

From: [REDACTED]
To: [East Anglia ONE North](#); [East Anglia Two](#)
Subject: Deadline 10 submission
Date: 03 May 2021 18:00:51

Our ref: 2000023185 and 200023184

Could the inspectors please investigate the disturbance of ground nesting birds in the fields near Friston?

The site of the proposed EA1N and EA2 substations has lain fallow since autumn 2020. During the winter there was no activity in the fields but as spring progressed birds started nesting and taking advantage of the food source that had grown without interference.

In their email of 17th March 2021 SPR confirmed that no investigation work would take place within the Leiston-Aldeburgh Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Sandlings Special Protected Area (SPA) during the bird nesting season. What SPR have failed to take into account is that ALL wild bird species, their eggs and nests are protected by law. SPR must avoid harming wild birds by timing work to avoid the breeding season.

Having received no reply from SPR I contacted the RSPB about my concerns, in particular in relation to sky larks which are classified in the Red List under the Birds of Conservation Concern 4: The Red List for Birds (2015). The RSPB said that surveys must take place as close as possible to the date on which any work might take place and action must be taken to ensure that nesting birds are not disturbed.

On three occasions I asked SPR to confirm if and when a survey of ground nesting birds had taken place and I received either no reply or a vague "ecological surveys have taken place throughout the process" reply. I asked for a copy of the survey. Finally on the 21st April I received a reply from SPR stating that a survey of ground nesting birds had taken place across THE ENTIRE EA1N and EA2 proposed site on the 20th April. SPR said that they could not give me a copy of the report because it contained sensitive information about protected species.

The residents of Friston were on high alert on the 20th April, waiting to see what heavy machinery and general disturbance might take place as we had seen from numerous road signs that work was due to start. No one saw ANYONE on site on the 20th April. The public paths that run through the proposed site are busy with concerned residents and regular dog walkers throughout the day. I have made extensive enquires and no one saw any surveying taking place on that day. SPR must have used a large team of surveyors to cover a 9km cable route and a 22 acre site in one day, all without anyone seeing them.

Please could the planning inspectors ask for a copy of the ground nesting bird survey of 20th April? You may say that pre-consent investigative work does not fall within your remit but I believe that it must. This is an example of how SPR fail to adequately engage with local residents and palm us off with platitudes. They never answer our questions and constantly dodge scrutiny. If the inspectors were to get a copy of the report you could examine it to see if it identified ground nesting sites across the EA1N and EA2 proposed site and put in adequate protection for these nests. It is also important to see if the survey was carried out by suitably qualified people. Despite several requests SPR have refused to give me the contact details for their "Ecological Clerk of Works", who, according to the RSPB should be on site while work is taking place.

Since work has begun on the fields there has been a noticeable reduction if not elimination of the sound of sky larks. I have no doubt that nesting birds have, and continue to be disturbed. The fields have been sprayed with some nasty chemical so all the lovely seed heads that provided food for the birds have been poisoned.

The upset and anger in the local community is palpable. This is the land that we value and love. SPR like to promote their "community engagement" credentials and their awareness of the "ecological sensitivity of the area". If this were true they would never have brought their diggers and heavy machines onto fields where birds are nesting. Why this work was not carried out in the autumn or winter is inexplicable. We are filled with horror as to what might be to come if these plans are approved. We continue to object to the onshore infrastructure aspect of these plans entirely.

Louise Fincham