

Attendee at OFH Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December no. 20031161- Freckenham resident and Trustee of Freckenham Village Hall.

I just don't want to be known as the village residents who just let something the size the Applicant is proposing to happen for Freckenham and surrounding village residents.

I also don't want our lovely little patch of Suffolk to be known or filmed as currently seen on TV as "An Abandoned Engineering Project". I am not qualified to say anything about the technology for solar panels but I do know in the 10+ years we have had solar panels at home technology has "progressed". The BESS storage containers truly will look like a white elephant and any landscape proposals cannot screen them even in 40 years!

I am sure many in this room will remember the size of the IBM computers and telephone exchange buildings – there is one in The Avenue near this venue. Look at home computers and mobile phone technology how they have all changed and down sized, to be tied in to a project for 40 years when it is likely to be out of date in 15 - 20 years!

I have lived in the village for nearly [REDACTED], it is my home and my feel-good space. I can't just let the Applicant who came with a big red line in 2019 take this without saying something. In Freckenham the owner of Freckenham Estate heard our concerns and withdrew his land but it didn't deter the Applicant they just went for more land towards West Row and Isleham. I will be driving through an industrial landscape of solar panels and fencing. If I want to visit friends in Red Lodge, go on the A11 or A14 to bigger towns it will also be the BESS storage.

Freckenham does not have a shop and it's around 3 miles to Red Lodge, Mildenhall, Isleham or Fordham. As was mentioned by the Say No To Sunnica team the Applicants proposal is like a mesh around our villagers, to me it's more like a barbwire fence, that we will have to battle through. Where currently we have the joy of the open Fen and Breckland landscape with the rotation of crops, livestock in the fields, free range chickens when not inside due to bird flu outbreaks and our big skies.

We have a village hall that villagers fundraised to build it, as a community we take a pride in the building, designed in the style of a Suffolk barn so it just blends into the countryside.

I'm a Trustee of the independent charity for Freckenham village hall isn't a business but it has to earn revenue somehow and if we face two years of construction traffic, this will have an impact on revenue.

We have a thriving monthly farmers market, represented by many small businesses in the community like Barleycorn Deli & café in Mildenhall, TFM Butchers of Isleham farmshop, Artistry in Cocoa in Newmarket. Others have no "shop outlet" like The Pie Kitchen, Preserves and Honey so rely on Farmers Market like ours, also at Isleham and Burwell in the proposed scheme area. We have asparagus grown in the village sold at the market so that's zero food

miles. So access to these venues to sell to the public on a monthly basis is critical, though the setting of farm fields as you drive into our village will change with this scheme.

As well as the monthly farmers market we have now restarted our monthly film nights. We are hoping that perhaps in 2023 to restart having live professional touring theatre events. We are getting back to pre-covid levels of weekly activities at the hall and have even came runners up in the Active Suffolk most Active Community Award, not bad for a small village with a population of around 400!!

The users of the hall come from the village, surrounding villages and towns, so they will be facing the increased traffic during construction. As will villagers trying to get out to shop, visit their family, friends, medical appointments etc.

When the village had road closures/diversions for an electricity cable to be installed from Burwell to Lakenheath United States Air Base. It caused disruption to villagers and hall users. As a village hall trustee I worked very closely with the installers to ensure the villagers, monthly events and weekly activity users were advised of which way to come to the village hall, The timescale for this was weeks, not the two years the Applicant is proposing.

As a dog owner if we go into Newmarket we will often go [REDACTED] so we can enjoy a walk on the Jockey Club's heath land. Usually, the one as you come off the A11 into Newmarket on the old Bury Road. There is the view of Ely Cathedral on a clear day. It's a well used section for recreational use for dog walkers, walkers and runners as well as the many horses in Newmarket.

One of my biggest worries is if this scheme goes ahead is the battery safety and its decommissioning at the end, as listening to the Applicant this week especially, they are still very much in the "I don't have an answer stage we will consult with our team and respond by deadline 5". As from what they are saying this week at the other hearings I have attended they are leaving decommissioning as the responsibility of the landowners to go back to what the use was at the start of the scheme.

### **In conclusion:**

With very much a passionate view of living in Freckenham, the village hall and its use.

We care, we see it through, we try and be sustainable!! From the Katharine Shore Charity set up in the 1700s is still in existence to provide help for village ladies. In WWI all our village men enlisted so that when it came to conscription there were none left to be conscripted. For the size of the village it was one of the biggest ratio to do so.

The feeling I have is the Applicant does not care, its not even going to guarantee us "green energy" which is what they promised. They are just looking to get this through the NSIP and sell

to ever will give them the most money. So my plea to the Planning Inspectorate is to make sure that there are strong and secure safeguards in place that whoever takes it on to then appoint contractors that there is security for Freckenham and the surrounding villages that they WILL do what they need to do AND there is battery safety procedures and a decommissioning plan in place.

### **Further points from attending the other meetings**

Even The PROW rep from Cambs CC who spoke on Thursday pointed out to the Applicant, they will be having to deal with the contractor(s) not the Applicant. The true reality is it will actually will be third party as the Applicant is selling the project at a sort of design stage, so Applicant really has no interest in what happens after they have done the deal and the money is in their bank account. Who knows who or what the buyer is going to agree or dismiss any of the carefully requested caveats and safe guards we are asking for now. So are all these hearings actually going to have any weight at the build stage?

The applicant just keeps putting in documents, with wording in answer to questions hidden amongst pages and pages of their latest plan. A typical example was on the accompanied site visits I asked the Applicant how big was the fencing, what animals would it allow into the solar panel fields. I specifically asked what about badgers and at that time they said no the mesh size would not allow badgers in. Yet at the hearing on Wednesday they said it would allow access for badgers. I queried this at a break with the specialist Mr Woodfield from the Say No to Sunnica Group and he raised it with the Applicant. The Applicant said yes to badgers but when asked how the access would work they said no to "gates", the mesh would allow the badgers access. I'd like to know what this mesh is as if badgers can get in what else can, medium dogs, muntjac or even children?