

Comment on ISH4 part 2, 16 February 2023.

I wish to rebut a statement made by the Applicant's counsel Mr Turney regarding usage of U6006 at the ISH4 on 16 February 2013.

In response to SCC's request for the removal of E12 and E13 Mr Turney stated that the loss of these plots would be disproportionate as the Applicant's user survey recorded an average of 'five pedestrians and a couple of cyclists' "*. . . we've got adequate mitigation as it stands. . . . It's an unclassified Road. I think it's mainly used by pedestrians and cyclists rather than being used by motor vehicles, whether they can legally do so, but we've carried out usage surveys. I think we recorded five pedestrians and a couple of cyclists on average. We say the loss of 25 megawatts of power to accommodate the views, which we're already addressing through mitigation on that route would be disproportionate to address those impacts.*"

[31.08 sec, Part 2/578 of Transcript]

I don't understand Mr Turney's figures: they do not accord with the numbers we encounter on our walks on a regular basis, or with Freckenham Parish Council's survey which recorded 25 users (21 pedestrians, 3 cyclists and 1 motorcyclist) in just 2 hours on 15 May last year, nor with ORVal (University of Exeter's Outdoor Recreation Valuation tool) which calculates an estimated annual visitor usage of 38,925 with a welfare value of £186,978 [see REP2-139 p.10].

U6006 is also popular with equestrian users, which is rarely, if ever, acknowledged by the Applicant. Considerable set back is necessary to avoid the tunnelling effect of security fencing which is dangerous to horses and wildlife (we regularly encounter deer) as there is nowhere for sensitive animals to escape to if they are spooked by solar panels, as described by Mr Fenwick when his normally reliable horse bolted early one morning, causing him serious injury [Appendix A, REP2-238]. (My neighbour, with rooftop solar, confirms his panels make odd creaking and groaning noises as they heat up.)

Greater consideration needs to be given to horse riders as they will experience more adverse visual effects than pedestrians due to their elevated viewpoint. But if this scheme goes ahead, recreational riding is likely to become a thing of the past along U6006, one of the best and most scenic bridleways in the area.

I think Mr Turney misunderstands the significance of U6006, it is not just a country lane. This unmade-up road draws users from a wide area by its proximity to a number of local communities and those further afield because it is open to wheeled traffic, regularly used by groups of motor cyclists. People aren't just using U6006 for local recreation but as part of their longer journeys.

Given how pivotal U6006 appears to be to the Applicant's construction plans, it is noticeable how much they've attempted to diminish its significance, these low survey figures are just another example. The Applicant rarely acknowledges U6006 as a road, preferring to call it a PROW or bridleway. But it is a road and deserves the same respect as any other road within the network. U6006 was officially designated in the 1950s at the same time as Elms Road was designated U6003/4, it is still unmade-up but according to James Pickerin, SCC Area Rights of Way Officer: 'once a highway always a highway' but the Applicant has never included it on any of their plans as a 'highway within the scheme'.

It is also worth reminding the Applicant that U6006 is a non-designated heritage asset, recorded on the Suffolk Heritage Environment Record as WGN097 and FRK 214. This road has been in existence for at least two hundred and fifty years [Hodkinson's 1783 Map of Suffolk] and probably for considerably longer as a remnant of the ancient Icknield Way [see REP2-236]. The Applicant should accept Suffolk County Council's recommendations either to remove E12 altogether or to create a setback sufficient to minimise harm, which would at least demonstrate that the Applicant has some respect for the community and its heritage.