

I first became aware of the beauty of the area whilst stationed at RAF Wittering in the 1950s. More recently I have been a frequent visitor to Essendine and the surrounding area visiting my daughter and her family.

I would advocate that this proposal is completely out of keeping with the surrounding rural landscape. It will completely ruin large swathes of beautiful rural English countryside which the residents and visitors, such as me to the area have enjoyed as part of their daily lives for both recreation and work.

The proposed scheme uses over 2000 acres of Best or Most Valuable farmland for the installation of over half a million solar panels. This is absolutely crazy. Given the current crises in cost of living and food shortages, the use of prime agricultural land for the inherently inefficient generation of electricity makes no sense at all. The land should be used for growing crops.

The installation will have a severely detrimental effect on biodiversity and will affect wildlife and their habitats. The risks to the loss of species, both plant and animal are huge.

People chose to live in this area because of the rural beauty. They choose to live in the countryside because of the health and wellbeing benefits it brings. The peace and quiet, the ability to listen to birdsong, to see the changing colours of the countryside through the seasons.

The many paths that this proposed scheme crosses will no longer offer the same pleasures as previously. The security screening, high fencing, cameras and lights will all have a negative effect on the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors to the area. And that is when the proposed scheme is completed.

In the intervening period, the residents of Essendine and other local villages will be subject to unimaginable noise and disturbance caused by the massive increase in traffic movements generated as a result of the construction process. The local road and services infrastructure is not sufficiently good to be able to cope with the vast increase in traffic.

Widespread deterioration is likely to occur.

What is more, as mentioned previously. Solar Power is inherently inefficient having an annual average output of 10% (government figures). In terms of renewable energy sources, wind power is more efficient at between 35% and 50% dependent on wind strength. Thus, as a country, we should be concentrating on wind power generation and investing in small compact nuclear power stations while funding research and development into lesser alternatives such as wave and tidal power generation.

This Mallard Pass proposal should therefore be rejected because it is an inherently inefficient and unreliable way to generate electricity. And that, because of its size, it will have a huge detrimental effect on biodiversity and the health and wellbeing of wildlife and the resident and visitors to the area.

It should also be rejected on the basis that the company behind the scheme, Canadian Solar, sources their products from China. That is not a crime, however, it is understood that the panels are manufactured in regions of China where human rights abuses are understood to occur against the peoples of the region.

This country should not be supporting or buying products made under these conditions, however beneficial the price may be.