

May 2026 AGM: Revised Planning Guidance

Introduction

In the Winter 2025 Newsletter the 'Renewables survey' findings were circulated. Under "Next Steps" it was stated that revised guidelines would be presented at the 2026 AGM.

The below updated guidelines are not black & white 'rules' that can be voted upon because individual propositions and circumstances, when approvals are sought, can vary significantly and all subtle differences cannot be catered for in a hard and fast manner. There will, as there has always been, the necessity for an element of subjectivity to be involved.

The new guidelines are exactly that – a guide for both Members and the ORRA Committee - and we expect these to evolve further over time. Member participation in the evolution process is always valued, and the 2026 AGM is an ideal forum for that. The following confirms where we are now and why, and what, is changing going forward.

Graham Carn (ORRA Committee)

Revised ORRA 'guidelines' regarding consents for alterations to buildings including 'Renewables' and neighbour 'agreements' to changes - AGM May 2026

AGM May 2026 Current position:

The Covenants applying to all properties on the Ratton Estate protect and preserve the Estate's character and amenities. The Covenants are detailed in householder's respective deeds and, following the May 2019 AGM, ORRA circulated these in 'plain language' to Members in a booklet explaining also ORRA's Charter & Constitution to oversee them. If you have mislaid your booklet all this information is also available on the ORRA website. The booklet and website set out clearly current guidance on both building alterations and other requirements such as street scene, hedges, gardens, maintenance fees, and courtesy to neighbours.

In respect specifically to building alterations the guidance reads: "It is essential that any external alterations to any property should be put before the ORRA committee prior to and regardless of applying for permission from the Borough Council (if required)". This should be before works are commenced so there is no risk of having to change anything subsequently, and ORRA can provide its written consent to be placed with the property's deeds. Obtaining consent is important because in the event of sale or transfer subsequently of the property the consent needs to be available to solicitors. Retrospective consents may not be possible, and an effective breach of covenant could cause delays, unnecessary expense, or even loss of a sale. Householder's may not always relish ORRA's involvement in what they

wish to do with their own homes, but the oversight responsibilities are on behalf of us all collectively and the process is the least intrusive as possible. Most cases are dealt with quickly and the ORRA website has all relevant information.

Going forward: For general building alterations the guidance in the ORRA booklet remains with the committee focused on alterations needing to be sympathetic to street scene and works completed in line with existing appearance of the property and materials similarly matched to the original construction. With Renewable Energy installations the ORRA booklet currently provides no guidance as, in 2019, solar panels were across the board frowned upon for the Estate and that position has remained till now. However, time has moved on and both solar panels and heat exchangers have more media and government profile, and therefore Member support, as evidenced in our 'Renewables Survey' responses last summer. Despite respondents not being in quite the numbers we had hoped there was clear general support of 'renewables' albeit qualified very clearly with the desire to maintain the street scene, as the paramount priority. Therefore, ORRA is looking to introduce as relaxed as possible renewable installation guidelines whilst still needing to accommodate the street scene aspect.

In practical terms this means that new 'guidelines' are proposed as follows:

- Solar panel and heat exchanger installations for front facing property aspects are not considered desirable, and will not be consented to, if the street scene is detrimentally affected. Solar tiles on front facing roofs would be an option to gain consents provided tile styles, colour and appearance are sympathetic to original and surrounding roofs.
- Solar roof panels and heat exchange installations for non-front facing aspects can be considered and consent forthcoming, provided no significant impact on street scene and installed with as much sympathy as possible (colour / design) to the original appearance of the property.

Neighbour consents: Currently the ORRA requirements are "Agreement should be obtained, in writing, from immediate neighbours either side, front and back, before any major changes are made as per the current covenants". The 'Renewables survey' undertaken gave some fresh direction with regard to neighbour consents, which we have previously shared, so ORRA still requires these - as both a neighbour courtesy and for any concerns to be accommodated wherever possible - we therefore propose amending the guidelines as follows:

- Where consents are either not forthcoming, or considered unreasonable, then the committee can still provide ORRA consent. This applies to both general alterations and renewable installations.