

# **Sea Poppies holiday let business, Thorpeness - written representation to the Planning Inspectorate in respect of the DCO for Sizewell C, June 2021.**

This representation is in three parts:

1. A short paper outlining our concerns on water quality, in particular due to shipping and emissions. This is particularly critical because of the importance of swimming at Thorpeness to our visitors (and us).
2. Our statement about the business and our wide range of concerns. This is similar to that which we have already submitted to the examiners in response to their written question to us.
3. Some additional points for the inspectors' consideration.

(As Pt 2 has already been submitted and is included for completeness, we will not be submitting a separate written representation summary as the word count for Pts 1 & 3 is less than 1500 words.)

## **1. Impact of Sizewell C on the marine environment for leisure users, in particular swimmers at Thorpeness and Sizewell.**

We are very concerned that the development might cause a significant deterioration in the sea water quality in east Suffolk, in particular at Thorpeness and Sizewell.

Specific concerns are as follows:

### **1.1 Jellyfish in swimming waters**

We fear that the increased water temperatures will exacerbate jellyfish blooms which are increasingly occurring due to the unusually warm water in this location. We fear the operation of additional cooling plants, together with climate change impacts, will lead to significantly increased risk in these waters - for visitors and residents.

Research indicates that increases in water temperature in mid-latitudes may broaden the reproductive periods of mid-latitude jellyfish, and improve winter survival of tropical species expanding to temperate waters, therefore boosting both alien and native outbreaks. (Ref. Boero et al, 2016).

In her paper 'Anthropogenic causes of jellyfish blooms and their direct consequences for humans: a review' (Purcell, 2007), Jennifer Purcell states: "many human activities may contribute to increases in jellyfish populations in coastal waters. Increased jellyfish and ctenophore populations often are associated with warming caused by climate changes and possibly power plant thermal effluents. Jellyfish may benefit from eutrophication, which can

increase small-zooplankton abundance, turbidity and hypoxia, all conditions that may favour jellyfish over fish. Fishing activities can remove predators of jellyfish and zooplanktivorous fish competitors as well as cause large-scale ecosystem changes that improve conditions for jellyfish.'

Additionally, human coastal development has also helped jellyfish thrive. The structures and construction that we have placed in the water, such as piers, marinas, oil platforms, artificial reefs, refuse, rubble, aquaculture pens and structures, etc. provide an abundance of habitats for polyps to settle on. <https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2011/02/26/giant-jellyfish-swarms-%E2%80%93-are-humans-the-cause/> (Renee Cho, 2007).

We have personally seen a significant increase in jellyfish in these waters in the last couple of years, having been badly stung several times. The following activities will favour jellyfish increases:

- Increased water temperatures from the additional cooling plant, exacerbated by changes due to climate change
- Structures in the water (habitat for breeding)
- Water turbidity - already high and likely to increase due a wide range of SZC activities and, in particular, the beach landing and marine freight. (favours jellyfish or do not rely on sight to find prey)
- Reduced fish competition for plankton due to the cooling plant kill.

This issue would seriously reduce the attractiveness of Thorpeness to visitors - a family resort where swimming is really popular with all ages. This issue needs to be properly investigated by the applicant and mitigatory measure put in place.

## **1.2 Shipping impacts**

The applicant's revised freight strategy looks to deliver a large proportion of materials by sea, anticipating 700 vessels per annum each with a 4500 tonne load. Deliveries by sea would happen primarily, if not wholly, during the tourist season April - October. The size of vessel would mean the use of tugs and barges to facilitate unloading.

Concerns include:

- Noise pollution, especially if activities also happen at night
- Air pollution from vessels - Shipping accounts for a growing proportion of the adverse impacts of air pollution, being a significant source of nitrous oxides, sulphur dioxide and particulate pollution, of which black carbon is particularly damaging. These pollutants are also precursors to ozone pollution, from which this area suffers particularly badly. Of particular concern are the impacts of ships manoeuvring and idling offshore while waiting for and undergoing transfer of cargo to barges
- Impact of barges and tug boats - these appear to have been omitted from EDF's analysis in the ES addendum. How many return journey's will be undertaken for each vessel and over what time period? For what proportion of a typical summer day will shipping activities be taking place in the coastal waters of Thorpeness and Sizewell?

- Waste water - the risk of deliberate or accidental black and grey water discharges in coastal waters
- Contaminated bilge water
- Accidental pollution - eg oil spills

These issues need further examination and preventative/mitigatory measures put in place.

### **1.3 Water discharges**

- EDF estimate that 20,000 tonnes of contaminants will be released into the water as a result of SZC's operation over a period of 60 years (SZC, Bk6, Vol2, Ch21, Appendix 21F BEEMS TRI93, p60). Seawater in this part of the North Sea carries a high volume of suspended matter and this turbidity will be further increased by the water discharge process itself. This turbidity means that contaminants are held in the water, instead of settling. This, together with the ongoing release of contaminants into the water, presents a significant hazard to the health of swimmers, both through ingestion and submersion, which has not been adequately recognised or evaluated. Consideration of these risks especially to frequent swimmers and children (who are especially vulnerable) must be assessed and mitigated for.

EDF have not properly considered alternative measures (for example, a closed water cooling system) to reduce this impact. This must be done.

## **2. Sea poppies holiday let business - general statement of impacts and concerns**

The following was submitted in response to the Examining Authority's written question EXQ1, Part 6 of 6, SE.1.9, 'Effect on business operations: Please provide more detail in respect of your concern on the impact that the Proposed Development would have on your business.'

Thorpeness was the UK's first purpose-built holiday village and retains its proud heritage, relaxed atmosphere and precious local environment.

We know our visitors come here for the tranquillity, easy access (especially from London), and fantastic unspoilt coastline and wildlife. They love the great local food, the family friendly atmosphere and the big Suffolk skies and sea air. They say it's relaxing and restorative, like stepping back in time. A recent visitor described the calm quiet atmosphere as a world away from 'daily life' and as a haven for his family. Another says: [It's] lovely and quiet, connecting with nature and an escape from the hurly burly of the modern world: just proper unspoilt English countryside and beaches.

As an 8 bed holiday let property, our target market is for multi-generational family groups or joint family parties. We have surveyed some of our visitors and they all commented specifically upon the special qualities of the area such as; the peace and tranquillity, enjoyment of coastal walks, swimming and the beaches, quiet lanes and no traffic jams.

Should Sizewell C be developed we do not believe that they will want to stay in Thorpeness for the following key reasons:

- 1) Traffic congestion to and from Thorpeness and also whilst they are staying in the area.
- 2) The nature of Thorpeness will change as properties become multi-occupied in providing accommodation for workers at Sizewell C. During the construction of Sizewell B we understand there was a brothel in the village. This will change the family friendly atmosphere of the village.
- 3) The disruption, noise, pollution and loss of dark skies will remove the key attributes of the area, the reason people visit.
- 4) The destruction of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, its habitats and wildlife value will be resented by visitors and drive them away from the area.
- 5) The collateral damage caused by the demand for staff by EDF will impact existing businesses as the availability of and the ability to retain and/ or recruit new staff becomes even more difficult. The unprecedented demand for low-cost housing will reduce the ability of existing local businesses to attract new staff. The consequences will be increased costs and lack of availability of much needed services in the area. There are already signs of the problems that Sizewell c would exacerbate: our housekeepers/cleaners resigned the business this week because they are unable to recruit the staff that they need.
- 6) The restriction on access to beaches at Sizewell and the length of time to get to treasured destinations by car such as: Minsmere, Dunwich Heath, Walberswick and Southwold will detract from visitor's enjoyment of the area.

A really popular pleasure of Thorpeness is swimming in the sea. We are really concerned this too will be threatened with increased turbidity and water pollution resulting from the marine works and shipping. We also fear that the increased water temperatures will exacerbate jellyfish blooms which are increasingly occurring due to the unusually warm water in this location. We fear the operation of additional cooling plants, together with climate change impacts, will lead to significantly increased risk in these waters - for visitors and residents.

We believe Sizewell C will blight this area permanently, but especially during construction, making our business unviable. The loss of what our visitors' value, cannot be mitigated for: we are appalled at the proposed wilful destruction of such a tranquil, unique and fragile place. The character of this special landscape and settlements will be irrevocably transformed by road construction, traffic congestion, loss of coastal access, and destruction of tourism businesses (already under huge pressure due to covid). Our iconic views north from Aldeburgh of Thorpeness and House-in-the-Clouds will be blighted by soviet-style monstrosities. These proposals will deliver wholesale industrialisation of our precious coast. We believe that the unique attraction of Thorpeness and the Suffolk coastal area as a tourism destination will be destroyed.

We anticipate that we will have to close our business as we will not be able to offer our customers what they expect and what we wish to deliver. There will be a consequential impact onto local businesses not only for those we support directly with in excess of 50% of our revenue being re-invested directly locally but also the loss of our visitor spend in the pubs, café's shops and visitor attractions not just in Thorpeness but in towns and villages all along the Suffolk coast.

It is our view that the development of Sizewell C will be catastrophic for the local tourism economy and also those businesses in the supply chain that support this vital part of East Suffolk. Employment in this region is already fortunately high. We anticipate that our supply chain will therefore be severely disrupted due to the additional burden of the short-term demand by EDF for workers. Local businesses and residents will be badly affected by shortages of people to provide the services we support and rely on. We do not accept East Suffolk Councils assertion in the Open Floor Hearings that there will be a 'different sort of tourism'. This we feel is clutching at straws.

Our customers also highlight their worries about the long-term legacy of such a development including the industrialisation of the area and issues for future generations. The consequences of this development will not just be for the 12+ years of construction but also for decades to come. Our visitors are aware of this.

It is our opinion that the impact on the tourist economy (predicted by the applicant to be 29%) will be significantly worse in Thorpeness. It will be a particular victim of the cumulative impacts of this and the SPR windfarm proposals and will suffer an onslaught of 24 hour noise, light and air pollution.

Several of our loyal visitors have said they will be much less likely to return if this development goes ahead. This loss will directly impact the local economy, stripping the Suffolk coast of the unique character that our tourism businesses help to create, and reducing the quality of life for all who live here, who benefit from tourism revenue and enjoy all that this helps to support. We do not want a different type of tourism that revolves around an industrialised coast and two megalithic nuclear power stations.

We are aware that there has been discussion about a tourism fund (but not the detail), however our business model relies on a certain number of let nights per year. We do not believe that this fund will be of benefit to us.

We say that the Examining Authority should consider Sea Poppies as a bellwether in the tourism ecosystem. There will be many others in the same position, small businesses who you won't hear from but which also have to reconsider their future. We predict a collapse in the holiday let market, as people realise that visiting here will mean witnessing the heart-breaking destruction of the special qualities that drew them here in the first place.

We market our house as ‘a great place for chilling out in this delightful, quirky but quiet seaside village, ...- and a perfect base for exploring the beach and coast’.

We work really hard to do everything we can to offer a holiday experience to our visitors that lives up to these expectations. But we cannot hand on heart continue to offer our house in this way if this development goes ahead and what we promise becomes just a shattered dream as all that we love about this area is destroyed.

Sizewell C is the wrong solution in the wrong place and the consequences of its construction will be significant and long lasting. This application should be rejected.

### **3. Additional comments**

1. Please note we have purposely not attempted to comment on issues impacting biodiversity and loss of protected habitats; finances; economics; climate change/carbon footprint, sea defences and marine pollution - subjects which we feel very strongly about but on which I know other individuals and organisations will be submitting extensive written representations. We endorse the excellent submissions made by so many people and organisations at the open floor hearings and the written submissions of, in particular, Stop Sizewell C, TASC, the Minsmere Levels Group, the RSPB, Suffolk Coastal Friends of the Earth, the Alde & Ore Association/Alison Andrews and Suffolk Wildlife Trust.
2. We cannot endorse the submission of East Suffolk Council who are elected and appointed to represent local people but are completely failing to defend their constituents’ interests adequately on this issue. What we stand to lose cannot be mitigated for. Moreover, we absolutely refute the extraordinary suggestion of Craig Rivett, representing East Suffolk council at the Open Floor Hearings on 18<sup>th</sup> May, that a new ‘different’ type of tourism is possible - we are aware of no tourism built around wholesale coastal (and hinterland) industrialisation, traffic congestion, pollution and desecration of precious wildlife habitats.
3. Impact of Sizewell C defences - we are concerned that hard defences of the scale proposed (and becoming even bigger in future years) will impact erosion at Thorpeness which is already a significant concern. Additionally, we would like to establish details of the materials (nature, source, quantity) that will be used for the soft sea defences. As these are sacrificial, what quantity is expected to be lost each year and what will be the impact on neighbouring coastline?
4. We wish to retain the right to speak at issue-specific hearings, as we deem appropriate.

Frances Crowe / William Parker

Sea Poppies co-owners

June 2021