

Unique Reference: 20035512

Braceborough and Wilsthorpe Parish Council written submission

Braceborough and Wilsthorpe Parish Council are representing the views of our Parishioners.

From the start of this application back in November 2021, at all of our Parish Council meetings and specially arranged Parish meetings on this matter, The Mallard Pass Solar Farm planning application has been overwhelmingly objected to by Parishioners for the following reasons.

Sheer size of the proposed development

The site area over 2105 acres, to give it some scale this is equivalent to 1300 football pitches.

The solar area is 1052 acres, if you include field margins it is 1312 acres. As it is currently laid out, the 530,000 solar panels (over half a million), will be spread haphazardly over this acreage on both sides of country roads and lanes and will blight the landscape for 40 years plus.

At the end of this term there is no assurance that the whole area will be effectively cleared and cleaned of toxic waste by-products and returned to 'countryside'. I say returned to 'countryside' because it could never again be used for agriculture by virtue of contamination from lead, cadmium and other toxic substances leaking from damaged or poorly manufactured panels. The power will be nothing like that which Mallard Pass presume to generate. Their assumptions are made on installed capacity, not actual yield, which would be approximately 11% of their stated output, destroying the countryside for a miniscule return!

Loss of Best and Most Versatile Land

We know that there is a need for us to produce more energy and we also know that there is a cost of living crisis which has seen food in the shops and markets rise in some cases by over a 100%

Approximately 55% of the land we would be losing is rated best and most versatile for growing crops. The Government's food strategy policy paper in June 2022 clearly wants to maintain agricultural production. Farming and the agro-food industry are key parts of the South Kesteven economy and losing this would have a detrimental effect on local income as well as reducing our ability to provide home grown food. We have this farming land now, why destroy it when it's needed so badly? Once destroyed it will never again be able to be used for agriculture. (as mentioned above)

Visual and audio impact

The sheer scale and topography of the area means you cannot eradicate or screen all of the adverse visual impacts. One of the new substations will be visible and audible for residents in Essendine on the A6121, with a continuous 60 - 80 decibels (dependent on size of substation) of humming noise and will probably be subject to government regulations.

There will be field upon field of 3.3 metre solar panel arrays, high security fencing approximately 1320 security cameras at a height of 3.5 metres as well as security lighting creating light pollution.

With 84 plus containers housing inverters and transformers (each with their own audible output), the whole of the landscape will be transformed into an industrial park. The height of the panels at 3.3 metres poses a constant danger with regards to glare to motorists, distracting

them and also to anyone who suffers from vertigo, inducing disorientation and flickering reflected sunlight can cause seizure, even in non-epileptics.

Biodiversity

All of this will have a huge detrimental effect on biodiversity in the area and depending on what the fencing arrangements end up being, will determine the impact on the habitat corridors for some mammals like badgers and brown hares as well as the impact for deer. A great deal of wildlife will lose their habitat and the security fencing could cause serious injury to deer and other animals who inhabit the fields and woodlands. Mallard Pass have not produced a detailed and clear plan on how this development will achieve net biodiversity **gains** (ie gains in addition to any measures deployed to mitigate any adverse impacts that may result from the development) Mallard Pass talk about bio-diversity net gain, something that the government insists upon, without a robust plan this will not be realised, and it will end up being a biodiversity net **loss**.

The local community

There are absolutely zero benefits to the local community. Power generated by Mallard Pass will not be channelled to the local area, it will not reduce people's bills. There is also no mention of local labour being sought. The only people who will benefit from this financially are the people who in principle have agreed to lease their land and Mallard Pass/Canadian Solar, now rebranded.

And the local community will be paying the price of this with their lives being turned upside down during construction and their peaceful countryside ruined forever.

Mental health

Amongst all of the information in this proposal, unless we have missed it, there is no understanding of the mental health issues that will arise from this development. For many, many people who have lived in this beautiful area for years to have it so brutally transformed will cause distress and anxiety. Especially those affected by the compulsory acquisition rights! The area has special meaning for everyone who enjoy taking exercise this is why they live here. For many, taking their dogs out walking in the fresh air brings contentment and peace and with public rights of way being closed or diverted during construction this will not be possible (although some new additional permissive paths are promised). There is no peace, tranquillity, or beauty in walking, running, or cycling through a corridor of giant solar panel arrays! Having all this taken away will bring anguish and stress to everyone, creating and exacerbating mental health issues.

Battery storage

The fact that battery storage was not included in the development 'at this time' begs the question of 'when will it be installed'? This development might be sold on quickly if planning permission is granted then the new owner may well install battery storage.

The reason this is such a concern is the danger to life that that lithium batteries present.

There have been many cases of the storage batteries catching fire and they cannot be put out by conventional means with a real risk of spreading across fields to villages and setting fire to homes and endangering life. You only have to look at what global warming has done with the

temperatures we have experienced a year or so ago in the UK with wildfires engulfing homes and business premises.

Construction issues

Two to three years of construction means extensive traffic measures through Ryhall, Essendine, Great Casterton and surrounding areas. Heavy traffic will come off the A1 and turn at Great Casterton into Ryhall Road, which is very narrow with a sharp turn. Great Casterton has two schools, Great Casterton C of E Primary school and Casterton College which are both on this road with schoolchildren and students arriving on foot, car and coach at peak periods. Our roads and country lanes just about cope with the increase in Amazon deliveries, let alone the prospect of 80, 400 and 1000 tonne HGV loads driving through them. As well as destroying verges, this traffic will imperil drivers, as well as schoolchildren, walkers, runners, cyclists and horse riders who because of this major increase in heavy goods vehicles and the closure of public rights of ways will be forced to use the roadways more often.

With upwards of 400 workers per day on the site with their own transport six days a week from 7am to 7pm being added to the lorries, this becomes a major safety hazard in the making.

Environmental damage

The construction of this development will cause enormous damage to the environment, from biodiversity (which I have covered) to flooding.

I have mentioned HGVs, the loads of equipment they will be delivering, heavy piling machinery, deep mounted structures to house the solar panels, and containers housing vast amounts of peripheral machinery and equipment, will create noise, dust, air, and light pollution and will compact the ground. This in turn will exacerbate the problems of flooding with water run-off from the panels and the hard surfaces. This will cause major problems for many villages within the construction radius who already suffer flooding with run-off from fields and water courses. This issue is almost dismissed out of hand by Mallard Pass.

To conclude:

There are currently multiple planning applications for Solar Farms which if passed will change our landscape forever, because most of them want to be placed on farmland and the general countryside, Lincolnshire in particular.

Mass solar panels should be on brownfield sites, industrial roofing, and housing. There is no sane reason why they should take over productive farmland and our beautiful countryside.

David Kentish – Chair Braceborough and Wilsthorpe Parish Council