

Submission dead line 4
Worlington Parish Council

- Open floor hearing
- Baddingham Lane
- Worlington's Bat population.

Open Floor hearing

I would like to start by saying the application has already effected so many of our residents lives for well over 2 years now and we hope that this is where it will end. I personally have had the privilege to meet some wonderful people who have fought this application, people who sadly will never know the out come.

Worlington has a vast farming history dating back centuries, Roman artefacts including agricultural implements have been found within our parish boundaries, and we are listed in the doomsday book.

We are a small parish of 500 residents, consisting of a high elderly population, many of whom are unable to attend such meetings as these or easily access online information and even if they can access the vast amount of literature submitted by the applicant, like the rest of us, they have found it a mammoth task reading through the poorly organised poorly produced and poorly presented documentation.

We, Worlington Parish Council recognise that the value of our residents' houses in monetary terms is not a consideration in this application.

BUT what about the true value of our homes?

Our homes are not just the bricks and mortar of a building, A home is the village you live in, the community you grow with. It is where you celebrate and commiserate life events, they are where we go at the end of the day. They are our sanctuaries.

As previously stated, this proposal has already affected us and how we see where we live. I for one will not be staying in a village so dear to my heart if this application is passed and I know I am not the only one to feel like this.

A once desirable village where houses were snapped up quickly now sees residents loosing buyers time and time again. No one wants to move to a village which will be transformed from a rural setting into an industrialised area.

The applicants have made Worlington and the other villages like ours feel insignificant, not even worthy of consideration. We are but an inconvenience to them, just another obstruction to climb over in their pursuit to line their pockets.

Our residents are not insignificant, they have farmed your fields, provided food for your tables, paid their taxes and contributed to their local areas, They do not deserve to be subjected to the applicants application which will see us imprisoned in our own village and homes.

40 years is not a temporary installation.

A defendant convicted for life will spend 15 – 25 years behind bars, we will be sentenced to 40 years.

I reiterate 40 years!

Our residents will be forced to live through the construction phase resulting in a huge increase of traffic and noise within our quiet village.

Large vehicles which our roads are not suited for, as I believe some of you experienced first hand on site visits at the Walnut tree junction.

And though traffic will decrease initially after construction what happens when the panels/ batteries need replacing? Will these large HGV's be present again? And for how long? How often?

Badlingham lane,

One of the few right of ways on our door step. Used frequently by our residents and those of our neighbouring parish of Freckenham. This footpath will be closed for an unverified amount of time.

The applicants proposal straddles this green lane, our views of fields will be replaced by solar panels and fencing. How can we believe this will not impact our residents and not change our vista for a life time....

40 years? it will never be the same.

Right now Badlingham lane it is a haven for wildlife including Worlington's beloved bats. The applicants destruction and disturbance of this foot path including removal of trees and scrub to lay cables, increase in noise, vehicles and people will have a severe and detrimental effect on their roosting sites and flight paths.

Our countryside is vulnerable, it is not infinite and it needs to be protected from such large scale developments that will effect the area for decades to come.

- The application is far too spread out over a far too large an area and as previous councillors have stated it "goes against all local planning guidance."
- It will cut our villages off from our neighbours.
- It will change our landscape from a rural setting to an industrialised area.

Worlington Parish council are yet to be convinced to the carbon efficiency of this scheme.

The applicant needs to stop hiding behind the countries need for green energy, this application is nothing more than a buy back money making enterprise. With an excessive amount of solar arrays to justify 77 acres of batteries storage.

Lastly we would like to implore that the applicant stop trying to paint a picture of grazing sheep below the panels. Within the application I have failed to find any genuine provisions being put in place to accommodate sheep.

This is purely a fantasy on their part, for so many reasons.

We are crop farmers with pigs on rotation, there are very few sheep farmers in this area.

So ...

where are these sheep coming from?

What on site provisions are being put in place?

With sheep and solar good stewardship of the land is needed, weeds need to be removed, grass needs to be kept at a certain height and Stoney soil is problematic when cutting as it presents a direct risk to the panels themselves. The grass is effected by both grazing and the panels so it is advisable to re seed every 3-5 years.

Baddlingham Lane

We, Worlington PC have previously mentioned our concern regarding construction through and around Badlingham lane. Baddlingham Lane is a historical footpath linked to the Ickneild way. It is used daily by our residents and those further afield. WPC are unable to see how the path will be fully accessible for the whole construction phase of the area. When it is reopened it will not be the same, solar arrays, high security fencing, flood lights and CCTV. The change of vista will be dramatic and WPC feel this route will be less frequented by our residents and in turn force them into driving to another area for their walks.

- Badlingham lane includes many different species of flora and fauna.
- There is a CWS which lays extremely close to E13
- Along the PROW are trees with preservation orders that are earmarked for removal (along with bushes and scrub) by the applicant.

Bats

WPC have previously submitted our bat surveys one of which was conducted at Badlingham lane.

- **7 species plus a sub group** known as Myotis which contain 4 individual species.
- There is one other species that is not picked up on the bat detector but is widespread in Suffolk and will be present: the Brown Long-eared bat.
- **Barbastelle bats were recorded**, *the barbastelle is particularly rare and thought to still be declining throughout its range across Europe. Barbastelle is listed as 'Near Threatened' on the Global IUCN Red List and 'Vulnerable' on the UK Red List, which also describes it as 'at imminent risk of extinction' and estimates a population of 4500 individuals in England. It is offered special protection through its listing on Annex II of the Habitats Directive, requiring for member states to designate Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) to protect the species and its habitats.*
Source BCT bat conservation trust website
- **Serotine** bats were recorded, the Serotine is one of our largest bats and is not very common
- Potential roosting sites observed and photographed which are included in our Bat survey of Badlingham Lane.
- Due to the lack of scientific studies in regards of large scale installations of PVA panels and battery storage and how these affect local bat population, we feel this is a cause of concern.

Sunnica proposal has the ability to cause a significant detrimental effect on the local bat population both during and after construction. Points of consideration include:

- Installation noise and vibrations
- Effects on roosting
- introduction of artificial lighting
- disturbance to their food chain
- Fragmentation of habitat
- If bats corridor roots are severed bats can be cut off from their foraging habitats, making it harder for them to hunt and survive
- Today's main threats include land use practices, climate change, pollution, development and infrastructure, and human disturbance.

There is a lack of information regarding the effects of solar panels and bats, written papers that have been presented use the known effects of wind farms on bat populations and draws a comparison.

Evidence review of the impact of solar farms on birds, bats and general ecology 2016 (NEER012)

published by Natural England on 9 March 2017.

“Based on this review, there is currently no experimental observational or theoretical scientific literature on the effect solar panels may have on bats.”

WPC foresee Badlingham lane and the surrounding area being turned into a trackway for vehicle movement during the construction phase. There will be a significant amount of traffic, noise, lights and people which all will have a detrimental affect on our local bat population.

Bat Conservation Trust

Impacts of road schemes

The potential negative impacts of road construction on bats include:

- destruction, degradation and fragmentation of roosting, foraging and commuting habitat;
- mortality of bats through collision with vehicles; and
- disturbance from noise, lighting and air pollution associated with the road.

Bats are afforded protection by European and UK law in an effort to help bat populations recover from the losses sustained in the last century. Mitigation for the impacts of roads is therefore an essential part of helping to ensure the survival of our bat species.

Impact of artificial light

Bats are nocturnal animals that have adapted to a life in darkness, partly to avoid predation during daylight hours from bird of prey species such as sparrowhawks. Therefore the artificial lighting of bat roosts, access points and foraging pathways can be extremely disturbing to bats and should be avoided. Artificial light falling on or close to a bat roost can cause many problems for bats, by;

- delaying or preventing emergence from roosts**, resulting in reduced foraging time and missing the peak time of insect abundance (just after dusk). As all bats in the UK feed on insects, this missed opportunity can have a serious impact on their survival and the growth rates of their young.
- in some cases lead to **bats abandoning or becoming entombed in the roost** when the entrance is lit up as bats will be less inclined to leave their roosts in these conditions. This is likely to be considered a breach of legislation as both bats and their roosts are protected by law.
- affecting the feeding behaviour of bats away from the roost**. Slower flying species (lesser horseshoes, greater horseshoes and the 6 *Myotis* species) avoid illuminated areas and therefore lose foraging grounds if they are lit. This results in slower flying species having to use poorer quality foraging sites and losing out on prey, which are attracted to the surrounding lit areas, a so called ‘**vacuum effect**’.
- affecting commuting and foraging routes**, which have been shown to be avoided if there is artificial light spill onto these areas.