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**To:** [Cleve Hill Solar Park](#)  
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Please find attached a transcript of the oral submission given by myself on behalf of Faversham Town Council at today's open floor hearing.

Kindest regards

Cllr Ben J Martin HNDip Bus, Cert Finance,  
Watling Ward Councillor

FTC Logo Reworked



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## Oral presentation Cleve Hill

Faversham Town Council believes that as a nation we must make the switch to renewable energy, however this must be balanced with other concerns. Including biodiversity, and local impact.

The Council believes that the identifiable concerns in relation to the proposed project greatly outweigh the renewable energy benefit and as such objects to the proposal.

I will outline briefly some of the concerns we have.

The size of the project area is larger than the combined area of the town of Faversham and the village of Gravaney. The size and proximity are unprecedented in the UK and will dwarf the communities that border it.

The loss of public amenity: - the site is straddled and bordered by public footpaths and can be seen from the national cycle network. The proposed landscaping mitigation will change the very nature of the area. Part of the joy of walking or cycling in the area is the vistas and wide open space, features that will be lost, with in fenced in footpaths bordered with cctv and security lights. – solar panels belong on rooftops not beauty spots.

Increased flood risk – should this proposal go ahead, the applicants will no doubt maintain the sea wall in order to protect their assets, in doing so the flood risk to Faversham will remain unmitigated, the town council believes that this are of land should be returned to flood plain in order to offer better protection for Faversham from flooding.

Concerns over storage safety.

Lithium-Iron battery fires are widely regarded to be difficult to control with advice in some areas that they be allowed to burn out. – given the size of the proposed energy storage in the application, we have grave concerns over the potential impact such a fire would have, given that the gas and smoke from such fires include highly toxic compounds including significant quantities of hydrogen fluoride, a gas which when it comes into contact with moisture produces hydrofluoric acid.

Impact upon archelogy – with no widespread archaeological investigation of the site the development could damage underlying archelogy eradicating the possibility of ever knowing the full history of the site.

Lack of local benefit - This proposal is projected to have no direct positive economic impact on the local economy. There are no projections for increases in local employment, spend with local business, development of a supporting business ecosystem etc. The only benefit (of any kind) that Cleve Hill Solar Park can identify for the local area is their obligatory business rates payments to Swale Borough Council. That is not enough.

Detrimental impact during construction. – the construction of the site would take 2 years, and involve an increase in the number of large vehicle movements through the area. Junction 7 of the M2 already suffers at peak times, in addition, to access the site, large vehicles would have to use narrow winding country lanes, lanes which are utilised to access a rural school and as part of a popular cycle route. The impacts of large good vehicles on congestion & air quality on narrow roads are well known to the people of Faversham, with parts of the town already suffering with illegal levels of air pollution.

Detrimental impact upon wildlife and biodiversity.

When we consider the environment, we can't just consider climate change. Faversham Town Council recently declared a climate and biodiversity emergency.

The proposed site is immediately adjacent to The Swale which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site. The Swale Estuary is also a National Nature Reserve (and Marine Conservation Zone) and the site is bordered on the North and West, by both the South Swale Local Nature Reserve and the Oare Marshes Local Nature Reserve. The site is almost wholly enclosed by land which is designated as Wetland of International Importance. Although the land which would be used to accommodate the facility is not itself protected or designated, it is of a markedly similar character and quality to the surrounding Ramsar areas. It is also clear that the rare birds and other species which use the surrounding protected areas also use the nearby land including the site itself as habitat. It is clear there is a high likelihood of long-term negative effects on Dark-bellied Brent Geese and Breeding Marsh Harriers. The nearby SPA boasts a population of 24 pairs of the latter, representing at least 15% of the breeding population in Great Britain.

In short although Faversham Town Council supports a move to renewable electricity, we feel this must be balanced against other environmental, historical, social-economic & biodiversity concerns, this project fails to meet that balance and as such Faversham Town Council objects to it in the strongest possible terms.