

David Kentish - Unique reference number 20033487

To the Planning Inspectorate regarding the Mallard Pass Solar Farm proposal.

As a resident of Braceborough I am truly concerned about the huge solar farm that Mallard Pass are proposing. I understand the need for clean energy, and I am not against solar power, but I am against this monstrosity which will devastate the local area in so many ways and for the following reasons.

The enormous size of this development

This development by reason of its extensive size, almost 2105 acres (by far the largest solar farm ever proposed in the UK) would have an over-dominating impact within an open landscape of fields and arable farming land and will result in a negative impact upon the character and amenity of the countryside and the villages in the area.

The power generated will be nothing like that which Mallard Pass presume. Their assumptions are made on installed capacity, not actual yield, which would be approximately 11% of their stated output, destroying the countryside for such a miniscule return!

Wildlife & biodiversity

A great deal of wildlife will lose their habitat and 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 biodiversity 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**.

Flood risks

The compacted ground caused by the heavy movement of equipment and piling machinery will create flooding issues 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.

Loss of productive agricultural land for food production

Approximately 55% of the land we would be losing is rated best and most versatile for growing crops. The Governments 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 because of the toxic substances that will leak from damaged or poorly maintained solar panels.

Visual blight of the surrounding countryside

The sheer scale and topography of the area means you cannot eradicate or screen all of the adverse visual impacts. 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.

Construction traffic and routing agreement

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. The chilling prospect of 80, 400 and 1000 ton HGV loads driving through country lanes, throughout the proposed site area, destroying verges, imperiling drivers, as well as schoolchildren, walkers, runners, cyclists and horse riders who because of this major increase in heavy goods vehicles and the vehicles of upwards of 400 workers on the site from 7am to 7pm six days a week, plus the closure of public rights of ways will all be forced to use the roadways more often, will result in casualties.

How would local parishes benefit

The short answer is they won't! There are absolutely zero benefits to the local community. Power generated by Mallard Pass will not be channeled to the local area, it will not reduce people's bills. There is also no mention of local labour being sought. And for zero sum benefit, we in the local community pay the price of this folly with having our lives turned upside down during construction and having to live with our peaceful countryside ruined forever.

Mental health

For myself and my wife and the many people who live in this beautiful area 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 we 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 all, creating and exacerbating mental health issues.

Positioning of panels to avoid sun glare

The height of the panels at 3.3 metres poses a constant danger with regards to glare to motorists. Distracting them and anyone who suffers from vertigo, inducing disorientation and flickering reflected sunlight can cause seizure, even in non-epileptics.

Types of fencing around the boundaries for security purposes

Depending on what the security fencing arrangements end up being, will determine the impact on the habitat corridors for many 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. The security lighting will also cause serious issues for nocturnal creatures.

What Job opportunities are there for the area?

There are none.

Light and noise pollution

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.

With 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 will create considerable 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 a glowing, humming 25-plus-mile perimeter industrial park.

Safe storage of energy

This development could very well be sold on quickly if planning permission is granted, and although battery storage has not been included in this proposal, the new owner may well install battery storage at a later date.

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.

To conclude:

Only the developers and the landowners will benefit from this solar farm.

There is no evidence of any successful solar farm developed between Windell Energy and Canadian Solar. I would also refer you to the concerns that have been expressed in Parliament by Alicia Kearns, Member of Parliament for Rutland and Melton voicing her concerns with Windel Energy and Windel Energy Directors financial records, as well as allegations of forced labour in Canadian Solar's supply chains.

There are currently multiple planning applications for Solar Farms which if passed will change our landscape forever, 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 good reason why they should take over productive farmland and our beautiful countryside.

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