

WRITTEN REPRESENTATION FOR SUNNICA by Newmarket Town Council

Newmarket Town Council strongly objects to the Sunnica application and provides the following representation:

Newmarket is a town steeped in history and has been the centre of the Horseracing industry since the 17th century. It is located on the border of the counties of Suffolk and Cambridgeshire and has a population of 18,220; 18.3% being aged 0-15, 62.4% being aged 16-64 and 19.3% being aged 65+ (*Suffolk Observatory*).

1. Town History – Newmarket has a unique heritage; its High Street developed from one of the ancient trackways of the Icknield Way – ‘the oldest road in Europe’ – running all the way from southern England, up towards the Neolithic flint mines at Grimes Graves just north of Brandon, and on towards the Norfolk coast. The surrounding area saw early settlement because of its water sources, and the remains of Bronze Age and Iron Age barrows were scattered across the Heath until the 19th century.

The powerful Iron Age Iceni tribe included the Newmarket area in their lands. The huge “Devil’s Dyke” earthwork on Newmarket Heath, which runs for about 7 miles between Woodditton and Reach, is part of a defensive system which archaeologists consider to date back to the fifth century AD, with continued development in the sixth century, although its origins could be even earlier (Malim et al., *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society* 85, 1997, pp. 27-122). Today, the footpath running along the Dyke offers interesting and varied walks, together with spectacular views across the Heath and the Racecourses. It is also a site of Special Scientific Interest and home to rare species of flora and fauna, including Lizard Orchids, Pasque Flowers and Chalkhill Blue butterflies.

The surrounding landscape has always played a pivotal part in Newmarket’s history. On 26th February 1605, King James I stopped off in Newmarket on his way towards Thetford, on a journey to explore the sporting potential of the area. His enjoyment of hunting hares in the fields around Fordham led him to return to Newmarket and eventually to build a royal palace on the High Street, so that he could stay in the town in both spring and autumn each year, taking his pleasure in hunting and horse racing in the vicinity of the town. This pattern was followed by his son King Charles I, to the extent that in 1647, after his capture by Parliamentary forces, he chose to be escorted to Newmarket, where he spent time riding out on the Heath, and was even recorded playing bowls nearby at Chippenham Park. It is important to understand that the Sunnica Industrial site covers land that the Stuart Kings would have viewed as integral to the attractions of Newmarket.

After the Restoration, King Charles II was quick to re-establish the Royal Stables in Newmarket, and a new Palace complex was created further up the High Street. As it had been for his father and grandfather, the main attraction of the town was its landscape setting, with all its possibilities for sport and recreation. King Charles II’s former guardian, the Duke of Newcastle, recommended Newmarket as “the sweetest place in the world and best air and no place like it for Hunting, Hawking and Coursing, & Horse races”. Important visitors from home and abroad were entertained in the town – in 1669, the King invited Cosimo III, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, to visit, and the Duke’s travel journal provides eyewitness accounts of the King’s recreations: racing

on the Heath, visiting Sir William Russell at Chippenham, and “the diversion of hare hunting”; the journal even identifies why the countryside was so well suited to the latter: “being entirely free from trees it leaves to the huntsman the full enjoyment of seeing the animals without interruption, and observing their subtle flight”.

It cannot be stressed strongly enough that it was the landscape surrounding Newmarket that attracted the Stuart Kings, and encouraged them to establish the sport of Horseracing here. This pattern continued through succeeding centuries, with monarchs visiting Newmarket regularly to enjoy the wide-open spaces surrounding the town and participate in the training and racing of horses.



‘George I at Newmarket, 4 or 5 October 1717’ by John Wootton

Royal patronage was particularly evident from King Edward VII’s first visit to Newmarket as Prince of Wales in 1861, continuing throughout his reign and those of his son George V, his grandson George VI and his great granddaughter, our late Queen Elizabeth II.



The late Queen Elizabeth II surveying her horses in training on Newmarket Heath, with John Warren, Sir Michael Stoute and the late Coral Pritchard-Gordon (Courtesy of Newmarket Journal)

The setting of the town has provided the perfect conditions for Horseracing to develop into the global industry it is today, and Newmarket is now known internationally as “Headquarters” in the racing world. In turn, the development of the sport of Horseracing has resulted in the creation of a unique landscape, a patchwork of stud farms which encircle the town like a green mantle, as well as ensuring the preservation of the wonderful expanse of Newmarket Heath, said to be the largest area of cultivated heathland in the world. This beautiful landscape, rich in history and culturally important, remains available for everyone to enjoy, but it simply would not exist if it were not for the Horseracing industry and those people who tend it on the industry’s behalf. We are extremely fortunate to be the custodians of such a precious landscape, and we have a duty to preserve this heritage for future generations.

2. The effects of Sunnica Ltd.’s proposal on Newmarket – Newmarket Town Council is responsible for a number of community facilities, areas and services throughout the town and running and facilitation of events & festivals for the town. The council committee has 18 elected councillors and is led by the Town Mayor. Meetings are held on Monday evenings and members of the public may attend and speak on matters at the beginning of the agendas.

Our Town Council is completely against Sunnica Ltd’s plans for the Sunnica Industrial Energy site. Sunnica Ltd.’s consultation process has been completely inadequate and

has left many of our residents in the dark about the construction, operation, and decommissioning of the Sunnica Industrial site. Although the solar farm is not set to be built within our town borders it still affects us as a town massively for the following reasons:

2.1 The Effect on Agriculture

Historically, the area in and around Newmarket has always had farming as one of its main occupations. Our area produces a substantial variety of vegetables for the country, helping to secure our national food security. Sunnica plans to build their industrial solar site on this high-quality agricultural land. We as a country simply cannot afford to lose arable land to industrial solar farms. The effect of building thousands upon thousands of these solar panels on farmland for 40 years will be completely detrimental to the land quality. This land will likely be used for industry following Sunnica's decommissioning in 40 years' time, representing a permanent loss of agricultural land.

2.2 Solar on Warehouses

We, as a council, cannot understand how this loss of agricultural land is even being considered when rooftops of warehouses are clearly the superior option. In our area we have a large number of warehouses whose rooftops could be used for solar power. A recent study shows that UK warehouse rooftops have the capability of doubling the UK's solar output contributing up to 15GW of new solar power, without compromising our essential agricultural land.

2.3 The Effect on the Horseracing Industry

Newmarket has been considered the home of the Horseracing industry for centuries. A report commissioned by Forest Heath District Council in 2014 concluded that Newmarket is a unique training centre which is incomparable in economic and historical importance. This relationship between Horseracing and Newmarket has always been protected; this can be seen throughout history, with infrastructure projects being modified to protect the Heath. In 1851 the railway was tunnelled under the Heath and moved north of the Limekilns. Similarly, during wartime the Heath was never touched, whilst most other land was ploughed for agriculture. The Sunnica Industrial Solar site poses a great threat to Newmarket's status as the Headquarters of Horseracing worldwide. We must not allow this premier position to slip.

2.4 The Effect on the Local Economy

As well as the historical importance of Newmarket, the Horseracing industry contributes massively to our town's economy. In and around Newmarket there are countless Horseracing businesses - The Jockey Club, Tattersalls, the National Stud, the National Horseracing Museum, the British Racing School, 70 licensed trainers, 63 stud farms, 3 equine hospitals, 100 vets, as well as various bloodstock services, veterinary research centres, farriers, feed suppliers, saddlers and many others. By threatening the Horseracing industry, the Sunnica industrial site inevitably threatens each of these individual businesses. In 2017 a SQW study showed that the Horseracing industry creates 3,597 jobs and contributes almost £242,000,000 to our local economy each year (*Newmarket's Equine Cluster: the economic impact of the horse racing industry centred upon Newmarket - a short update to the 2014 report*). This clearly demonstrates the extent of our town's

economic reliance on the Horseracing industry. Therefore, this clear threat that the Sunnica Industrial site poses to our town must be stopped.

2.5 The Effect on Tourism in our Area

A huge amount of time and effort has been invested into making our town the tourist destination it is today. People visit our town largely to experience the 'Home of Horseracing' first hand, but also for the beautiful countryside views in and around our town. Visitors' guides have always highlighted the wide-open spaces which surround Newmarket, from as far back as 1673: "The town stands in such a plain, that it hath a prospect three quarters of the compass, almost to the bounds of the horizon; to the south east it is more rising ground, ending in Woodland" (Blome's *Britannia*). This "rising ground" is Warren Hill, which has offered panoramic views over the unique, unspoilt landscapes of the Horseracing industry for centuries – views recorded by renowned artists such as John Wootton and his followers, and still enjoyed by visitors and residents today.



'The Warren Hill at Newmarket' by John Wootton (d. 1764)

The Sunnica Industrial site will essentially industrialise the countryside of our area, destroying this renowned landscape. For example, the famous views over the Limekilns Gallop will be turned into a sea of solar panels with a 10-metre high electricity substation. There will be a particular impact on the iconic view across the fields to Ely Cathedral, 20km away – this is a cherished view which draws people to climb Warren Hill on a clear day. How can we possibly allow all this to

be threatened? The resulted effect on the number of tourists visiting us will be catastrophic. Local businesses like the Bedford Lodge Hotel, the Packhorse Inn, Discover Newmarket, the National Horseracing Museum, and many others will all be threatened by Sunnica's plans. Our very attractive countryside is an amenity for all; residents and visitors.

2.6 The Effect on Traffic through our Town

Sunnica's construction vehicles during the construction period will travel to our area on the A14 dual carriageway, taking the junction off onto the Fordham Road, and travelling to Exning past Tesco. Tesco is our town's main supermarket, and those shopping there will be affected by this traffic. As well as this, our town is the official bypass from the A14 when there is an accident, and recently there has been an overwhelming amount of traffic coming through Newmarket from the A14. Consequently, the whole of Fordham Road and our High Street are constantly coming to a standstill. This will only worsen during the construction period, with heavy good vehicles transporting solar panels to our area for the Sunnica Industrial site. This will negatively impact the lives of our residents and people who use this route daily. Both Fairstead House School and St. Louis Primary School, as well as many businesses, are located on the Fordham Road, where traffic will be at its worst. Many residents walk their children to these school, but how will this still be considered safe with constant construction vehicles on roads? The construction of Sunnica Industrial site will negatively impact daily lives of those who work, live, or go to school in our town, and this must be taken under consideration.

Link to Gallops Tour



REPRESENTATIONS FROM RESIDENTS OF NEWMARKET

R. DUNLOP, Lives [REDACTED]

"I am writing to share my concerns of how the Sunnica Energy Farm is set to impact my life personally. I live in Newmarket, and mother, Karin Dobbie, moved back to England a year ago after living in South Africa for 30 years. She now lives in Chippenham Park with her partner Gavin Hunter. It has been such a relief to have her back so close to us. We regularly meet halfway with our dogs in Snailwell, on the Snailwell footpath which connects Chippenham and Newmarket together. This footpath is set to be closed by the construction of the Sunnica Energy Farm. Our villages in this area are all closely linked by the footpath connections between us, with people from different villages coming together through these links. It will be such a loss to lose this connection.

As well as this, my husband Edward Dunlop has trained racehorses for nearly 30 years in Newmarket. We have had countless owners travel great distances to watch their horses gallop on the notorious Limekilns. This unmatched experience is under threat with acres upon acres of industrial solar panels set to ruin views of the gallops. The racing industry contributes hundreds of millions of pounds per annum to this area, and we must stop any threat to the industry and the history of the town."

"I walk on the limekilns almost every day with my dogs and constantly enjoy the natural beauty of these famous gallops and the beautiful surrounding countryside. I also meet lots of other fellow walkers who enjoy spending their afternoons exercising their dogs or walking themselves. This view will be desecrated by Sunnica Ltd's plan to cover the area in Solar Panels. I have three whippets who love to run and this area is one of the only areas with vast open space which allows both my dogs and I to enjoy the outdoors.

My husband trains racehorses in Newmarket and our owners come to watch their horses galloping on the Limekilns often. Each one comments on the amazing experience they have on these historic gallops when they visit. There are wonderful paintings and pictures throughout history of famous racehorses on these gallops. Please do not destroy this beautiful place."

K. DOBBIE, [REDACTED]

"To whom it may concern.

For many years I have enjoyed walking my dogs in the afternoon on the Limekilns in Newmarket. We are very privileged to be allowed to walk there on the famous training grounds with the large expanses of grass, covered in spring with wild flowers, intermingled with small woods. As you walk you can enjoy the lovely views of the Suffolk/Cambridgeshire countryside all around you. For this reason I am horrified to learn that if the proposed plan by Sunnica goes through we will be looking at fields of glass solar panels and maybe high batteries.

Surely solar panels would be more suited to roofs or brownfield sites rather than ruining arable land and our beautiful countryside.

Hoping that sense will prevail."

"I am writing to inform the Examining Authority of my personal concerns about how the Sunnica Energy Farm will impact my life and the life of my partner, Gavin Hunter. We are residents of Chippenham, and are both retired [REDACTED]. One of the things we most enjoy is walking our dog on the secure beautiful footpath linking Snailwell to the end of the Bury Road in Newmarket. It is one of the few footpaths that is fenced making it very safe for both children and dogs. I regularly meet up with my friends and my daughter, Rebecca Dunlop, and grandchildren through this walk, so it is not only beneficial for my wellbeing, but also my social life.

I also object to the Sunnica proposal which takes away arable land in our area which grows over 30,000 tonnes of carrots, potatoes, and onions a year for the country. I find it hard to believe that this land is of the low calibre that Sunnica maintains given the amount of food produced in the area every year.

As well as this, I believe the villages are not suitable to accommodate large industrial construction vehicles and cranes. This will no doubt change our village life as we know it, negatively affecting the lifestyles of many.

I do hope the Examining Authority consider how this scheme will be detrimental to the lives of villagers affected."

G. HUNTER, [REDACTED]

"Many years ago, as a teenager I arrived in Newmarket to start my career in the Horseracing Industry. And now in my [REDACTED] I have returned, maybe in my so-called twilight years, to spend time in the same wonderful area with my memories, and to enjoy seeing my relatives and my many friends. One of my

great pleasures is to walk with my beloved dog on the Limekilns where once I used to ride as a youngster from the very start at the Boys Grave to the top where the Bury Road joins the off-ramp from the A11 which heralds the start of this famous town steeped in the history of famous names both human and equine. To be able to gaze across at gallops and stud land and beautiful farmland is one of my great pleasures as I know it is to so many other walkers.

But now I hear to my horror and dismay of plans to destroy these views by constructing vast areas of solar panelling which will border the very edge of this renowned area of racing heritage, preserved for so long by so many dedicated persons. Should this horrendous planning application be approved by the relevant authorities, large areas of the adjacent land will disappear for good and eventually leave behind a devastation only fit for possible housing which is unlikely to be required in the area for any good reason.

Please, dear God, do not allow this planning application to be approved.”





THE JOCKEY CLUB
ROOMS

02/11/22

Reference 20031344 / The Sunnica Energy Farm

Dear Sir / Madam,

We are writing on behalf of The Jockey Club Rooms, The Bedford Lodge Hotel, The Best Western Heath Court Hotel and the National Horse Racing Museum. We would like to express and have recorded our extreme concern with regards to the proposed Sunnica Energy Solar Farm. As currently proposed, we all agree that the scheme will do significant harm to our businesses.

All of our businesses work continuously hard to develop the tourism trade within the historic town of Newmarket, not only does this benefit the town, it also supports over 300 jobs locally between us, not to mention our suppliers. This is all reliant on the consistency of tourism to visit Newmarket and the surrounding area. Any threat to that consistency poses a threat to our businesses.

Newmarket's unique and historic landscape is second to none in the world, which is the reason why we have the best thoroughbred horses. Many of these horses sell for millions at Tattersall's, they also attract guests to our properties from all around the world throughout the year. They also train every day in Newmarket and are stabled here and surrounding areas which also supports 1000s of jobs in the industry.

Newmarket also has one of the largest breeding operations in the world, and many of these stud farms back onto the proposed site.

To allow the Sunnica Energy Farm 2,500 acre site to go ahead in our area will have a harmful impact not only to our tourism trade, it will also put many future stud farms off from having their horses stabled here. This in the long run will have a detrimental effect on the local economy and would be far reaching.

For the horseracing industry, the loss of the landscape that has been associated with Newmarket racing and training for so many years will mean people in the industry view the town less well. Investment will be harder to get as the nature of the town as a rural horseracing community will be destroyed by the extensive solar panels. They will overlook some of our most iconic sites, most notably the Limekilns. If the industry views the town less well, investment will be less. Stud farmers, both present and future, will be put off from remaining here. This will cause the horseracing industry to decline in the town. Whether or not the scheme is eventually removed, the downgrading of the town in the mind of the horseracing industry is likely something we will never recover from. There are many other locations across the UK and the world which can replace Newmarket as the centre of the industry. It is crucial we do not harm it, for the good of the town.

For tourists, if the horseracing industry declines so will visits to see the horseracing and to be involved in the industry. In addition, the loss of the quality landscape itself will directly put tourists off and encourage them to go elsewhere. The visual impact of this will cover a vast area, damaging its natural beauty and will take many years for this to be naturally hidden with any potential planting schemes. One of our main attractions for guests visiting is our landscape, if this goes ahead this will change suddenly. Also, for the two years the scheme is being built, much of the local area will be a building site. Even two years of reduced revenue due to this will harm our businesses.

Speaking to a top EDF energy consultant specialising in nuclear energy, we have been informed that by the nature of solar, it would (obviously) only collect energy when the sun is shining, this energy is then limited in how it is stored, therefore resulting in the need for many batteries to allow this to be effective. We are concerned that harm is going to be done to our town, and to our businesses, for insufficient gain.

We also have real concerns about the inclusion of batteries in the scheme. We do not understand how many batteries will be included and we ask that Sunnica provide that information. We understand that if one of these batteries were to leak or explode, the evacuation required would be over a large radius. Who would pay



THE JOCKEY CLUB

ROOMS

for the loss of revenue to our businesses? This is also a great concern to the surrounding stud farms being able to evacuate their world class horses, where would they go assuming they could evacuate safely in time?

Sunnica have not explained any sufficient benefit to our town and local business to offset having this site located on our doorstep. This poses a real threat to tourism and horseracing in the town. Therefore must stress that this is not allowed to proceed.

Sincerely,

Christopher Ogston, General Manager The Jockey Club Rooms

Noel Burns Chief Executive of The Bedford Lodge Hotel

Robert Nobs General Manager of The Best Western Heath Court Hotel

Anne-Marie Hogan Director of the National Horse Racing Museum.