

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Cleve Hill Solar Park](#)  
**Subject:** Written Representation  
**Date:** 20 September 2019 22:53:58  
**Attachments:** [REDACTED]

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Good evening,  
Please find attached a further Written Representation from Graveney with Goodnestone Parish Council on the subject of an Equality Impact Assessment.  
Kind regards,

Bex Ratchford  
Parish Clerk

# **GRAVENEY with GOODNESTONE PARISH COUNCIL**

[www.graveneywithgoodnestonepc.kentparishes.gov.uk](http://www.graveneywithgoodnestonepc.kentparishes.gov.uk)

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Your ref: EN010085

20<sup>th</sup> September 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

Application by Cleve Hill Solar Park Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Cleve Hill Solar Park Project

Following the Open Floor Hearing held on 10<sup>th</sup> September, Graveney with Goodnestone Parish Council is presenting this written submission on the subject of an Equality Impact Assessment.

We are extremely concerned about the impact on the residents of Graveney and Goodnestone should the proposed Cleve Hill development go ahead. This is due to the population of Graveney and Goodnestone including people who fall within the nine groups with protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010. For instance, there are more than 100 elderly people who live immediately next to the main road in Graveney and whose lives will be adversely impacted by noise during the construction phase and possibly beyond.

The parish council believes the Equality Impact Assessment written by the applicant's representatives may be an attempt to divert attention from the legal requirement to assess the impact on groups of people with protected characteristics. If any of these groups are disadvantaged because of activities relating to the proposed development, they will be discriminated against and mitigation is required.

It is the belief of the parish council that there is no mitigation possible for some groups of people with protected characteristics and therefore the development should not be given planning consent, especially as in some cases additional human rights legislation also applies.

The impact on people should have been a material factor in the choice of the site for development and we note with great concern that this appears to have been omitted in the discussions about the suitability of alternative sites.

There is extensive research about the detrimental effects of a development like this in terms of construction and traffic noise. This written submission highlights noise during the construction phase; subsequent submissions will focus on further effects such as air pollution, light pollution and vibration.

It is generally accepted that noise has a detrimental effect and it was interesting to note that the Lead Inspector, Mr Rose, referred to noise when he said 'if anyone is disturbed by background noise, please alert us' (EN010085-000935: Recording of Issue Specific Hearings on 4<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> July).

The applicant provides a very detailed analysis of the impact of noise on birds, but the impact on people is only assessed from three specific properties. The fact that there are many households near the site and at the side of the road has not been considered. In the case of the school, the position of the building and the playground have not been considered. Other intensive and long term projects consider in detail the consequences of noise on people and mitigate with robust actions. One example is the High Speed 2 rail project. Specific government advice can be found in the Planning Practice Guidance on Noise published in 2014.

Throughout the community liaison phase it appeared that the applicant had little concern for the demographic of residents. For example, due to the age of a significant proportion of residents (retirees), requests were made to have all measurements in both imperial and metric units. The size of the solar panels is obviously of great import to stakeholders; unfortunately, the applicant did not respond to the request thus disadvantaging elderly people who are not familiar with metric measurements.

This submission lists a small proportion of available research which indicates a lack of clarity from the applicant about the consequences of the construction of the development on people generally and those with protected characteristics specifically. All the research listed was available on the worldwide web on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

The applicant was asked by a local resident in one of their near neighbour visits on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018 if and when an assessment would be carried out on the impact of the development on people. The applicant agreed to do this, but to date this assessment has not taken place. The parish council would suggest that the outcome of such an assessment would show that the site and location are not suitable for a development of this type.

It is also the belief of the parish council that the impact of traffic could deprive some residents of their human right to education.

We note that Kent County Council (KCC) has to date failed to provide its Risk Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment. This calls in to question their ability to sign off the Traffic and Transport Plan.

Officially recognised dB levels can give an indication of the level of noise hindrance; however, the same parameters cannot be applied to certain groups with protected characteristics, for example, those on the autistic spectrum, those with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or hearing problems, all of whom can be very noise sensitive. There are children with these specific learning needs in both the primary school and the other registered school in Graveney. The noise

from traffic and construction will almost certainly adversely affect their learning and may potentially cause regression. In the case of young people with significant autism it could also affect their Equality and Human Right to Education (Protocol 1, Article 2) as they may not be able to participate in the individual structured curriculum devised for them. In this case mitigation strategies would appear to be impossible.

The parish council notes that some of the dB levels in the tables in the Environmental Assessment are .5dB below the minimum noise level. We would be grateful to know how this figure was arrived at.

In addition, the cumulative effects of construction traffic noise, workers' transport noise and construction noise over an extended period of time (14 hours a day, 5 and a half days a week, for a period of 2 and a half years) will have a huge impact on people in general and those with protected characteristics in particular. Graveney is a rural village and people move here to enjoy their lives in peace and quiet.

The elderly and young people will be disadvantaged by the noise resulting from this development during construction and possibly beyond the construction phase. Possible effects include sleep deprivation, especially as the workers' traffic starts very early and previously the village has been much quieter at these times. Sleep deprivation can result in cardio-vascular issues, behaviour issues for elderly people with dementia, stress, anxiety, well-being and mental difficulties.

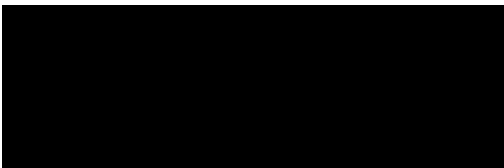
For young people, their ability to learn could be hindered because noise can affect their concentration, or they may be hyper sensitive to noise which could potentially affect their learning and behaviour as well as their mental well-being.

People with a range of disabilities will be disadvantaged as a result of the noise emanating from the construction traffic and the construction of the development. Specific disabilities include mental health, autism, hearing difficulties and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. One effect of noise during the construction phase and possibly beyond is the exacerbation of disability symptoms, both physically and mentally.

Pregnancy and maternity can be affected by noise during the construction phase and possibly beyond, as evidence shows that the development of a foetus can be adversely affected by noise.

A selection of research to support these assertions is listed at the end of this submission.

Yours faithfully,



Bex Ratchford  
Parish Clerk



Sources:

### **European Commission: Science for Environment Policy – Issue 47 (January 2015)**

[https://ec.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/index_en)

This study includes research on the effect of noise on vulnerable groups, including primary school children, young adolescents, pre-school children, the elderly, and children with autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Effects suggested include annoyance, sleep disturbance, heart and circulation problems, deterioration in mental and physical quality of life and learning and comprehension difficulties.

### **Noise Pollution and Impact of Children’s Health NCBI**

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pub>

This research found that ‘noise induced hearing loss and non-auditory adverse effects due to noise pollution are being increasingly diagnosed in all age groups, including the foetus. Pregnant women, foetus, newborns, infants and children are most susceptible to noise induced hazards and should be given the outmost protection.’

### **Caregiver’s Guide to Autism Symptoms –WebMD**

<https://www.webmd.com/features>

This report highlights that ‘intense sensitivity to sound is a common autism symptom. Loud noises may be painful. The din of a city street or mall can be too much.’

### **Children and Noise World Health Organisation**

<https://www.who.int/capacity>

This is a training manual which outlines the effects of noise on children, including foetus and babies and children with dyslexia and hyperactivity. The effects described include hearing difficulties, physiological and psychological effects as well as impaired cognition.

### **Elderly living near noisy roads have ‘increased stroke risk’ – NHS**

<https://www.nhs.uk/neurology>

One of the findings of this research is that ‘daytime road traffic noise was associated with a 3-4% increased risk of death from any cause in adults and the elderly in areas exposed to more than 55dB.’