

[Redacted text]

companies operate in Xinjiang Province and may be producing cheap solar panels. It is likely that electrical energy used in the production of Chinese solar panels may have come from coal fired power stations. This raises a question: what point in the life of the solar panel will it actually begin producing carbon neutral electricity?

(c) **Local impact:** This proposed enormous solar farm of over 530,000 solar panels 3.2 metres (10 feet 6 inches) high, the biggest in the UK so far, would effectively turn beautiful rural Rutland countryside into an enormous industrial estate, devaluing local homes, reducing tourism, and damaging the mostly single-track country lanes with heavy goods vehicles (HGVs). HGVs (which I used to drive) are 8' 2½" wide, weighing up to 44 tonnes, as wide as the metalled road surface in places. The verges of the lanes are already badly potholed each side of the metalled surface. Some low loaders delivering earth moving equipment weigh considerably more than 44 tonnes. On a personal note, [REDACTED] far but cycle every day for exercise on my e-bike. My local roads will become unusable for this. Passing the infrequent cars in either direction is difficult because the potholed road edges mean I must stay on the edge of the metalled surface causing cars to bounce through potholes or come uncomfortably close. Happily most local car drivers are very considerate to cyclists, often slowing or pulling onto the verge where possible. This is not possible for an HGV.

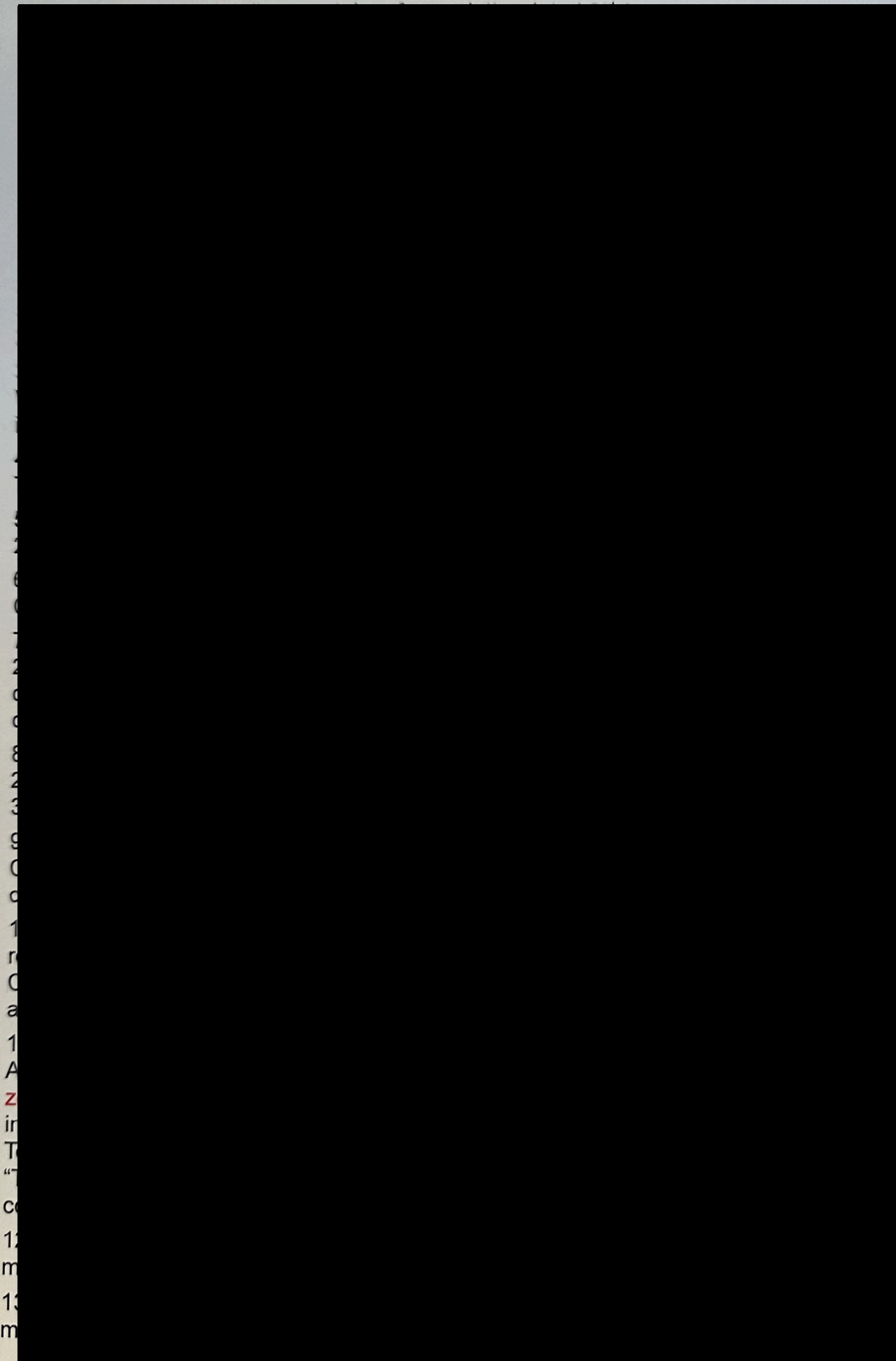
(d) **Use of fertile agricultural land:** There are plenty of brown field sites and many enormous warehouse roof areas which can and should be used for solar panels. Given that we already import a great deal of food it is plainly wrong further to deplete our ability to grow our own. The effects of the pandemic, of our leaving EU, and Putin's murderous invasion of Ukraine have already demonstrated the increasing fragility of the global supply system within the so-called "global village".

(e) **Loss of natural environment and bio-diversity:** The compaction of the land by the heavy construction equipment used to hammer in the thousands of steel posts will make the land irrecoverable at the end of the approximate 25 year life of the solar panels. The considerable loss the local bio-diversity across the fertile agricultural land proposed to be covered with solar panels standing 10 feet 6 inches tall cannot easily be mitigated, if at all.

(f) **Increase risk of flash flooding:** Ever increasing climate change exposes us to periods of heavier or persistent rainfall. While I do not know the exact details, Rutland is gently undulating. I am concerned about the increased possibility of flash flooding caused by run-off from the large surface area of non-absorbent solar panels onto ground compacted during the construction process.

Noel Staples
23.05.2023

Statement of Noel Staples for a future Open Floor session
Interested Party registration number 2003413



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