

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Cleve Hill Solar Park](#)
Subject: RE: Open Floor Hearing 10th September 2019
Date: 10 September 2019 17:16:36
Attachments: [REDACTED]

Please find attached the text of the oral presentation I made to the Planning Inspectorate Open Floor Hearing 3 this morning on behalf of Swale Green Party (10/09/2019). I would be grateful if you would acknowledge receipt.

Tim Valentine
Swale Green Party

From: Cleve Hill Solar Park <CleveHillSolarPark@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Sent: 27 August 2019 07:03
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Open Floor Hearing 10th September 2019

Dear Mr Valentine,

Thank you for your e-mail; I have added you to the list of people wishing to speak at the Open Floor Hearing and will make the Examining Authority aware of your request. The agenda for the hearing is likely to be published early next week.

Kind regards,

Hefin
Hefin Jones
Rheolwr Achos / Case Manager
Cynllunio Seilwaith Cenedlaethol / National Infrastructure Planning
Yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio / The Planning Inspectorate, Temple Quay House,
Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6PN
Llinell Uniongyrchol / Direct Line: 0303 444 5944 neu/or 07407877938
Llinell Gymorth / Helpline: 0303 444 5000
E-Bost / Email: hefin.jones@planninginspectorate.gov.uk
Wê / Web: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk> (Cynllunio
Seilwaith Cenedlaethol/National Infrastructure Planning)

Wê / Web: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/planning-inspectorate
(Gwaith achos ac apeliadau/Casework and appeals)

Twitter: [@PINSgov](https://twitter.com/PINSgov)

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Ysgrifennwch ataf yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg
Please write to me in Welsh or English

From: Tim Valentine <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 24 August 2019 13:21
To: Cleve Hill Solar Park <CleveHillSolarPark@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Subject: Open Floor Hearing 10th September 2019

Dear Mr Jones,

I am writing to request an opportunity to speak at the open floor hearing on Tues September 10th on behalf of Swale Green Party. Unfortunately I was not able to attend the earlier hearings and Swale Green Party has not yet had an opportunity to speak at a hearing.

Kind regards,

Tim Valentine
Swale Green Party

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Oral submission to Cleve Hill Solar Park Open Floor Hearing 3

10 September 2019

Councillor Tim Valentine

Swale Green Party

I am an elected member of Swale Borough Council representing Boughton & Courtenay – the ward in which the proposed development would be located. I am the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Environment. But today I am speaking on behalf of Swale Green Party.

You may expect that the Green Party would support renewable energy. Indeed we do. Personally, I am something of an enthusiast. I have solar PV and solar thermal on my roof. My house is heated by an air-source heat pump and I drive an electric vehicle. I should also declare an interest: I am a director of a 5MW community-owned solar array at Iwade. It is about 17 acres and generates enough electricity to power the annual consumption of 1,250 houses. Profits from renewable energy generation are given back to community. So far we have supported the Seashells Children's centre at Sheerness, Sheppey Scouts, the Brogdale Collection, Abbey Physic Community Garden, Halpern Arts and Kent Wildlife Trust.

In the Green Party we recognise that we must generate renewable energy at scale to address the climate emergency. The great advantage of solar energy is that can be distributed on a domestic and community scale. It allows families, businesses and communities to benefit from generating their own renewable energy. Our vision is for every suitable building to generate its own energy. Every new building in Swale should have solar PV on its roof. At this scale solar is more efficiently deployed because the energy can be consumed in the building itself or by neighbouring consumers, minimising distribution losses.

There is no advantage in concentrating 880,000 solar panels in one site, as proposed by the developer. In fact, it has massive disadvantages: the industrialisation of the countryside; a dramatic visual impact on a rare landscape; and the displacement of wildlife of international significance.

In June 2019 Swale Borough Council passed a motion declaring a Climate and Ecological Emergency. Although the renewable energy generated from the proposed solar power station would be very welcome in meeting our climate targets, the habitat loss and would have a negative impact for the ecological emergency.

I understand that when considering Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects local planning policy is normally overridden by National Policy Statements. However, there are no national policy statements for either solar power or battery storage. Swale Borough Council has a local plan adopted about two years ago. The proposed development is contrary to many policies in the local plan. The whole site is part of a defined Area of High Landscape Value in recognition of its locally valuable landscape quality where views can extend much further than is normal. The site adjoins the Swale Site of Special Scientific interest, a Special Protection Area and a Ramsar site of international importance for migratory bird. Therefore, in the absence of national policy, local policy must be given considerable weight.

The long-term plan for the development site is one of managed realignment, by which the sea defences will be breached and the site return to tidal salt marsh. This policy will benefit biodiversity and contribute to carbon storage. Tidal salt marsh is one of the most effective landscape types for the rate of long-term carbon accumulation¹. The proposed development will delay this managed realignment by 20 years. This loss of potential carbon sequestration should be offset against in the benefit of low carbon renewable energy generation.

The proposal is very different from any other solar farm that exists in the UK. The scale of the proposal is far larger than any existing solar energy projects. The east-west orientation of the panels and the high-density layout means that there will not be the breaks in shading characteristic of traditional projects with south-facing panels. The scale of the battery is far larger than any existing battery and therefore deployment of the technology at this scale is untested.

The proposed development is clearly unsuitable for the site. There has been a failure to consider development of more suitable sites. There are brown-field sites nearby that have spare capacity of grid connections where disused power stations have been closed down.

I remember very well walking on the footpath across the site a few years ago. Our presence disturbed a marsh harrier that was close to the path. It flew up in front of us, giving us the closest view, I have ever had of this magnificent bird. There are very few wild places left to us where such an experience is possible. We have a duty to protect these places for future generations. I urge you to do so.

ⁱ Laffoley, D. d'A. & Grimsditch, G. (eds.) (2009) *The Management of Coastal Carbon Sinks*. IUCN. Gland, Switzerland. (Natural England Commissioned Report No. NECR033.)

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