



Hearing Transcript

Project:	Oaklands Farm Solar Limited
Hearing:	Open Floor Hearing 2 (OFH2)
Date:	22 October 2024

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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:04:28 - 00:00:07:28

Good evening everybody. Could you take your seats, please?

00:00:14:22 - 00:00:52:11

Thank you. The time is just after 6 p.m., and the second open floor hearing from Oaklands Farm solar Park is now open. Thank you all for joining us this evening. You're in the distance, but I think I can see most people. Thank you for coming. Please, could a member of the case team confirm that I can be heard clearly, and that the live streaming and recording have started? Thank you. My name is Stuart Cowperthwaite, and I've been appointed by the Secretary of State as the examining authority to examine the application by Oaklands Farm Solar Limited for an order granting development consent for this project.

00:00:53:04 - 00:00:59:20

I'm supported by the planning inspectors case team. They're managed by Noel Mangum, who is with us today.

00:01:01:09 - 00:01:20:25

Today's hearing is a hybrid event, meaning that some of you present with us are here in the room in person. Others have had an opportunity to join using Microsoft Teams. Um, I believe that nobody is participating news in Microsoft Teams. So, um, it is the people in the room here today taking part.

00:01:22:11 - 00:01:24:25

I'll now deal with a few housekeeping matters.

00:01:26:11 - 00:01:31:05

Can everyone please ensure that you've set all devices and phones to silent

00:01:33:02 - 00:01:46:09

to avoid disrupting the hearing? Please keep microphones muted until I invite you to speak. There will be a roving microphone for people to use. Um, and there are two microphones at the desk in front of me.

00:01:49:04 - 00:02:11:23

I understand that no fire alarm test is planned for this evening. Should an alarm sound, then please leave using one of the fire exits on your left. On the outside wall of this room. Um. And go to the fire assembly point, which is between the main entrance and the adventure golf. So it's within the car park.

00:02:13:09 - 00:02:25:24

The recording of today's hearing will be made available on the National Infrastructure Planning website as soon as we can. After the hearing is finished, please contact a member of the case team. If you don't know how to find the website.

00:02:27:29 - 00:02:46:21

A link to the Planning Inspectorate Privacy Notice was provided in my rule. A letter of the 16th of July. This sets out how the personal data of our customers is handled in accordance with data protection law, and I assume that everyone is familiarize themselves with it as necessary. Please speak to normal if you have any questions about that.

00:02:49:00 - 00:02:52:22

Is there a speaker for the applicant here this evening, please?

00:02:54:24 - 00:02:58:11

So the Representative as to whether you will be able to.

00:02:59:20 - 00:03:06:12

Thank you. Um, I'll give the applicant an opportunity to respond to all submissions at the very end.

00:03:09:04 - 00:03:24:23

I'm not going to invite any other introductions at this stage. Um, there'll be no opportunity for you to introduce yourself later. If I invite you to speak. I will follow the agenda that was published on the 15th of October, 2024.

00:03:27:27 - 00:03:33:07

Does anybody in the room have a. Could we show actually the agenda on the screen if possible?

00:03:34:06 - 00:03:34:29

Ah ah.

00:03:39:03 - 00:03:39:28

Thank you.

00:03:41:24 - 00:03:53:11

So that's the agenda that was published on the 15th of October. It's a very straightforward agenda, but it is what I will follow this evening. Does anybody in the room have a question about the agenda or arrangements for the hearing?

00:03:55:21 - 00:04:00:25

Question at the back. Could we get a microphone, please? To the right.

00:04:05:12 - 00:04:08:21

Can we get a microphone to the person at the back, please?

00:04:15:25 - 00:04:20:21

Sorry, it was just a point out that we can't see it back here. I don't know if you've got any paper copies.

00:04:20:23 - 00:04:23:28

There are there are chairs at the front if you'd like to come to the front.

00:04:32:15 - 00:04:44:17

I will describe the agenda as we go through it. But do please feel free to move to the front if that would be helpful. Could we zoom in a little bit on the agenda? If possible, try to make the text a little bigger.

00:04:46:24 - 00:04:48:25

Hopefully that'll help a little. Thank you.

00:04:51:16 - 00:05:23:14

Hopefully that will help. Thank you. So, um, moving to agenda item two and the purpose of this hearing and how it will be conducted. The purpose of this open floor hearing is to give you an opportunity to raise things that you think should be considered for the decision about whether development consents should be granted. You're free to raise any topic that's important and relevant to the examination. This is an important this is an opportunity for me to hear your thoughts about the application at first hand.

00:05:25:08 - 00:05:42:16

This hearing is subject to my powers of control over its conduct as established by the Planning Act, 2008. To be clear, the purpose of this hearing is to assist my examination. It is not to be used as a political platform.

00:05:44:07 - 00:06:10:13

Any attempts to use it as a political platform won't be tolerated. Each patient. Each person who wishes to speak will be invited to speak at the appropriate time. These oral submissions should be based on representations previously made in writing by the speaker. However, they should not simply repeat matters previously covered in a written submission, but rather provide further detail, explanation and supporting evidence

00:06:12:06 - 00:06:24:05

as set out as set out in the agenda. I have suggested that each speaker completes their submission within ten minutes. I will review that period depending on how many people wish to speak this evening.

00:06:26:12 - 00:06:40:10

I will, as I consider necessary, ask questions of the speaker. And as I said before, I will give the applicant an opportunity to respond at the end. All comments, questions and answers should be directed to me, please, rather than anybody else.

00:06:41:25 - 00:06:46:25

Does anybody have a question about how this hearing will be conducted? The matters that I have just been through.

00:06:49:03 - 00:07:07:04

Thank you. So that concludes the agenda item two. So we'll move on to agenda item three. I'm now going to invite people who wish to make an oral representation to this meeting, to this hearing, rather to identify themselves.

00:07:09:06 - 00:07:16:08

When I invite you to speak, please ensure you speak clearly into a microphone and we'll use the roving microphone at this stage.

00:07:18:10 - 00:07:36:18

And give me your name and any organization that you're representing if you are representing an organization. And when I ask you to identify yourselves. So please, could I see you raising of hands of anybody who would like to give an oral representation today?

00:07:38:07 - 00:07:48:05

Right. So bear with us. If you could keep your hands aloft. Um, I will ask for a roving microphone to be brought to you so that you can identify yourselves.

00:07:51:11 - 00:07:53:21

This may take a minute or two. So, uh.

00:08:00:00 - 00:08:02:24

Thank you. Sir. Councillor Amy Walton.

00:08:05:24 - 00:08:10:05

Thank you. And who's chair of overseers? Parish council.

00:08:10:16 - 00:08:14:24

And Hughes. Thank you. And which council? Sorry. Oh.

00:08:16:16 - 00:08:17:04

Thank you.

00:08:18:21 - 00:08:20:26

I'm Diane Abbott, a local resident.

00:08:26:23 - 00:08:29:22

Maxine Barranco, a resident of Walton.

00:08:30:00 - 00:08:31:18

So could you give me your name again?

00:08:31:20 - 00:08:33:13

Maxine barranco.

00:08:33:24 - 00:08:34:21

Maxine bell.

00:08:34:23 - 00:08:36:20

Cinco cinco.

00:08:36:22 - 00:08:37:07

Barras.

00:08:37:09 - 00:08:38:20

Anchor b e r e z.

00:08:39:06 - 00:08:39:21

Thank you.

00:08:39:23 - 00:08:40:08

Sorry.

00:08:45:16 - 00:08:46:02

Thank you.

00:08:46:15 - 00:08:50:12

Uh, I'm Steve Mills, uh, resident of Coton in the Elms.

00:08:51:01 - 00:08:52:07

Steve mills, thank you.

00:08:55:25 - 00:08:59:12

James Blackwell, also a resident of Coton in the Elms.

00:09:00:11 - 00:09:03:10

Sorry, was that James Blackwell? Thank you.

00:09:08:05 - 00:09:10:07

Paul Eaton, resident of Ross Wisdom.

00:09:11:28 - 00:09:13:09

Was that Paul Newton?

00:09:13:21 - 00:09:14:08

Eaton?

00:09:14:10 - 00:09:15:28

Eaton, I do apologize.

00:09:18:26 - 00:09:23:07

Thank you. Any of the people who would like to speak this evening?

00:09:26:23 - 00:09:42:04

Okay, so we have one, 234567. So I'm content with up to ten minutes for representation on that basis. Thank you. Um, I'm proposing just to invite people in the order in which I took the names. Um.

00:09:46:12 - 00:09:51:02

Is everything okay? Thank you. So, Councillor Wilton, please.

00:10:03:06 - 00:10:37:06

To aid you, sir, I can forward my speech this week or by deadline. Five at the latest. Thank you. And any quotes, documents and appeals that are referenced as I speak are fully referenced in my written submission. But to keep to the ten minutes, I do not mention the referencing in full. Now, um, I speak on behalf of local residents as ward district councillor, but I'm also speaking to you as an expert in agriculture and as per the first open hearing, I farmed all my life, attended Harper Adams University and was a National Farmers Union group secretary. I've also diversified my farm and have installed solar and battery on my green offices.

00:10:37:08 - 00:10:47:00

Plus I have two grams source heat pumps I should add. I also farmland adjacent and next to this site at Walton on Trent, and live on and protect the Schedule Monument referred to in this application.

00:10:47:15 - 00:10:49:15

Thank you. Is that your.

00:10:50:14 - 00:10:52:08

And then I can begin, if you please.

00:10:52:10 - 00:10:53:19

Go ahead. Thank you.

00:10:54:05 - 00:11:24:09

I have been quite shocked by this process, and I hold the planning inspector in the highest regard for his direct and inquiring questions. But the applicants seem to cut and paste and not to directly answer them. The standard response seems to kick the can down the road for 40 years time with the damp. To mitigate matters and refer to the three most recent southern solar farms. Given it is quite simple, you cannot mitigate otter, skylark, barn owl and newt nesting and living habitat destruction. The applicants openly admit in responses.

00:11:24:19 - 00:11:56:06

Skylark nesting grounds will be gone. The choice will be for the inspector to destroy these habitats or to leave them. I do not envy you, sir. In the earlier questions, the applicants have stated the 50 acres of this farm, not under panels or batteries, will be used to continue the existing dairy herd. And please note they do not own a sheep, nor have they ever a neighbor. Overwinter some sheep on temporary grasslands some years. So I look forward to this mystical sheep flock. The owner's own grazing under the panels. It is a dairy and arable farm currently and has been all of my lifetime.

00:11:56:18 - 00:12:34:14

I have researched it in detail and cannot find one where as 74 acres of temporary haul track is required for access due to the traffic issues locally, this track decimates mature woodland and causes ecological devastation. Crossing a brook three times [REDACTED], giving zero climate change benefit and within the national forest. Since the last hearing, a further Burton Bridge has has a permanent seven and a half tonne weight restriction just up the road here at Branston, the main route off the A38 into Burton, that is three routes now weight and width restricted over the River Trent to the site.

00:12:34:16 - 00:13:10:02

A further road from five Lanes End called Hennessy Hill is being seven and a half ton restricted. Another route closed off into Burton to protect residential amenity from a local logistics company, causing issues on the air for there is nowhere to locally mitigate the traffic, which is often now at standstill. This alone should be a reason for the site's lack of suitability, with a further five best proposed on its periphery. The cumulative impact of traffic, heritage, landscape and character is not only frightening for residents, but on a scale wholly against the current SDC local Plan and NPF.

00:13:10:04 - 00:13:41:07

The site has a strong sense of detachment, time and place, rural communities preserved from intrusive urbanization. The mitigations themselves, such as three metre high unmanaged hedges, fences and cameras on poles, create a fundamentally negative impact on the landscape. If you have to grow something three metres to hide something, it should not be there in the first place. Appeals one against solar within Derbyshire at Alfreton were to protect residential amenity in landscape and character. This gives weight to this not being the right place for this installation.

00:13:41:09 - 00:14:15:19

Similarly, a Bess was refused at Callow Chesterfield. Whilst I'm aware you may not give the new SDC local draft plan any weight which is out for consideration now. Consultation now. A further 14,483 homes on BMV land are proposed, and the increased area of up to 68 hectares of employment land at the brownfield site designated for energy purposes under the existing current policy BNP 12 is worthy of note. This site is adjacent to the operating 18 megawatt steam turbine incinerator at Drake Club.

00:14:15:27 - 00:14:51:27

This area already addresses the climate change need, with a second incinerator at appeal within three kilometres to neighbouring battery stores on farms. The 360 acre Thornton Solar Farm, just over the close border in Staffordshire, plus a farmer run biomass plant at Thornton. Simply Best and Solar should be on rooftops and brownfield sites. Not the best and most versatile BMV land. As the fastest growing district in the UK, we have plenty of rooftops. My question about the building of this site on

sub aquifers, shown in the geology reports, and the safety of my water supply and boreholes, are not addressed in any way.

00:14:52:01 - 00:15:26:05

It is simply not possible to guarantee there will not be a fire in battery storage. They happen and are evidenced hence an appeal upheld at Pound Road Best, Hornchurch for the reason of unacceptable levels of pollution to aquifers and the significant risk to local residents and the environment. I know the applicants are unable to provide proof of them not being in financial difficulties. Now or in 40 years. Bond should be in place, a new precedent is needed or we will see the disaster we have with our water infrastructure and sewage that can must not be kicked for our children and grandchildren to deal with.

00:15:26:07 - 00:15:58:18

I also note in the Stdc Local Impact report the cost to stdc of the obligations enforcement being for 40 years has not been addressed. There is no local benefit for residents, only a potential increase in council tax all costs index linked, including the dem, should be in a bond now. The crux of this application has not changed. It comprises of 398 acres of solar and 74 acres of hall track. It will remove 472 acres of 67% best and most versatile agricultural land permanently.

00:15:58:21 - 00:16:40:15

I do not accept the applicant's stock answer that it is not an issue, as the area is only 0.003% of the BMV land in England. I set out the reasons below. Crewe Centre of Expertise for waters estimated in 2000 that within the UK, 60.9% of agricultural land was drained. Water and Evans note that a significant proportion of the most agriculturally productive land in England and Wales is dependent on flood protection and land drainage, and suggest that, with increased importance currently being placed on food security, land management options may need to be re-evaluated to reduce flood risk and to maintain standards of land drainage in areas of national agricultural importance.

00:16:40:17 - 00:17:15:23

The Environment Agency showed Adas data from 2002 that the maximum area drained as a percentage of hectare ridge in the East Midlands is 39% and the minimum area 31%, and in the West Midlands its a maximum of 19% and a minimum of 16%. This proves some land which is drained. BMV is far more valuable than other land, a rare commodity as this site is land drained. The applicants wish to kick the can and the damp to 40 years to decide how to deal with the problem of the buried infrastructure, and cut the cables at 0.7m deep.

00:17:15:25 - 00:17:49:18

Leave the buried infrastructure in the ground, polluting the triple C river mice and soil forever, at one point recently stating in the damp pull out the buried plastic ducks and impossible ridiculous suggestion, they now state in the latest demo. The cutting of cables at 0.7m deep will allow land drainage, which is ridiculous as this occurs as it has on my farm within the last five years at 1.1m d a mile drink and then operate at 0.6m deep, running into the land drains. It is a fact that land drainage goes in at 1.1 to 1.2 metres deep in permeable soils.

00:17:49:20 - 00:18:28:21

This is backed up by the Bible of On Drainage HDB Field Drainage Guide with a section on drain depth. I should add. It's a little rich of the applicants to part quote me in deadline for applicants responses, but at least they openly admit taking out the infrastructure they wish to leave in the ground would stop the land returning to BMV and undo the soil improvements. However, if it cannot be drained, it will no longer be BMV. A simple fact backed up with data. The Chris key findings stated that flooding as a result of climate change poses a further risk to BMV loss, with almost 60% of our most productive grade one land already sitting on the Environment Agency's flood zone three.

00:18:28:28 - 00:19:03:28

75% of East Midlands Grade one BMV is at the highest risk of flooding, as it is in flood zone three. East Midlands is one of three regions to have experienced the highest absolute losses of BMV land from development projects between 2010 to 2022, the highest of grade three A, B and B, this ground is potato sized, nematode, free, not tested as requested in my questions, making the BMV even more valuable as you can only grow potatoes every 6 to 7 years, and this area is renowned for supplying crisping potatoes to the Walkers Midlands factories.

00:19:04:28 - 00:19:44:21

It can be argued that this loss of BMV will accelerate in the next decade due to climate change, with climate mitigation strategies such as elms being and nutrient neutrality schemes. The permanent or long term losses of good agricultural land will have a negative impact on strategic food supplies. Grades one, two and three above land is protected for that reason, and this policy should be adhered to and backed up by recent appeals for Solar and Bess. The Lillington Swadlincote, Derbyshire Appeal stated whilst the collective benefits arising are significant, the harm caused by allowing the development of just below 50% of the site's BMV hectare ridge over a period of 40 years would be of greater significance.

00:19:44:23 - 00:20:15:16

Similarly, Cawston, Norfolk Best's appeal for the same reasons. In conclusion, agricultural land is one of the most valuable natural assets in the UK. In 2014, Andrew Montague Fuller from Cambridge University produced a report entitled The Best Use of Agricultural Land, which warn the UK may be running out of land for food production and could face a potential shortfall of 2 million hectares by 2030. He argued we needed to put more land aside for the food needs of a growing population. I do not disagree.

00:20:15:23 - 00:20:49:15

There are many reasons this application should not go ahead. Traffic, cumulative effect. Landscape and character. Heritage. Sub. Aquifers and AI and soil pollution. But in planning terms, it is quite simple. Any proposal on BMV land needs to be justified by the most compelling evidence, and there is none, nowhere in national or local policy guidance does it state declaring a climate emergency implies a precedence over all other considerations. This land will be lost to BMV, as will the ecological habitats permanently if this application is allowed.

00:20:49:17 - 00:20:50:12

Thank you sir.

00:20:54:04 - 00:20:56:08

Ladies and gentlemen, please

00:20:57:23 - 00:20:58:10

give me.

00:21:03:04 - 00:21:07:08

Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen, please do not.

00:21:07:10 - 00:21:25:00

Applaud any representations that are made. Um, that will make people who have a different view feel uncomfortable. It is entirely inappropriate to show support in that manner. So please desist from doing that.

00:21:27:05 - 00:21:28:00

Thank you.

00:21:32:23 - 00:21:44:03

It's an important point. People may have a different point of view. So if you applaud in that way, it will make those people feel uncomfortable. So please do not do that.

00:21:47:11 - 00:21:48:03

Thank you.

00:21:50:12 - 00:22:27:25

Councillor Wilton, thank you for your thoughtful submission and for your submissions earlier today and for your previous submissions. Um, you repeated some of the points you made earlier, but I'd like to. And I'm grateful for your offer of a written submission. Um, and I'm grateful for the references being set out in that submission, so thank you. Um, I'd just like to ask you one very, very specific point, so I will I will study your submission in more detail. Um, you referred to your own private water supply being the potential for impact on your private water supply.

00:22:30:29 - 00:22:31:26

Is that correct?

00:22:32:07 - 00:22:39:11

Yes, sir. As I mentioned in the first open hearing. Yeah. Um, I put in a borehole when I bought ground.

00:22:39:15 - 00:22:41:11

You did mention that before? Yes.

00:22:41:13 - 00:23:13:08

And, you know, it's at 80m deep and we've realized the ground. I didn't realize, but the ground is sub aquifer at from relevant base. The geology reports are shown at Draco that it's sub aquifer and also on the site for the current base. So. And I didn't know till I put in a ground source heat pump that there was water ten meters down and we were still going strong at 80m, 100m down.

00:23:13:10 - 00:23:19:12

So I would not being a geologist, I would assume It's a big setback for.

00:23:20:10 - 00:23:29:23

Thank you, and I apologize you did mention it in your previous submission. I forgot about that. Um. Thank you, Councillor Wilton. I appreciate that submission.

00:23:33:22 - 00:23:36:25

Could I invite Anne Hughes to make a submission, please?

00:23:41:19 - 00:24:14:02

Could I just I just like to make one correction, actually, that, um, my role is to, um, conduct the examination, and I will create a recommendation report to the secretary of State. So I will make a recommendation. I will make recommendations about whether consent should be granted. The final decision on or the decision on consent will be made by the Secretary of State. So it's not my decision. I will make a recommendation. The Secretary of State will make the decision.

00:24:14:04 - 00:24:20:27

So I just wanted to make that clear. Um, please, um, go ahead with your submission.

00:24:21:06 - 00:24:37:29

Thank you. Thank you. Sir. I am Ann Hughes, chair of Overseas Parish Council, and speaking on behalf of the residents of overseer. And if it helps our forward a copy of my speech to you later, I also mention a report that the parish council is drafting, and I can send that to you at a later date as well.

00:24:38:01 - 00:24:38:20

Thank you.

00:24:39:20 - 00:25:23:12

Overseas is not in the immediate vicinity of this proposed infrastructure project, but we believe that as a village, we will be significantly adversely affected by it, primarily due to the increased traffic that it would cause. I am surprised that there has been no official consultation with us or consideration of the impact on our main street. Indeed, there is no mention in any of the traffic routes of vehicles coming through our village. Over Seale was a mining village, but has been transformed through the National Forest and Black to green project so that many of its local employment opportunities are now in tourism, hospitality and outdoor recreational activities.

00:25:24:17 - 00:26:06:04

We are in favour of solar power, but it needs to be in the right place. Recognising that there is easy access to the national grid at Railclone. Then solar panels should have been a requirement on every house and other buildings being built as part of the new estate there. Put them over car parks with either charging for electric vehicles, on factory and office rules, or on brownfield sites, but not on prime farmland. Whilst we need power, we also need food. Councillor Wilton has explained far better than I could how and why this application would take some of the highest quality agricultural land out of production, permanently reducing our ability to feed ourselves.

00:26:06:25 - 00:26:45:00

In addition, its prominent position, the lack of provision for proper maintenance of rural hedges and ditches, etc., coupled with the apparent lack of understanding of the range of heritage assets nearby, mean that its impact would be one of urbanisation of the area. This is in direct conflict to the recently launched National Forest vision of being a magnet for tourism. A wide range of attractions, outdoor activities, hospitality and all the associated jobs. However, there is another reason why this proposal is in the wrong place and that is one of access, or rather lack of it.

00:26:45:16 - 00:27:21:21

Whilst the A38 is part of the strategic road network, the fact that the new bridge over the Trent at Walton has not yet been built, and it is quite possible that it will not be, at least in the foreseeable future, coupled with the weight limits on the other, Trent bridges mean that HGV access to this proposed solar farm from the A38 involves going through heavily congested Burton on Trent. Inevitably, this will lead to much more of the heavy construction traffic approaching from the southeast and the M42, A40 two in particular.

00:27:21:23 - 00:27:53:06

Which leads me to overseas concerns. Our main concern relates to the further additional traffic this would place on the A tribal four, which is our village main street and bisects the village main Street, Burton Road and Akers Bridge Road are all road names for the 84 within the village. The road is fronted by listed buildings, houses, shops, businesses, churches and the Robin Hood pub. It has to be crossed by children going to and from the village school.

00:27:53:08 - 00:28:26:21

Older children catching buses to secondary schools is used by the elderly going to the post office to collect their pensions and shop at the village, shop by dog walkers, by cyclists and equestrians on their way to quieter roads and off road walking and riding. In summary. A typical rural village main street in places in oversell, the age of four is only 6.8m wide and has narrow pavements. We already have lorries coming through that have only a total of 18in spare.

00:28:26:23 - 00:29:00:23

When they pass one another, that is six inches at each side of the road and six inches in the middle. Parents are walking their children to school with HGVs, passing them with six inches to spare at 30mph. We do now have children who refuse to walk to school because of this, and who are now taken to school by car. So much for Derbyshire County Council's promotion of active travel and also, with respect, so much for the nation's net zero policies. We have no we have houses with no real off road parking, i.e.

00:29:00:25 - 00:29:42:27

they use the pavement vans delivering to houses and businesses, bus stops and currently only one pedestrian crossing at the traffic lights. We are already asking for more together with more central pedestrian refuges. There has been a significant cumulative increase in traffic, especially HGV traffic, with the development of Mercia Park at Junction 11 of the M42 a42. The development itself that has been allowed to continue without the new Walton Bridge, meaning that traffic cannot easily use the A38 and uses the aquifer in its place, and the significant additional traffic from the pallet network logistics operation in Swadlincote.

00:29:43:25 - 00:30:16:05

I consider myself to be a newcomer to the village. I'll soon have lived there for 15 years, but even in that time, and specifically over the last couple of years, I have seen a huge increase in the traffic on the treble, for it is within easy living memory that my home [REDACTED], the tribal floor was a working farm with the farmer, herding his cattle along the 84 for milking. I still have horses on my land and all rides have to begin and end on the 84.

00:30:17:11 - 00:30:56:17

The parish council was so concerned about this that we established a working group, which had been monitoring traffic levels and the loss of amenity that it is causing, in addition to the noise pollution, congestion and reduction to our house values, we are now beginning to see changed behavior as people are driving more rather than walking, and even dogs are not wanting to walk along the road. Our report commits us to trying to ensure that the situation does not get any worse, and is also likely to ask for significant amendments to the table, for which may include additional pedestrian crossings and or refuge islands.

00:30:56:22 - 00:31:31:16

Average speed monitoring and reduce speed limits and resurfacing the road to reduce noise. In addition to the construction of the solar farm itself, there are several applications for buses or at or near the site, and those constructions will bring even more traffic into the area. In the planning documentation, route eight is the one that causes concern. It starts at junction 11 on the M42 and comes up for a trial for as far as acres offered. It then goes cross-country, skirting Netherfield Grange Road to Coton in the Elms.

00:31:31:21 - 00:32:08:24

The route then is not specified itself is worrying as it is obviously not being assessed. However, for those who are not familiar with the area, these are small country lanes which I would frequently ride along with my equestrian friends. Coton in particular is an inappropriate road route for HGVs. I would avoid taking my seven and a half tonne horsebox through Coton to get to Catton Park for events. Due to the tight corners, narrow lanes and parked cars. One road in Coton does indeed have a seven and a half ton weight limit on it, and police have recently stopped HGVs using it.

00:32:09:03 - 00:32:45:02

This being the case, we do not believe that HGVs will use this route. The alternative, which we believe HGVs will use, is for them to continue up the a treble for and go through overseas. This is what concerns us. Many residents feel very strongly about the situation and some are here this

evening to support our aims of ensuring that it is not permitted to get any worse than it already is. We believe that if a route that avoids our village is prescribed, that it will be unenforceable and that we will still have to suffer the consequences.

00:32:45:29 - 00:33:30:03

Vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, wheelchair and mobility scooter users, parents with children, dog walkers, cyclists and horse riders have no facilities to get around the village other than using the A table four with its narrow and in places, non-existent footpaths. There are no cycle tracks, tracks or facilities for horse riders. However, there is also concern for motor vehicle drivers and passengers. We know that the village and the H four is built on a Warren of mine shafts and tunnels, but as far as we are aware, there has not been any investigation as to their current state and capacity to withstand the weight of several 44 tonne vehicles.

00:33:30:25 - 00:34:02:21

A major sinkhole did open up on Akers Road at the age of four in the village in 1992, which seriously damaged the listed house and closed the road for several weeks. In the last couple of years, there have been two smaller sinkholes on Moira Road, which meets the tribal four in Over Seal. In addition, the developer of the New Acres estate in the village had planned to build on the land close to the arable table for, but was unable to do so because of its instability.

00:34:03:10 - 00:34:36:20

Development. On the other side of the tribal four Ah Valley Road has also been prevented due to the instability of the land. The possibility of a major sinkhole opening up with heavy traffic on it is horrifying in its potential for a long term road closure. Serious damage to properties, life changing injuries and potentially even deaths. At the very least, if the A travel for is to be used for this traffic, there needs to be a full survey of its ability to withstand the weight of multiple large HGV vehicles.

00:34:36:25 - 00:35:19:26

We now regularly have over 900 vehicles per hour going through the village. There is no mention of any route from junction 11 on the M42. Other than that original through Khotan, we believe this is misleading and would like clarity about what is being proposed and how it would be enforced should the proposed routes prove unworkable. Can you please ensure that all work stops until a full survey of any new route is undertaken at a minimum, similar to that done for the published route, but also including a detailed structural survey to ensure that the A travel for through overseas is safe if that is to be considered at a later date.

00:35:21:04 - 00:35:57:21

Whatever route was determined, should the proposal go ahead. We need to know what powers and mechanisms are in place to ensure that the agreed route is followed. The proposed financial penalties for vehicles using alternative routes is pointless, without a methodology to identify them and enforce the agreed routes. In conclusion, whilst we support the move to more sustainable energy, this proposal is in the wrong place, taking away valuable food production land and currently without appropriate Access as all local bridges across the Trent.

00:35:57:23 - 00:36:10:10

Have weight restrictions on them, except for two in Burton. Alternatively, if this project does have to go ahead, it should wait until the new bridge at Drake Flow is completed. Thank you sir.

00:36:11:10 - 00:36:45:12

Thank you. I'm very grateful for that and grateful to you for submitting the written version. It's particularly helpful to have the written version because that goes on record as well as what you've said, and it also makes it easy for me to track the applicant's responses to what you've said as well. So thank you for that. Um, I am struck by the comments that you've made about ensuring that the

construction routes are followed. That's something that, um, I have examined specifically to some degree already.

00:36:46:00 - 00:37:22:11

Um, so, um, and there has been council input on that as well. But I do understand the importance of securing the routes. I have driven construction route eight that you referred to. And most recent I have done it more than once and most recently, um, on Monday. Um, so I've seen that firsthand. A lot of the issues that you've set out. So thank you for highlighting those. Again. Could I ask you, though, about equestrian users, of which you seem to have some knowledge? Um, yes.

00:37:22:13 - 00:38:02:03

So, um, I am keen to understand the extent of equestrian use of the roads in the area a little more. So I have seen evidence of horses in some of the farms. I've seen some of the warning signs, um, that highlight that there are a question equestrian users of some of the country roads. So don't feel you have to respond to this now. But if there is evidence of the extent of equestrian use in the area that you're able to assist with, then I would welcome that.

00:38:02:12 - 00:38:36:18

Yes, I can probably get that for you from the British Horse Society. Um, I have been involved with them on access for equestrian users. Um, I am aware there are. I'm just trying to tot up. I should think somewhere between 30 and 50 horses in and around overseas. And we do have difficulty getting access to off road riding. As I said, my own home is on the A trial for. So every ride starts and finishes on the I travel for. There are several other in the village because the travel for cuts straight through.

00:38:36:20 - 00:38:43:12

We have to at the very least cross it. If not, go along it for a way to get to the areas that we wish to ride in.

00:38:43:22 - 00:38:58:17

And just a thank you very much. Thank you for your submission. Thank you. Right. If we could, um. And I'm grateful to people for not applauding at that point. Thank you. Um, can we pass next to Diane Abbott, please?

00:39:07:03 - 00:39:12:12

So, please, um, feel free to start with your submission. Thank you.

00:39:12:15 - 00:39:45:24

Some of this may have been covered this morning in the issue specific hearings. Thank you. I'm a local resident living next to next door to Oaklands Farm. I will be subject to all of the harms and nuisances caused by the development, but none of the compensations that the farm owners will benefit from. The project has suffered right from the outset because of inadequate community engagement. The statutory consultation events in 2022 were poorly advertised, didn't capture all of the affected communities as we've already heard, and contains scant information.

00:39:46:12 - 00:40:13:29

Nor was it made clear at the consultation, but if you had any concerns then you need to to lodge a complaint almost then and there. Um, it was not until this year that I found out that the consultation had been deemed satisfactory by the local councils, even though I raised concerns at the time, um, to the applicants, not to the councils. Um, also, the marketing for the event failed to target many of the affected residents.

00:40:16:05 - 00:40:50:05

We've talked already. This is not a suitable site for a solar farm. When there are other brownfield sites locally, it's on best and most versatile land, in a prominent position in the landscape and in an area with very poor and overstretched transport routes. It will industrialise our countryside, reduce local input employment and tourism, put habitats at risk and lead to various environmental impacts for the life of the project. It will greatly impact landscape, value and amenity and it will have a long lasting effect that cannot fully be mitigated.

00:40:50:14 - 00:40:57:23

Not to mention, there are also risks from the battery storage facility, fire and possible increased flooding on the roads.

00:40:59:11 - 00:41:51:19

N1 has several provisions to ensure that such a project like this focuses on good design and the provision of improvements that benefit the environment and local communities. I do not think this application comes close to meeting that day. I wish to make sure that if this development does go ahead, then it should. Then it is designed sensitively so that it abides by all of the relevant legislation and causes the least possible impact to all stakeholders. So far, I've been disappointed by how the applicant's various technical assessments generally downplay the current state of the site in terms of amenity, environmental benefits and agricultural importance, and yet very optimistically Domestically, right? The benefits delivered by the project, where they have been challenged on the technical aspects of the project.

00:41:51:21 - 00:42:03:18

The applicants have broadly reject other stakeholders comments and have purely reiterated their initial position. In each instance, it's clearly a case of the applicants marking their own homework. And.

00:42:05:19 - 00:42:13:00

You'll be aware of this. I've found instances, for example, in noise, where the specialists of cherry picked legislation to support their case.

00:42:14:23 - 00:42:49:09

But this legislation is not always applicable or in the absence of UK specific legislation, such as for Glint and Glare, the specialist specialists have used their own expert judgment to define mitigation criteria that will never be met in practice. This information has been buried deep in the various technical documents, meaning it's highly unlikely that any of the local residents or stakeholders might have extracted this information. Either the local residents or even professionals if they were only viewing the summary documents.

00:42:50:25 - 00:43:26:04

I've questioned the accuracy of all of the applicant's visual representations, which don't appear to be to scale and create an unrealistic impression of how the landscape will be affected throughout the life of the project. The applicant has so far failed to address these concerns. Overall, the applicants have offered very little in return for this massive industrial installation in our rural environment. Miles of fencing and opaque screening will ruin the scenic views from the site, reducing amenity and creating an industrialized corridor between local villages.

00:43:26:22 - 00:43:49:00

They have proposed adding a footpath through the site under the line of pylons where they can't put their infrastructure, but this serves little benefit to the local communities and does not connect villages. There will be a small amount of additional woodland and pockets of meadow planting around the site as visual mitigation. But again, there will be no public access to these areas.

00:43:50:29 - 00:44:26:12

Other aspects where the application fails to consider good design is in the transport route onto the site, which follows the course of a local stream, meaning excessive environmental impacts. Also, the site of the second construction compound is in a highly visible location just off Cotham Road. It would be better sited at the centre of the development, where it would be more secure and offer improved access to the majority of the site without threatening the local landmark of the Twin Oaks tree and also being an eyesore for local residents and users of Coton Road.

00:44:27:19 - 00:45:02:26

If this development does go ahead, there is so much more that could be done. Why not deliver safe walking routes around the perimeter of the site that will help link local villages? That will enable my son to go to school using active transport, rather than having to be driven in a car. Why not create open access meadow and woodland areas where the mitigation planting is required? These simple measures would go a long way to reducing the amenity impacts on the local community and making the development a better neighbor to its local community, thereby meeting the requirements.

00:45:03:07 - 00:45:03:23

And one

00:45:05:12 - 00:45:32:08

recent precedent shows the Secretary of State is willing to approve solar farms, even against the recommendation of the Planning Inspectorate. Nevertheless, I believe there is still much that can be done to improve the way that this project fits into the environment and to minimise its effects on residents and wildlife. I hope our presence here today can help safeguard get more safeguards built into the proposal to deliver the best possible outcomes for the local community.

00:45:33:26 - 00:46:04:09

Thank you very much. And, um, I just like to repeat some of my comments from earlier today, actually, where I thanked you for your input to the issues we were considering earlier around visual impact around glint and glare. Um, and how considered your submissions have been and actually, um, have been very helpful to me in terms of the issues that I am pressing the applicant on and others on. So I'm grateful to you for that.

00:46:04:28 - 00:46:34:24

Um, I think in would you be able to submit your submission in writing as well? Yeah. Thank you. I think there's a very interesting, um, aspect of what you've said about improvement and opportunities for improvement. Um, there's very clear guidance in the policy about, um, an expectation that the applicant will give consideration to improvement. And I have mentioned some things around that earlier today. Um,

00:46:36:10 - 00:47:07:03

And both the things that you've mentioned and with other speakers as well, if there are, um, improvements of the type of walking routes around the perimeter, some of those things which actually very much rely on local knowledge, um, they may not have been identified to date some of those types of improvements. So there is still time within the examination to surface some of those ideas.

00:47:07:27 - 00:47:32:13

Um, so I'm not necessarily looking to you to be a focal point for that. There may be others who can help with that. Um, but I think more generally, if there are some very specific local ideas about how improvements could be made, um, through the application, then those would be gratefully received. Um, so it is an area that that I would want to consider further. Um.

00:47:38:08 - 00:47:46:19

I don't think I have any specific questions other than that request about, um, the improvements, please. Thank you. Thank you very much indeed.

00:47:48:21 - 00:48:00:25

Um, let's move on to the fourth speaker, please. Um, which was, um, Maxine Presenca. Is that okay? Thank you.

00:48:06:14 - 00:48:06:29

Thank.

00:48:09:29 - 00:48:10:14

You.

00:48:11:28 - 00:48:17:17

If the red light is showing, you can be heard. So that's it? Yeah. Thank you.

00:48:19:12 - 00:48:56:11

Um, I'm not going to repeat what's already been mentioned before. Um, I'm not sure whether I'm pro or against, but there are some points that I'd like to make. Um, the first This point, um, is I think that the energy claims are excessive because they're based on the rated capacity of the solar panels in kilowatts, uh, rather than actual sort of deliverable electricity in kilowatt hours, which is the true measure of how much, um, energy they're going to produce and how many houses it will, will supply.

00:48:57:06 - 00:49:11:28

Um, my, my real, um, opinion is that they should really have proper calculations done by a team of physicists that really know what they're talking about in terms of daylight hours, um, and any longer in terms.

00:49:12:00 - 00:49:12:18

Of daylight.

00:49:12:20 - 00:49:13:05

Hours.

00:49:13:25 - 00:49:14:10

Okay.

00:49:14:24 - 00:49:18:25

Okay. And also losses in transmission and distribution.

00:49:18:27 - 00:49:19:12

Okay.

00:49:19:14 - 00:49:57:06

So that's my first point. My second point really about the fire safety is with these installations, it's not possible to do a dry run before, um, the installation has been put off. So how are we making sure, um, that we're taking into account into account the distance from the fire station? Um, and also also the roads, I mean, is the the access by the fire stations really going to be that rapid? And we need to really think about that because that is, you know, some someplace uh, so some sources quote that foam doesn't work very well.

00:49:57:08 - 00:50:06:00

Sometimes water is used and it leads to a release of fluorine gas. So that's another concern for that one. Um,

00:50:07:15 - 00:50:37:17

another point I'd like to make is about the, the supply chains that are involved in the, the hardware and all of the components that are then sourced to, to then say, build a base. Um, I'd really like to know, have they been properly audited by senior staff at um, they were are a. Um, and human resources as well, because a lot of these components and equipment will come from China, I believe.

00:50:37:29 - 00:51:16:06

And if not if, say, for instance, if the best is sold by a German company, most of the components or some of the components are going to come from around the world. And we need to be very careful about that, because if we if we sanction placing of hardware and components, then we're actually if we if we don't order it, it's a bit like the fashion industry. If we don't order it at a senior level and make sure where things are being manufactured, um, uphold workers rights and there's no forced labor involved or, um, exploitation, then we're actually condoning that.

00:51:16:08 - 00:51:33:27

That's my concern. And I'd like to know and see audit reports, um, for all of the component companies and all of the, the sort of built larger component companies. We need traceability and we need auditability as well. Um.

00:51:38:09 - 00:52:14:02

My other point was about the bonds. Um, I, I was thinking about, um, for instance, uh, double glazing window companies. They go bust, they change hands, all sorts of things. If we're going to have bonds. And I think, I believe we do need bonds to look after the area. Um, right until the end of the lifecycle of the project, if we're going to have these bonds, they've got to be transferable. If if the company has ever sold or there's another leasing partner that can, then we need to make sure that those bonds are there.

00:52:14:22 - 00:52:30:18

Um, and with contingency plans, you know, if, if there is a big pollution problem. Um, if, if there are, uh, if there is damaged by fire, that kind of thing. So we need to make sure that the bond amount is sensible and that it's transferable.

00:52:32:06 - 00:52:32:26

Um.

00:52:37:02 - 00:52:38:14

Uh, sorry. I'm just.

00:52:41:10 - 00:53:11:21

Um, in terms of leachate into the soil and water roots. I'm particularly interested in lead and cadmium and would like to see the, the data for that real data that that is really applicable to the installation because they're the two biggest worries with, uh, broken solar panels. And what happens is the solar farm ages, um, and potentially there's more damage or breakdown of the components.

00:53:11:23 - 00:53:15:12

And then there's more, more leachate. Um.

00:53:18:14 - 00:53:20:10

I think, uh.

00:53:33:05 - 00:53:33:27

I think that's it.

00:53:33:29 - 00:53:34:29

Thank you. Thank you.

00:53:35:18 - 00:53:36:03

Sweet.

00:53:36:07 - 00:53:40:26

Well, in a broad range of issues. Um, thank you for that. Um.

00:53:43:14 - 00:53:51:11

The lead in cadmium. So you raise concerns about those. And actually, the point was very well made about

00:53:53:08 - 00:54:06:07

that in relation to broken or aged solar panels. Why do you raise that particularly as a concern? Have you seen some reports about that in particular?

00:54:06:14 - 00:54:16:22

There've been some studies and some reported data on it. So I think those two in particular we need to be very careful about. Um, plus any other toxic heavy metals.

00:54:17:18 - 00:54:39:18

Hmm. Okay. If there are Particularly robust, um, reports of that type that you could submit to us. That would be helpful. Um, so, um, yes, an invitation to do that. I've made a very careful note of the things that you've been through. Um.

00:54:45:15 - 00:55:15:16

I mean, one of my my, um, other points is if you consider the whole supply chain of, of solar panels where all the components come from to make the bigger units, it's it's not a low carbon industry. It's it's, you know, and it's a toxic industry. So we've got to do something about the pollution in the manufacture of all the components as well as possible leachate and pollution, etc. if we have a fire, if the panels are broken, that kind of thing.

00:55:15:18 - 00:55:19:16

But I'll try and look out some scholarly articles.

00:55:19:18 - 00:55:20:18

That's you.

00:55:20:20 - 00:55:26:27

You understand the type of thing I'm looking for? Thank you. Thank you for that submission. Very much appreciated.

00:55:26:29 - 00:55:27:23

Thank you for your time.

00:55:27:25 - 00:55:28:20

Thank you, thank you.

00:55:34:02 - 00:55:38:20

Um, could Steve Mills now make his submission, please? Thank you.

00:55:47:24 - 00:56:03:19

Yeah. Good evening. Thank you for the invitation. Thank you. Uh, just to say, I'm a local resident, uh, 14 years in Coton in the Elms. Uh, I don't know if you've visited Coton in the Elms. It's a very small village with, uh, very tight roads.

00:56:03:21 - 00:56:05:05

I've visited it several times.

00:56:05:13 - 00:56:38:23

Lovely. It's a lovely place to live. I am in favour of renewable energy, solar, wind and tidal. I have solar panels on my own home. And since March 2023, I produced 10,500 kilowatt hours of electricity. I've exported 6400 kilowatt hours of electricity into the grid. That's 60% of the production. And according to the app that I've got a reduced CO2 emissions by over ten tonnes.

00:56:38:27 - 00:57:09:18

So you can see I'm not against solar panels, solar power or renewable energy. However, I do have deep reservations about the proposed solar power station planned at Oaklands Farm. Firstly, you obviously know that the road infrastructure in this area is pretty well unsuitable for heavy traffic, and even the current levels of traffic we have are. These would be exacerbated by the type and the amount of traffic needed to build this large scale development.

00:57:10:00 - 00:57:45:00

We already have poor road services. A lot of people here can, uh, confess to having found potholes with their wheels and things like that. And heavy lorries using the lanes. Uh, indeed. Sometimes we get, uh, 40 tonne container lorries coming down trying to come through codeine in the arms, and it's just an impossible thing. That's partly due to the fact that coat in the arms is right. Uh, on the direct link between the a, uh, the M42 and the A38.

00:57:45:02 - 00:58:17:29

So people using satnav get diverted through there. So my, my thing is that the traffic will only get worse with this proposal. Secondly, I enjoy the benefits of being in a rural location both for my mental and physical health. Agricultural land, I feel, is best suited for farming and not industry. As the population in the UK grows, will need to have more for food security and rely less on imports but taking away farmland.

00:58:18:01 - 00:58:49:10

Note this proposal does not own reduces the nation's capacity to produce food, but also denies farmers a livelihood. I'm also dismayed at the loss of wildlife habitat for birds, fauna and flora, both during construction and when built. Thirdly, the 40 year time scale of this project indicates to me that the land will be taken out of agricultural use for far too long. Projections of restoring it after that time are purely fantasy.

00:58:49:15 - 00:59:21:24

Realistically, it could never be restored. In any case, who can project what development will come along in that time to negate the need for this installation. Certainly, the widespread installation of solar panels on homes and industrial buildings would call into question the validity of this project. Fourthly, it's currently government policy to use brownfield sites and rooftop locations in preference to farmland for solar power production. The Oaklands farm proposal goes against this policy.

00:59:22:13 - 00:59:41:21

In this area, we have several such sites, such as the former power stations at Drake, Low and Willington, and the River Trent has many such former power station sites all along its banks. These, of course, are directly connected to the power grid. There are also old airfield sites which are far more suitable than Oaklands Farm.

00:59:43:12 - 01:00:15:04

Fifthly, I'm concerned about the potential for pollution of the local environment due to the need to have a large amount of battery stored around the proposed site, and also as the last submission came in about, uh, issues with damaged solar panels. As we already know, there can be significant pollution hazard, especially in the event of a fire. As an experienced fire officer of 27 years, I'm concerned about the provision for fire service to attend and deal with potential major incidents at this site.

01:00:16:16 - 01:00:40:25

Six. A well-known national charity has produced an excellent report to show that we as a nation, should be encouraging and legislating for solar panels to be fitted on rooftops rather than on farmland. Their report reveals that half of the nation's solar output could be achieved in this way. There are any number of large warehouses and other buildings being built, but excuse me.

01:00:47:05 - 01:01:17:15

Around the country and indeed in this area, a few homes should be fitted with them. Ideal places to install solar panels. In this way, such as my own home. There's not only a direct link to the national grid for any surplus to be fed, but also the consumer benefits from the installations on their property. I'm surprised that as a nation, we're not utilizing also the greatest natural asset we have to produce power, namely the diurnal tides around our coast. Seven.

01:01:17:19 - 01:01:48:15

I've heard nothing in the proposal about the fiscal viability of this proposal. Taking into account that I do not expect to pay off the investment on my rooftop panels for a considerable time. I'm left wondering how long it would take for this proposed investment at Oaklands to turn a profit, if indeed it ever will. The government wants cheaper energy for anyone, but to my way of thinking, any solar power station must aim to return a profit as quickly as possible, which would inevitably lead to higher prices being charged to the consumer.

01:01:49:07 - 01:02:22:14

In short, while I sincerely advocate the wider use of renewable energy, this proposal is certainly in the wrong place for the wrong reasons. It would cause long term destruction in the locality and destroy the beauty of a rural aspect of this area. It will be an eyesore and blot on this natural landscape for many years to come if allowed to proceed. I feel agricultural land for farming. Solar power stations, sited on more appropriate sites and solar panels should be more widely placed on rooftops.

01:02:22:16 - 01:02:23:04

Thank you.

01:02:23:15 - 01:02:27:11

Thank you. Um, I see that you're reading from some notes.

01:02:27:13 - 01:02:29:00

Yeah, you can have those. Yeah. Please.

01:02:29:02 - 01:02:31:24

That would be. That would be very helpful. Okay. Thank you very much.

01:02:34:24 - 01:02:38:09

Could James Blackwell make his submission, please?

01:02:53:03 - 01:02:54:07

Thank you. Whenever you're ready.

01:02:54:09 - 01:02:55:06

Good evening. Thank you.

01:02:58:23 - 01:03:00:17

I can yes. Thank you. Right.

01:03:02:00 - 01:03:42:20

Um, I'm against this proposal. Uh, not against solar power or wind power at all, but this proposal is on BMV land, and it is for that reason alone that I'm also I'm against it. 62% of the of this land is BMV. The the problem with this application, like so many others, is that the government and its various committees, uh, issue guidelines, no regulation and time after time government has said, well, we need regulation on this.

01:03:42:22 - 01:04:31:26

We don't need guidance with a hard nosed application like this and all the others. Um, the applicants will say, what's legal? What can we do? How can we get round local objections? Have you made sure that the the thing will work, leaving aside the fact that, well, this land should be used for agricultural production. Um, in the government's uh submissions in April 2023, the government noted its target of a five fold increase in solar development by 2025, which would require, quote, sustained growth both on rooftop and ground, mainly ground mounted capacity.

01:04:32:29 - 01:05:06:14

Now, they do say that that ground mounted capacity should be in land which is poor or brownfield. But if you drive from, as I've done today from, um, Walton, uh, as you were from the Walton Bridge, uh, up to Branson, if you go further on to Clay Mills, there are a lot of warehouses and the new housing estate, and not a single solar panel to be seen, In fact, to my shame, I haven't got a solar panel on my reviver.

01:05:06:18 - 01:05:08:26

So, um,

01:05:10:17 - 01:05:47:14

what we're what we're seeing is a sort of a Wild West approach to this. Um, and statistics play quite an important role. For instance, again, and the government paper, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy presented to the House of Parliament in November 2023. It said that, um, only 0.5 and 0.7% of total land will be involved in ground mounted solar farms.

01:05:48:20 - 01:06:24:00

Um, but then you have the extrapolation that that would mean between 125,000 and 175,000 hectares of land would be involved. and at eight tons per eight tons of wheat per hectare yield based on 2015 to 2000 figures. 2020 figures. That would mean between 1 million and 1.4 million tonnes of wheat production lost.

01:06:25:10 - 01:06:27:07

So that's going to be made up somewhere,

01:06:28:26 - 01:06:50:12

but we go from 0.5 to 0.7 of the total land. To someone saying someone called Carbon Brief a fact checked site, and they said, well, it's only 4% of total production. A wonderful word. Only you can really make a lot out of that.

01:06:54:04 - 01:07:36:15

I was agree completely with Councillor Amy Wilson and I'm staggered that there's been no further improvement on the original application. Original specification regarding the water aquifers. I'm also staggered that the applicant hasn't put any put in anything about the proper restoration of land. That government paper two 1034 said. Applicants are encouraged to develop and implement a soil resources and management plan, which would help use and manage soils, sustain sustainably and minimise adverse impacts on soil health and potential land contamination.

01:07:36:17 - 01:07:37:10

It's there.

01:07:38:26 - 01:07:54:28

This should be in line with our vision set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan to bring at least 40% of England's agricultural soils into sustainable management by 2028, and increase this up to 60% by 2030 2030.

01:07:58:13 - 01:08:07:12

We have a loss of woodland in the middle of the national forest. That's a retrograde step.

01:08:09:01 - 01:08:41:22

There is no compelling evidence, in my view, that to to make to to use this land, um, this BMV land. Um, climate change not withstanding. Um, in terms of climate change. The moratorium on wind turbines has now been lifted. Uh, left for me. I'd stick them for one end of the country to the other, you know, because they're also far more efficient in terms of, uh, their energy production.

01:08:41:24 - 01:09:17:24

And and they work whenever the wind blows. I cannot agree more with the comments regarding traffic. Um, in I living coach and in Mill Street and Church Street. I know residents there are really very, very worried by the potential for increased traffic. I don't know, I. Um, route eight goes through oversell, but those are South Derbyshire District Council document and it talks about routes two A and two B.

01:09:17:26 - 01:09:55:15

Two A is through steep and hill across the Burton across and Peters Bridge through steep and hill. And to B is from the a travel for uh through Coats and Mill street and Church Street. Now I'm a driver and having driven through steep and hill, if I was given a choice between driving into Cotham, between safe and hill, and going from the for, I take the trouble for every time. I know it's narrow. Uh, but these, uh, um, lorry drivers are extremely skillful, and they'll find a way.

01:09:56:13 - 01:10:29:05

And, uh, the residents of, um, of Mill Street and Church Street will have a miserable life. I heard it was, what is it, 87% increase in in heavy goods vehicle traffic through through those streets. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] She'd love to be here, but she said she's thoroughly against this proposal based on the access. So, um.

01:10:31:24 - 01:10:45:27

That is it. Oh, the other thing here is there's two cottages opposite, um, Oaklands, Penny Water and Oakfield Cottages that believe, um, I wonder how they're going to feel about the crashing and banging of the piling

01:10:47:13 - 01:10:51:07

over a period of up to two years? Um.

01:10:52:26 - 01:11:12:20

the World Health Organization does suggest, uh, and this is from a document lodged in the House of Commons library that none of these, none of these, uh, solar farms should be within three kilometers of a settlement. Um, similarities. Thank you.

01:11:12:29 - 01:11:22:15

Thank you very much indeed. Appreciate the time you've taken. Thank you. Could we, um, finally have Paul Eaton, please, to give his submission?

01:11:39:25 - 01:11:41:01

Whenever you're ready. Thank you.

01:11:41:17 - 01:11:42:21

All right. Is this on?

01:11:42:24 - 01:11:45:04

It is. Yeah. Oh, it's on there. Yeah.

01:11:45:10 - 01:12:27:23

Um, a lot of my points, um, have already been covered by the safety of the villages. I live in Rochester,

. Um, been there about 20 years. I would say I have lost two foot of the grass verge, um, outside my house through lorries and tractors and the numerous number of people that have had accidents there. But also if, um, the decide to come from Stephen Hill and everybody will know this, that dreadful crossroads is better known as a crossroads of doom, because there have been umpteen acts of major accidents there over the years.

01:12:28:25 - 01:13:06:02

Um, so that is I'm just concerned about what's coming into the village. Um, if I try and move my lawn to the front, anything coming up, I have to get it to stand off off the road. And good standing there with a mower that is very, very busy. My other point is that why aren't we building this solar panel farm there? When five mile down the road on the M42 and the old Tamworth Road is a massive industrial estate with about 15 massive warehouses that you can see from miles and miles around, with not a solar panel on them.

01:13:07:09 - 01:13:17:18

To me that's just a waste. And they are big, big warehouses. And that's just the two points I want to make. I think most of my other points have been covered.

01:13:17:25 - 01:13:19:06

Thank you very much indeed.

01:13:19:08 - 01:13:19:23

Thank you.

01:13:50:28 - 01:14:21:20

I'm very grateful for the time that people have taken to put those submissions together. I'm grateful for that. And actually, um, I'm grateful for everybody else taking the time to come today as well. Um, it

does demonstrate to me the level of interest in this development. So, um, there were a large number of relevant representations made, um, which I noted.

01:14:22:08 - 01:14:55:15

Um, but again, seeing the number of people here, um, is helpful to me just to gauge the level of interest. So thank you for taking the time to come along today. Um, I have taken careful notes of all the points that have been made. There are a number of follow ups that I will make myself, um, based on those submissions. Um, very grateful to those of you who said you'd be able to submit written versions. Um, and my expectation will be that the applicant will provide a considered response to each one of those representations.

01:14:55:17 - 01:15:18:05

I'll allow the applicant to respond to that in a moment. Um, there are a couple of months left in the examination where I can take submissions. So, um, if you have related points to make, there are still opportunities to make submissions in writing, um, to the examination. So thank you if you're able to spend any time to do that. Um.

01:15:20:07 - 01:15:34:23

Is there anybody else who would like to speak before we close? I think we have allowed everyone who wanted to. Okay. Thank you. Um, I said earlier that I'd give the applicant an opportunity to reply should they wish to.

01:15:45:16 - 01:15:46:12

Thank you, sir.

01:15:46:14 - 01:15:48:28

Thank you for that. Um, and I will be brief.

01:15:49:00 - 01:15:49:15

As you would.

01:15:49:17 - 01:15:50:02

Expect.

01:15:50:15 - 01:15:53:12

Uh, if I introduce myself first. My name is Patrick Robinson.

01:15:54:06 - 01:16:37:13

Uh, I'm a lawyer with the firm Burgess Salmon and act as the advocate for the applicant here. Beaver. And really just take this opportunity to help people understand what our role here is today in an open floor hearing. Very much it is to listen. Uh, we will respond to these points and generally directed by user because you, you, you put these points to us and, uh, process the points and, and look for resolution from us. So the place for us to respond to these is not here tonight, but in the continue examination process, which people understand that when they, uh, when they wonder what's happening to the the time and effort they've put in tonight.

01:16:37:25 - 01:17:08:08

The DCO process is based on Consultation. Uh, it's a long process. Has been running for a long time, but all that consultation is valid. And we we definitely thank everyone for their time and and the effort they've put into these. And it is an opportunity for us, uh, as the applicant, to hear these issues and ensure that we have addressed them and properly addressed them. Um, with these issues particularly being raised in the local context from people who understand the area.

01:17:08:28 - 01:17:27:16

Um, so if that just sounds like a lot of assurance that it will be dealt with, um, we know above all, um, so you'll hold us to that. And I think that's the that's the comfort for the people here tonight that your process is to ensure that their, uh, their concerns have been heard and have been addressed.

01:17:30:00 - 01:17:32:01

Thank you. That's it. Thank you.

01:17:35:04 - 01:17:37:26

Could we have the agenda back on the screen, please?

01:17:46:07 - 01:17:47:05

It's not essential.

01:17:49:19 - 01:17:50:04

Okay.

01:17:52:20 - 01:17:58:18

So that completes item four of the agenda. Um.

01:18:01:07 - 01:18:32:11

The recording. So this recorded this hearing has been recorded, as I said earlier. Um, the recording will be the formal record of this hearing. And the recording will be published on the National Infrastructure planning website for all to see. Um, I believe that we've covered all of the items on the agenda this evening. Thank you again for, um, attending today. Thank you particularly for the people who made representations. Um, this open floor hearing is now closed.

01:18:32:13 - 01:18:33:01

Thank you.