

I am Adele Stainsby, Chairman of Essendine Village Hall for the past 30 years. I wish to speak about the implications that a solar installation of the enormous size proposed, will have a hugely detrimental effect on our community.

Essendine is a small village with very few facilities. Over the years, we have lost our shop and more recently our pub. Now our village only has its small church, a part time Post Office and the Village Hall, which is the communal hub of the village.

Essendine has a busy and fast main road, the A6121 running through the heart of it, splitting the village into two elongated halves. It has the busy East Coast Mainline railway, cutting through, north to south, a large industrial estate, a chemical storage facility, with highly dangerous substances such as liquid bromine and various nitrates. More recently a local bus company was given permission to relocate to the centre of the village on part of the industrial estate and create a new access into it, from the main road.

So you may think having just heard me reel off that list, that Essendine already has more than its fair share of problem areas! So why not build another industrial installation and obliterate what is good about living in Essendine; the wonderful countryside we are currently lucky enough to be surrounded by. In all four seasons, the fields, trees, hedgerows and verges are full of colour and bustling with wildlife. There is so much to see here, that no two days are the same when out walking the footpaths and bridleways of the area. The morning is filled with a cacophony of bird song from Blackbirds, Skylarks and the mewing of Red Kites and Buzzards. Night time brings the gentle calling of Owls and the occasional Nightingale to name but a few.

When out walking, we see Barn Owls hunting, Geese and Swans, Deer, Foxes, Hares and Rabbits on a daily basis. Our area is indeed rich in wildlife. Fields burst with colour from daisies, dandelions, buttercups and Scottish thistles, while hedgerows are full of colour from the Hawthorn, Blackthorn and Elderberry Flowers.

And so along comes Canadian Solar and Windel Energy, with this proposal to transform this rich and diverse landscape I've just described, into an extensive jungle of glass panels, concrete posts, high security fencing, security lights and CCTV cameras! Suddenly, all that is good about living in this village is swallowed up and is cut from beneath our feet with the dark cloud of this proposed solar development. No longer will we be able to meander freely by the babbling West Glen, walk and admire the wildlife, flora and fauna as we have been accustomed to. Instead we will have to walk like prisoners in a concentration camp in corridors of high security fencing, being watched by cameras and dictated to where we can walk.

Under the Countryside Act of 2000, it states "The right to roam allows the public to enter and remain on open access land for the purposes of open-air recreation". This right could soon be denied us.

Since the start of the Covid Pandemic in 2019, mental health became a very important aspect of our lives to concentrate on. During those difficult two years, our Right to Roam in the countryside around this area become pivotal for a great many people to maintain good mental health. Once again our mental well being is at risk, should this Solar installation be approved.

When reading the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan, my concerns for the mental well-being of local residents is highly disturbing. Throughout the document, the author uses the statements constantly of "Where practicable" and "where as far as reasonably practical" who decides what is 'reasonable' and who will oversee that this is adhered to? In 2015, when construction of the first substation was underway, there seemed to be no end to the flouting of rules and regulations!

Many of the statements I have read in this plan are ridiculous and will not be adhered to over the two year construction process. Examples include 'starting machinery sequentially', 'lowering heights at which materials are dropped'. There is also statements limiting noise to 45db, if night time operation is required; 45db is such a low noise level, that snoring is louder! Who will check these

noise and vibration levels? The WHO guidelines, recommend 'no more than 40db to prevent adverse health effects from night time noise'! Statements such as 'offsite prefabrication should be carried out' are made, but has the disclaimer of 'where reasonably practicable' again!

When reading the huge numbers of documents explaining how various issues will be overcome, I become so incensed that the developers simply have an answer for all the issues that will cause major disruption to local residents. This project if approved, will disrupt our normal everyday lives and increase stress levels to residents over the prolonged period of time. The altering of road junctions, the widening of roads with passing bays constructed, the huge volumes of extra traffic on the roads, will make it difficult for commuting to work on a daily basis, disrupt school journeys and will make it much more dangerous to even cross the road.

Their concerns have been further exacerbated by the recent discovery of the intention for Compulsory Acquisition (CA), of properties situated along the main A6121. When we investigated this intention, we realised this right by the developers, would seriously affect them all. If the plan were to be approved, access to all properties would be severely compromised during the laying of cables through the village, to connect solar panels with the substation. Utility services to the properties would likely to be affected and possibly cut for periods of time and of course that doesn't factor in further disruption for the accidental damage caused to services, when pipes and cables are damaged during trenching! Many of the residents, rely on their fibre broadband cables to be able to work from home. The Village Hall itself would be directly affected by CA too, as it fronts the main road and needs access via Plover Road, to our main vehicular entrance. It is quite likely that our booking and activities at the hall, would be severely affected for all the same reasons as residential properties. Noise too of trenching machinery and the general increase of construction traffic would also be distracting for our quiet groups, such as Yoga sessions.

Many residents are very stressed about how CA will create disruption to them on their individual properties on top of the

widespread disruption that will occur at the same time elsewhere in the village.

There will be considerable concern over the air quality, with air pollution from dust, as verges are churned up and drilling carried out to install the hundreds of thousands of solar panels. Why are they likely to be up to 3.5 metres high, when other developments are so much lower?

Our whole way of life will change forever. When considering your recommendations as to whether or not the Secretary of State should approve the building of this solar installation, think about these questions: Is it the right location, at the right time and for the right reasons? Is Solar on this scale really the way forward, or is it just a money making scheme for the developers, who will simply sell it off, if the proposal were to be given the go ahead; or the greedy farmers leasing their land to line their pockets and local government rubbing their hands for the extra cash the installation will generate for their coffers?

It is the people of this area who need to be put at the forefront when making a decision, as their lives will be made more difficult, more stressful and more constricted with access to the countryside which should be an unrestricted right, not one for which we have to a fight!

NOT HERE, NOT NOW, NOT EVER!