

The Written Representation of my Oral Submission referred to my deep concerns for the viability of E Suffolk as a tourist destination, and hence income-provider, its ecological prowess and significance, and for the well-being, mental and physical, of its residents for the duration of Sizewell C/D's construction.

I also have genuine fears for the safety of this (becoming) outdated technology and the safe disposal of its deadly waste; and I worry too about the Governance: who will eventually be appointed overseer of this project - and will they be genuinely accountable immediately and into the future?

However I did not speak directly about RSPB Minsmere itself and all the wildlife that is encouraged and supported there. As a volunteer I can talk specifically about the Reserve, and the response I have seen from some of the thousands of visitors who come that I have welcomed.

My house is 1 1/2 miles from the Reception Centre at Minsmere, where I volunteer.

There are numerous wonderful walks before you even enter the Reserve, for example along the New Cut (a controlled waterway that is quite naturalised) to Middleton, another over Vault Hill, and a further walk up Clay Lane.

The Reserve itself goes out of its way to welcome one and all - human species as well as birds, mammals, invertebrates and insects! I have welcomed visitors from all over the UK and beyond: Scandinavia, Holland, France, Spain, Canada, and USA are among those that I recall.

We provide an electric car charging point, robust, comfortable mobility scooters (foc but donations welcome), ramps for wheelchair-users, and an ongoing project (temporarily halted due to Covid 19) to make another hide accessible to disabled people.

We welcome children with open arms! We provide activity sheets to help them explore, and colourful booklets at a modest price to introduce them to the iconic species that are protected here: the beautifully camouflaged Bittern with its foghorn-like eerie booming call; the lovely Avocets with their upturned beaks; our prized raptors, the Marsh Harriers (their 'Sky- dancing' routine is a sight to behold); and our not-so-scary Adders. Not forgetting amazing insects like the Bee-wolves and Wasp-Spiders. Who knew? We do!

Give children a handful of very special creatures to look out for, make it a 'quest' (yes, they get stickers if they tick a few boxes on any of our varied Did You See? charts), and they have a whale of a time. Finally completely tiring themselves out in our nature-themed playground, or building dens.

On their way out through Reception they stop to tell us about all the animals and plants they've seen, and to receive their stickers.

'I've seen, I've seen, I've seen a SQUIRREL!' squeaked one excited 3year old.

I've been shown a dead 'adder' by a very serious little boy (it was a very desiccated worm), and another told me about the 'Mummy Bee carrying its baby'. It was actually the BeeWolf - a predatory wasp that catches honey bees on the wing, taking them underground to its lair. Mum didn't have the heart to tell her toddler the truth...

The point is, the children become engaged and fascinated by the amazing stories all these creatures have to tell. Even if we can't always bear to tell the little ones the whole truth!

We have expert Birders as our 'Guides in the Hides' and our two entomologists who all but live at Minsmere delight in imparting their vast knowledge to intrigued visitors.

We offer off-road 'Safaris' to see and hear the awe-inspiring Red Deer Rut in the autumn; we have guided walks to see the huge variety of flora and fauna on the site; we hold Nature Events for school groups; we host nature-related art and sculpture exhibitions; we have a local Birdwatching Group who come and show children and parents how they respectfully trap a variety of smaller birds as part of their regular Census: they measure, check, weigh and tag them, then record the results before showing the children who volunteer how to gently hold them and release them. It is a morning that my own two grandsons treasure in their memories. To gently hold a tiny Blue Tit in your hand and then release it is touching beyond words.

We have Common Seals off-shore, secretive Otters which occasionally turn up on a footpath, we recently had a Sea Eagle fly back and forth along the shoreline over two or three days (might it return? Might it stay to breed, maybe, next year?!); our most recent visitor was an exotic Golden Oriole, and our autumnal crowning glory: the Murmuration of thousands of Starlings over the reed beds - an often nightly display lasting up to an hour that will not fail to make you gasp in wonder. The RSPB's logo says "Let's Give Nature a Home", for if you do, it will come.

But where will they all go when the skies above are lit up 24/7?

When the dirt and sand and concrete dust hang like a fog over the site - polluting the air, blurring the views, and soiling all the vegetation?

When the noise of the construction site and constant stream of HGVs drown out the Skylark's song from up on high, the 'pinging' call of the Bearded Tits, the eponymous Chiffchaffs, the Whitethroats and Blackcaps - lovely songsters, all - even the booming Bittern?

The Nuclear Power Stations EDF have been constructing in Finland and northern France are not going well, we are hearing.

Are we going to risk losing Minsmere, its species, its staff, its volunteers, to an exorbitant (£20-30 Billion), potentially lethal, outdated source of power that will barely even fit on its designated site?

I fight this battle so I can look my grandsons in the eyes and tell them that "I tried".

I doubt that they and their generation will ever forgive those that gave it the go-ahead.

They will never be able to show their children this precious resource they have enjoyed for almost all of their childhood - and they and their children will be left to clear up the mess that we will have created.

Not in my name, at least.

END