

ISLEHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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The planning Inspectorate

5th September 2023

Re Sunnica Energy Farm

Response to his request for information dated 23 August 2023.

Unique Reference 20030170

Isleham Parish Council (IPC) reiterates its opposition to this scheme which, if approved, would have a devastating impact on the local environment and the communities in this area. The ExA was made aware of the almost unanimous opposition to this scheme from Isleham residents and multiple other parishes, groups, councils etc so we will not repeat this in detail here.

Regarding Section 3 of Sunnica Ltd's response to the SoS questions (submitted by Pinsent Masons):

1) IPC, speaking on behalf of Isleham residents, reiterates its position that the bomber crash site should not be developed. Our reasons for this have been presented in detail in our Written Representation, REP2-148 and responses to the ExA Questions REP2-075. This war grave is an important part of the village history. Isleham has a strong connection with the armed forces, being located close to RAF Mildenhall and RAF Lakenheath bases, and being home to a number of personnel and their families.

2) Residents here feel forever indebted to the bravery of the crew who sacrificed their own lives to save the lives of those in the village. The site has been preserved for decades as it was back then - an open, peaceful, agricultural field. Relatives of the crew who perished visit the site to commemorate their loved ones; some of those relatives submitted evidence stating their objection to the development of this site. IPC believes it would be an insult to their families if the site was drill piled, covered in panels, fenced off from view and surrounded by mitigation planting to hide the development. The open visual access to the site must be retained as indicated in our REP10-069.

3) We do not agree with the applicant that the crash site is limited to the primary impact crater. It is clear from reports at the time that the remains of crew and the aircraft were scattered over a significant area. We have already provided our views on this in REP6-067 and REP8-046.

4) IPC has taken advice on the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) process and understands that the JCCC's remit when considering licence applications is narrow, and is mainly confined to the preservation of remains on military sites. The JCCC does not take into account the harm caused by development of the site to the local landscape, the harm to local heritage or the ethical and moral considerations regarding development of a war grave. These considerations are for the ExA and SoS to consider, and should be informed by the views of residents (as set out in IPCs above mentioned submissions, as well as the submissions of the Say No to Sunnica community action group and their highly regarded expert on heritage and also the Isleham Society, a local heritage group REP2-149).

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Regarding Sunnica's comments in Section 7 on Agricultural matters:

5) Comments on the productivity of the land in this area, the high quality of the soil - especially that around Isleham, which routinely grows onions, potatoes, sugar beet, cereals, carrots and maize outlined in REP2-148

6) The staggering disparity between Sunnica's assessment of the land quality and what we know locally as people who live and farm here, as well as the expert assessments made by our local MPs and the Say No to Sunnica group (SNTS).

7) Notwithstanding that IPC maintains its objection to the entire Sunnica proposal, IPC maintains its support of the joint host local authority request to remove parcel E05, the field closest to Isleham. Not only is this the site of the military plane crash, but it also has the most significant impact for Isleham in terms of landscape, it comprises high quality BMV soil, and it is a nesting site for stone curlew and other declining farmland birds. This is outlined in our REP3a-060 and further detailed on our REP4-100, REP6-067 and REP8-046.



Site E05 taken in 2022 is from Beck Road Isleham looking south to the Lee Brook showing potatoes being grown. Such a crop is indicative of the land meeting Subgrade 3a of the ALC



Site E05 looking north west in the vicinity of the Bomber Crash showing potatoes again being grown in 2023.

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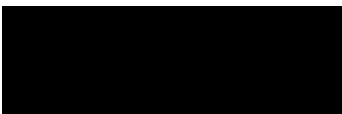
Site E05 looking north east in the vicinity of the Bomber Crash site showing sugar beet being grown in 2023. This crop, as with potatoes is again indicative of the land meeting Sub grade 3a of the ALC.

Regarding Natural England's response:

8) IPC maintains its concern about the impact of the development on stone curlew and other rare farmland birds that we enjoy seeing in this area. Sunnica's provision is inadequate, and we mirror the concerns raised by Friends of Isleham Nature Reserves REP2-140, local resident and retired Natural England employee, Dr Alistair Burn REP2-127 and the ecology expert responses submitted by SNTS in this regard.

9) Stone curlew require open areas, away from the public. Blocking known nesting sites with planting reduces the likelihood of them moving to adjacent sites.

Yours sincerely


R. D Liddington
Clerk to Isleham Parish Council