

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Sunnica Energy Farm](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Sunnica EN010106 - Response to submissions from NE & Sunnica
Date: 26 January 2024 09:36:14

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Unique Interested Party reference number: 20031117

Dear Sirs

I write on behalf of Chippenham Parish Council.

Chippenham Parish Council continues to oppose the Sunnica Solar Farm development. The council supports renewable, sustainable energy but this scheme is too big and in the wrong location, a view which is supported by the vast majority of our community following the results of a survey that shows 91.8% of Chippenham's residents oppose the scheme. The responses to the Secretary of State's letter of 14 December 2023 from Sunnica Limited and Natural England have been considered and the council's comments are detailed below:

Natural England has been less than forthcoming regarding the presence and impact on the Stone Curlew, which is disappointing but perhaps not that surprising considering how little evidence has been put forward previously throughout the Examination despite concerns being raised by a number of other groups including Suffolk Wildlife Trust and local councils. The Say No To Sunnica group employed the services of an ecology expert (Bioscan) who made the point that a cautionary approach is required and that clear evidence must be provided. There are legitimate concerns ranging from incomplete survey work to unsuitability of the offsetting areas for Stone Curlews and, therefore, a lack of confidence that these mitigations would succeed.

In relation to Natural England's seemingly indifferent approach, Chippenham Parish Council to be baffled on the significant issue of soil quality and that the pressing need for more robust information was not raised in the Secretary of State's letter. The whole situation regarding soil quality is so frustrating and the Sunnica commissioned results clearly distorted, as there is vastly more than 1% best and most versatile (BMV) land within the proposed Sunnica site. The Say No To Sunnica group also commissioned views from four independent soil experts and Natural England's own soil quality maps all contradict the soil assessment presented by Sunnica. The Inspectorate should not be relying solely on the investigations carried out by Sunnica as there is a clear conflict of interest. No productive land should be used for solar panels until all appropriate roof spaces have been covered but, of course, this approach would not appeal to Sunnica's wish to make a short term and easy profit for their shareholders.

Chippenham Parish Council also has concerns on the huge impact this scheme would have on the landscape and how much this is valued by local people in its current form. Sunnica seemed to imply throughout the Examination process that by spreading the scheme far and wide the effect would lessen. This view is farcical as the opposite would be true due to the actuality being like death from a thousand cuts. A more concentrated scheme would be preferential but that would not be viable. Regardless of this, Sunnica are being disingenuous as the layout has far more to do with landowners embracing the scheme. Sunnica's response to what mitigations had been considered regarding the visual impact made a comment about solar panels being designed to absorb light rather than reflect it is patently ridiculous and insulting.

As you must appreciate, this proposal has already had a huge impact on people's lives and health. It started in March 2018, and is still ongoing. The stress it has put people under is immeasurable. It is universally opposed and cannot be allowed to set a precedent for poor quality developments being inflicted upon communities, especially under the guise of net zero, which could conversely undermine peoples' disposition in reaching this important goal. Local people are not looking for a compromise on the Sunnica scheme as they believe that this application must be wholeheartedly rejected. There has been substantial evidence presented highlighting just how much people here care about their surroundings and how much this area means to them, as well as bringing to light the many flaws with the scheme, multiple failures by the applicant to follow procedure and failure to present accurate information to the Secretary of State.

Chippenham Parish Council believes that the Secretary of State must surely now have sufficient grounds to refuse this scheme.

Yours sincerely



CHIPPENHAM
Parish Council

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