increasingly skewed in favour of renewable energy projects.

Belltown Power recently acknowledged the strong local opposition, leading to a postponement of their plans in Egremont to allow for further consultations. The community’s resistance, encapsulated in a newly formed “Save Dent Fell” group, underscores the urgency for developers to engage with local opinions before moving forward. At a recent consultation meeting, residents left Post-it notes stating their objections, while some voiced that the financial incentives offered lacked legitimacy in the face of potential irrevocable changes to their landscape.

As the Labour government seeks to boost the UK's renewable energy capacity, including solar energy, the dynamic between local interests and national energy goals is increasingly contentious. Striking a balance between harnessing renewable resources and preserving local landscapes is emerging as a pivotal challenge, and communities like Egremont are at the forefront of this fight for both their heritage and their future.

In summary, the response to solar projects in Egremont is emblematic of a larger national discourse, where the push for renewable energy often collides with the deeply rooted values associated with rural living and land stewardship. As Dixon advocates for a vision he believes serves both his family's future and the planet's health, residents grapple with fears of losing the very essence of their community. This intersection of energy development, environmental concerns, and local resistance could shape the future landscape of renewable energy in the UK.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.thetimes.com/uk/environment/article/the-town-that-said-no-to-a-700000-offer-from-a-solar-farm-firm-7svphpgvn), [[4]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cew1j11jyewo)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.thetimes.com/uk/environment/article/the-town-that-said-no-to-a-700000-offer-from-a-solar-farm-firm-7svphpgvn), [[2]](https://cumbriacrack.com/2025/04/04/backlash-against-west-cumbrian-solar-farm-forces-developers-to-postpone-plans/), [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gelnmmzj7o)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cyrz7mnek74o.amp), [[6]](https://www.governing.com/infrastructure/new-york-county-protests-using-farm-land-for-solar-projects)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://cumbriacrack.com/2025/04/04/backlash-against-west-cumbrian-solar-farm-forces-developers-to-postpone-plans/), [[2]](https://cumbriacrack.com/2025/04/04/backlash-against-west-cumbrian-solar-farm-forces-developers-to-postpone-plans/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gelnmmzj7o), [[4]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cew1j11jyewo)
* Paragraph 6 – [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cyrz7mnek74o.amp), [[6]](https://www.governing.com/infrastructure/new-york-county-protests-using-farm-land-for-solar-projects)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.thetimes.com/uk/environment/article/the-town-that-said-no-to-a-700000-offer-from-a-solar-farm-firm-7svphpgvn), [[2]](https://cumbriacrack.com/2025/04/04/backlash-against-west-cumbrian-solar-farm-forces-developers-to-postpone-plans/), [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gelnmmzj7o)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.thetimes.com/uk/environment/article/the-town-that-said-no-to-a-700000-offer-from-a-solar-farm-firm-7svphpgvn), [[2]](https://cumbriacrack.com/2025/04/04/backlash-against-west-cumbrian-solar-farm-forces-developers-to-postpone-plans/), [[7]](https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/solar-energy-xcel-energy-wisconsin/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.thetimes.com/uk/environment/article/the-town-that-said-no-to-a-700000-offer-from-a-solar-farm-firm-7svphpgvn> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://cumbriacrack.com/2025/04/04/backlash-against-west-cumbrian-solar-farm-forces-developers-to-postpone-plans/> - In April 2025, developers Belltown Power postponed their plans for a 200-acre solar farm near Egremont, Cumbria, due to significant local opposition. The community expressed concerns over the visual impact on Dent Fell, a prominent local landmark. A 'Save Dent Fell' group was established to preserve the area for future generations. The developers acknowledged the need for additional time to address community feedback and indicated plans for a second round of consultation before resubmitting the application later in the year. ([cumbriacrack.com](https://cumbriacrack.com/2025/04/04/backlash-against-west-cumbrian-solar-farm-forces-developers-to-postpone-plans/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gelnmmzj7o> - A consultation about a major solar farm in Nottinghamshire revealed strong local opposition. The proposed Great North Road Solar Park, intended to power up to 400,000 homes, faced 54% opposition from respondents, primarily due to concerns over its visual and ecological impact. The project would cover 7,000 acres, approximately 10 kilometers in length, encircling two villages. ([bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gelnmmzj7o?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cew1j11jyewo> - Plans for a new solar farm in Hatton, near Horncastle, were rejected after facing significant local opposition. The proposal aimed to power about 21,000 homes annually but was scrutinized due to its potential impact on the surrounding landscape. The East Lindsey District Council received 378 formal objections and a petition with 479 signatures. The council's planning committee formally refused the application, citing concerns over the development's impact on the area. ([bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cew1j11jyewo?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cyrz7mnek74o.amp> - Residents and farmers in the Somerset Levels launched a campaign against a proposed 146-acre solar farm. Concerns included the loss of farmland and potential environmental impacts from the construction and manufacturing of the panels. The development aimed to create 500MW of clean energy, sufficient to power 115,000 homes, and would occupy agricultural land in six villages. Local parish councils voted against the application, and a petition against the solar farm garnered thousands of signatures. ([bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cyrz7mnek74o.amp?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.governing.com/infrastructure/new-york-county-protests-using-farm-land-for-solar-projects> - In Schoharie County, New York, state and local officials, along with residents, protested the use of farmland for solar farm projects. Assemblyman Chris Tague and State Senator Peter Oberacker held a press conference expressing concerns over the loss of agricultural land and the impact on local communities. While not opposed to renewable energy, they emphasized the importance of protecting farmland and local interests. ([governing.com](https://www.governing.com/infrastructure/new-york-county-protests-using-farm-land-for-solar-projects?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/solar-energy-xcel-energy-wisconsin/> - In western Wisconsin, a proposed 5,000-acre solar energy project by Xcel Energy faced opposition from over 2,100 residents. Concerns included environmental impacts and disruption to the farming industry. The project aimed to replace energy production from the Allen S. King Generating Plant, which was set to close in 2028. Local residents emphasized the need for alternative energy sources that do not compromise the county's natural beauty and agricultural heritage. ([cbsnews.com](https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/solar-energy-xcel-energy-wisconsin/?utm_source=openai))