

WRITTEN REPRESENTATION BY ESSENDINE PARISH COUNCIL TO EXAMINING AUTHORITY OF THE PLANNING INSPECTORATE re; Mallard Pass Solar Farm DCO.

Essendine Parish Council strongly oppose and do not agree with any part of the applicants DCO application (the Solar Farm project). It brings only negative impacts to our community and unacceptable upheaval for the very inefficient production of electricity.

Constructing a Solar Farm (to provide a limited amount of electricity from a system that is expected to be 10% efficient according to government information) on three sides of Essendine is swapping a global environmental crisis for a local rural environmental disaster.

When anyone who lives in Essendine, moved to Essendine, it already had in existence the East Coast main railway line from London to Scotland in a north south direction, it had the A6121 running through the centre of the village in an east west direction, it had the historic industrial areas (these industrial areas were established in the 19th century when the railway and station were first built (c.1850), Essendine station was the marshalling and access point for local sheep farmers (primarily from Stamford and the surrounding area) to bring their animals to Essendine station, join the railway, and be sent to livestock markets around the UK. Essendine does have a scheduled ancient 12th century church and beautiful open countryside offering many rural health and wellbeing benefits and amenities.

People live in Essendine because of its quiet rural location and the health giving benefits of beautiful long distance views. Residents enjoy the agricultural activity, open countryside and walks along quiet roads. People have not moved to Essendine to be surrounded by a 2000+ acre Solar Farm.

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Key impacts and issues - negatively affecting the residents of Essendine on the construction and operation of the proposed Solar Farm in land surrounding Essendine are identified in the document below.

Loss of Best and Most Valuable Farm Land - currently the Solar Farm site is planned to be sited on 40 plus percent (of the 2000+ acres of the Solar Farm) of Best and Most Valuable agricultural land. This land has been farmed for generations contributing to the food chain. Using Best and Most Valuable farm land for Solar Panels is not wise when the UK needs to be more mindful of its food security and the ever rising costs of imported food ingredients.

In August 2022, Rishi Sunak said "On my watch, we will not lose swathes of our best farmland to solar farms."

Loss of any Farm Land - to a Solar electricity generating plant that is only 10% efficient is not wise when the UK needs to be ever mindful of its food security and the ever rising costs of imported food ingredients.

People living in rural villages may already not have many amenities (i.e. Essendine has already lost its village shop and pub in recent years). It is unacceptable to lose fields, open

views and footpaths as well. Essendine village - 201 homes - would almost be enclosed by solar panels.

Principle -The construction of a 2000 plus acre Solar Farm in a rural agricultural area, with woodland and open fields is not in keeping with, or appropriate to, the look and feel of the local rural environment.

Overshadowing - The proposed Solar Panels are too high at 3 metres plus and the installation of hundreds of CCTV cameras will negatively affect the people that use the area as an amenity.

Disturbance – The developer states the anticipated construction phase will last for 2 years, core construction will be 12 hours a day Monday to Friday and 6 hours on Saturdays, with potential for up to four hundred staff working on site per day. (source MPSF Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan. Page 4 and 5. Document Reference EN010127/APP/7.11)

The two years plus construction period with up to 400 workers per day working six days a week will destroy the rural area and the small roads used by many as a local amenity. These are figures provided by the developer.

The construction traffic and noise will negatively affect the many walkers, runners, cyclists and horseback riders that frequent the locality.

Children's safety will be compromised especially when crossing roads to enter and or exit the school buses that take them to school.

Noise created by the operating plant and equipment (should the Solar Farm be built) will adversely affect the people of Essendine and be detrimental to their health.

Overbearing – The scale of the proposed Solar Farm at 2000 plus acres is extraordinarily large with its boundaries stretching for miles.

Layout and Density – the proposed Solar Farm will require approximately 80 shipping container sized buildings to accommodate transformers and container invertors plus additional equipment and technology to manage the site. These buildings will be a visual blot on the landscape and are not in keeping with the rural environment.

Out of Character – The areas in and around Essendine are agricultural not industrial. Essendine is home to two small industrial estates that house small businesses such as carpenters, kitchen designers, lighting specialists, a gym, a children's play centre, vehicle garages and storage facilities. All of these small local businesses are hidden from the village, due to the topography of the landscape they are hidden in a valley. Adding a 2000 plus acre industrial zone to three sides of a small agriculturally surrounded rural village with 350 residents is not in keeping with the character of the existing environment.

Land Topography - Solar panels are best located on South facing slopes. In relation to the topography of the land surrounding the village of Essendine, many of the proposed fields to be acquisitioned are North or North West facing. Therefore, in addition to the low annual efficiency (government use an annual efficiency of 10%) from panels located on ideally

oriented slopes, the installation on slopes which are of sub-optimal orientation will impact adversely on the already poor efficiency of the panels. In addition, the installation on sub optimal slopes necessitates installation at a greater height (up to 3.3m) thereby visually impacting on the rural landscape.

Substation – The construction of manmade structures approx 13 metres high that are visible from the A6121 in Essendine will create an industrial eyesore in a rural agricultural environment. This would not be acceptable in normal planning terms.

Road Safety – Is an issue in all local villages, adding to the risk with the addition of hundreds if not thousands of Transit type vans and HGV's for a construction period of two years, plus the required ongoing maintenance of the proposed Solar Farm in the next years will add increased road risk to the children, elderly and people that use the area as a relaxation amenity. The small local roads do not have public footpaths installed traversing roads with increased construction traffic creates an unsatisfactory risk for both driver and pedestrian, cyclist or horseback rider.

Drainage and flood risk – The Solar Farm will be built of 500,000 plus Solar Panels; these panels will be fixed to the ground with enormous amounts of concrete and or drilling stakes into the ground. These fixing methods will disturb the existing rain water management of the land and create potential flooding risks in Essendine and the wider locality. The West Glen river floods annually without the additional input from the proposed solar panels. It is a small watercourse which is wholly incapable of dealing with the run-off from 500,000 solar panels. The flooding currently directly affects the historic church and manorial earthworks adjacent to the river course, Map Ref 047131. Increased flooding will also likely affect the activities of the business opposite the church.



Picture shows recent flooding of Church Farm Essendine along the banks of the West Glen River. December 2020.



Picture shows recent flooding of Church Farm Essendine along the banks of the West Glen River. December 2020.



Picture shows flooding of 12th Century St Marys Church in Essendine. The Church is sited next to the West Glen river. December 2020.

Human Rights Infringement – The developer states in their DCO submission “The order has the potential to infringe the human rights of persons...” The residents of Essendine are fortunate to have laws in the UK that protect them from Human Rights infringements. Essendine Parish Council object in the strongest possible terms against any organisation that wishes to construct an industrial facility that will infringe human rights.

Compulsory Acquisition – The developer wishes to compulsory acquire rights over land owned by Essendine Parish Council. Essendine Parish Council object in the strongest possible terms to these compulsory acquisition rights being granted. This is land that is owned by the public for the public, its rights should not be given away to any individual or corporate body, even if only on a temporary basis for the period of construction of this industrial edifice. Disturbance to residents’ access to their properties would be unacceptable.

Utility companies have statutory rights over Parish Council land, and this is enshrined in law to which Essendine Parish Council fully subscribe and adhere to.

Essendine Parish Council understand a separate Compulsory Acquisition hearing will be held in July 2023 to which Essendine Parish Council will submit a formal submission.

Loss of public and local recreational amenity – The residents of Essendine and the walkers, runners, cyclists and horseback riders that frequent the locality and the currently infrequently used, by vehicles, roads as a local amenity will lose the current amenity that is provided by unfenced agriculture fields and hedgerows. During the construction period hundreds of Transit type vans, heavy construction equipment and HGVs will be using these roads with the effect of halting the unfettered access to this great amenity we currently have.

Public Rights of way compromised – Existing rights of way will be moved/changed. These rights of way have existed for years and are used by Essendine residents and members of the public use them as a health enhancing amenity.

The views available from the public rights-of-way will be changed forever. Some of the vistas available to the public from the public rights-of-way are classic and typical of rural England with gently rolling hills, clearly defined field boundaries and wooded areas. The imposition of solar panels on these vistas will be unacceptable.



Bridleway from Essendine towards Careby Road.

Why would residents want to be fenced in with solar panels to the left? June 2023.



Bridleway from Essendine towards Careby Road.
Two old oak trees in this area of field which has been left as nature area for many years.
June 2023.



View of arable field (beans this year) with pasture field and woodlands behind Stamford Road, Essendine. June 2023.



Oil seed rape field.
Ryhall Heath towards Ryhall. June 2023.



Ryhall Heath towards Ryhall. June 2023 close up showing the flowers alongside the crop.

Biodiversity - Effect on trees/wildlife/nature – the existing biodiversity is extensive and has naturally evolved over thousands of years, the area is home to many wild animals including red kites, badgers and herds of deer that roam freely. This existing biodiversity will be negatively affected with construction, the use of thousands of tonnes of concrete and miles of animal proof fencing to keep the animals away from the solar panels.

Destruction of health and wellbeing assets – the residents of Essendine and the wider local population use the area around Essendine as a natural free environment to improve and enhance their health and wellbeing, the construction of the Solar Farm will remove this environmental health improving asset from the arms of the population. The introduction of fenced-in fields, CCTV and security lighting will only diminish the health and wellbeing of the community.

Noise – The developer in their submission states substantial levels of noise will be generated, creation of additional noise is not acceptable to the residents of Essendine.

Light Pollution – The developer states the anticipated construction phase will last for 2 years, Monday to Friday and 6 hours on Saturdays, with potential for up to four hundred staff working on site per day. (source MPSF Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan. Page 4 and 5. Document Reference EN010127/APP/7.11)

The winter, autumn, and spring periods (for the working safety of the construction people) will require huge amounts of lighting for long periods of time, creating massive light pollution. Additionally, it is expected when constructed the solar farm will require significant lighting to manage the site in a safe way.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM SOME ESSENDINE RESIDENTS (names and email address withheld)

We are a retired older married couple and live on Stamford Road, Essendine. We take our dog out daily and have three favourite regular walks that we can do from the door with no need to use the car; Pickworth Road, Uffington Road, and the PRow from the A6121 Stamford Road to the B1176. They are pleasant country walks with plenty of bird activity and good country views. All of them would be badly affected by the proposed siting's of solar panels. High fences to shield field upon field of solar panels would mean it would be like walking along a narrow corridor. Bird song would be replaced by an irritating drone from the solar panels. Our daily healthy activity would become a stressful chore and a constant reminder of what we had lost.

We live on Stamford Road and are very concerned about the amount of extra heavy traffic that would be generated, especially in the construction phase but also in the running of the site after completion. Large and heavy lorries going past our bungalow 12 hours a day, 6 days a week would make it more difficult to drive out from our driveway, and would significantly increase the noise, the dust and the poorer air quality we would experience in the garden and inside the bungalow with open windows. Again at the detriment to our health.

We attended all the meetings and presentations the company gave to inform us of this proposed solar farm. At no time did they mention the need for compulsory acquisition of

some of our verge and front garden, we were only informed of this after the date for feedback had passed. The information they have provided is vague and the map is not accurate enough for us to work out how much of our garden it affects. We are concerned that during this part of the construction we will not be able to drive out of our bungalow or have difficulty returning.

The pleasant vistas experienced on approaching the village from any one of the four possible roads in would be replaced by the feeling of entering an industrial estate with views of row upon row of solar panels in place of green fields. The enjoyable experience of walking round the village with glimpses of long views of countryside again would be replaced by fields of solar panels. A constant reminder of what we would have lost, a pleasant rural village, our home, becoming just an industrial complex.

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I first came to live in Essendine in 1972. We moved here because we are country lovers, and appreciated the views, footpaths and wildlife that the village offered.

My children were born and raised here. They too became country lovers through regular walks by the river, across the fields and along the Uffington road, learning to identify the many birds we saw and the various species of deer.

I continue to appreciate the natural beauty of the surrounding area and the availability of quiet walks. Since the re-introduction of Red Kites to the area it is a daily joy to watch them. All this will be destroyed by the construction of this horrendous proposed installation. Traffic has already increased greatly in recent years following the expansion of Bourne and development of the former Fiat Allis site, and this has increased both noise and light pollution. Walking in the village will be greatly impacted by the proposed construction traffic, and Uffington Road, which is barely wide enough for two vehicles, simply cannot take the volume and size of vehicles proposed. It will be lost forever to walkers who currently enjoy the views it affords.

For many, outdoor exercise is therapeutic. I chose to continue living here for this reason, suffering from Depression. Walking with heavy vehicles going past and beautiful views replaced by miles of solar panels will simply exacerbate mental health issues.

My chief concern is for the wildlife. Red Kites are carrion feeders. They will be unable to see food which will be under solar panels. We will therefore lose these wonderful birds. The proposed fencing will be a threat to deer, which can become trapped and will die. The proposed deer access is simply a nonsense. They are wild animals and as such will avoid the installation and like the Kites, be lost to us. Similarly ground-nesting skylarks, which are slowly returning after a long period of decline, will be lost.

The verges in Uffington Road host a variety of wildflowers. As construction traffic uses this very narrow road, the verges will inevitably be destroyed and the wildflowers list forever. This is a VILLAGE. It is therefore rural. The imposition of this unwanted industrial installation will destroy it forever.

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Despite my Green Party leanings, this proposed installation conflicts me greatly. I am keen to do what I can to preserve our environment and way of life for future generations in the face of climate change, but the more we all look into this plan, the more obvious it is that the motivation is more for corporate gain than efficient future energy provision.

I have lived in this area since 1998, and in Essendine in particular for over 12 years. This plan is totally unsuitable and oversized for this area, so close to so many residential properties and likely to impact our lives for the years of construction, and beyond. The network of local roads, and in particular the planned access from the A1, will be devastated by all the multitudinous large, heavy vehicles involved on a daily basis.

Additionally, our home is positioned in a dip and at times of prolonged, heavy rainfall, the garden and driveway can become flooded. In both 2011 and 2020, the level came within inches of flooding both the house and my office outbuilding. With the concentration of panels at the top of the hill, and the inevitable concentration of water run-off, this will all just serve to exacerbate the problem.

The benefit of the output is going to be much less than claimed, as the figures are projected using optimum conditions and sunlight, something we all know as residents that is never going to be achieved over most of the year. It's inefficient, far too large and a waste of good agricultural land - an onshore wind farm would be far more efficient and much more acceptable. And let's not get started on the inefficiencies of the offsite manufacture before building even starts. Millions of panels having to be transported from the other side of the planet. Plus, our MP, Alicia Kearns, has asked questions that still need to be satisfactorily answered about the labour force that might be used in terms of their day-to-day treatment and the conditions in which they will be working.

We note that battery storage has been removed from the plan - so what is the point of the size? But this doesn't mean that this dangerous part of the original plan won't be reinstated through the back door at a later juncture. It will be far too close to the concentration of residential properties in the village.

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I received your communication in respect of soliciting our views on the above-mentioned proposed installation. To be clear, this whole proposal has put me in a great deal of conflict with my conscience; on the one hand, I want to do everything I can to preserve our environment and way of life for future generations in the face of climate change; but on the other hand, the more I look into this proposal, the more I can see so many holes in its claims to be "for the environment" and "for energy security".

On a personal note, I have lived in this area, in the same home, for 18 years. I bought my home in full knowledge of the presence of the East Coast Main Line, my home's position on the busy A6121 road and also that Essendine had a small but significant industrial estate, a legacy from when the village actually had its own railway station.

From a personal perspective, I have suffered from anxiety and depression since childhood

and part of my move to a more rural setting (I have one neighbour) was to be able to live in a more peaceful environment (after years in London) and focus my efforts on creating and maintaining my garden by way of therapy. I cannot begin to describe the impact that this proposal has had upon me, the idea of the roads being clogged with massive hgv's and trucks, delivering equipment for the build together with the noise of construction for over two years (E.g. pile drivers and wagons) married with the prospect of numerous workers in closer proximity fills me with dread, is affecting my sleep and is already encroaching on my mental health, before this has even become a reality.

The area also offers me numerous healing interactions with nature whether that be the walks through Braceborough woods, over the track to Greatford and beyond or even just in the fields following tracks, the idea of losing access to these great open spaces whilst being hemmed in by high fences is devastating. What also concerns me is the presence of a flock of deer which has been free to roam the area since medieval times when Essendine formed part of a deer park. Their freedoms will be vastly restricted to pathways, edged by high fences forcing them into following regimented routes and most likely onto the roads, causing more traffic accidents. That, to me, sounds the death knell for these precious and historic wild creatures.

My home is positioned in a dip and at times of rainfall, the garden and driveway can become flooded. In fact, on a couple of winter days, the water almost made ingress into the house. Having hundreds of massive (3 metre high) solar panels will significantly increase the chances of forced rainwater runoff which inevitably will lead to increased flooding, something I am not prepared to countenance, given the damage this will likely cause my home and therefore negatively impact my financial situation.

To my knowledge, those of us residing in the area will gain no benefit from this farm, having listened to specialist representation on the capability of generating energy from a site of this proportion in this Northern European country, the proposed output, as claimed by Mallard Pass, falls well short of what would indeed work. In addition, I note that battery storage has been removed from the plan - so what is the point of the size? To me, the footprint is way too large and I struggle to comprehend how losing such vast tracts of good, arable land makes any sense at all, in the light of the need to improve the nation's food security.

Thank you for asking for my input; I much appreciate your efforts in coordinating a strong and robust response from us who will have to endure not only a massively disruptive installation period (of indeterminate duration) as well as the ongoing loss of natural and arable land. This feels counter-intuitive to all the messages we receive around the need to protect and preserve our environment. Surely there is a better way?

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I wish to make known my objections to the planning authorities regarding the proposed Mallard Pass Solar Project

The size proposed would spoil the immediate and nearby environment for many different reasons.

I have lived at this address for over 40 years and have enjoyed the many rural aspects that living in Essendine affords. These rural aspects would be seriously curtailed if the solar farm was to go ahead. The agricultural land around this area is fertile and provides crops and beneficial grazing for livestock. The hedgerows and fields are suitable habitats for many breeds of birds and different types of wildlife. These would be put into jeopardy if the solar farm went ahead.

The A6121 is the main road which runs through Essendine. Over the years I have noticed a definite increase in traffic passing through the village on this road. The traffic on roads in the village and surrounding area would be heavier from the start of the construction right through till the farm is fully operational. This would be detrimental for the residents of the village and nearby. The residents who live on the main Stamford / Bourne roads would be further disturbed due to the construction of some of the solar farm taking place along this road. This would mean long periods when access to and from their residences could be hindered due to the construction work taking place outside their homes.

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We are writing to advise of our disapproval on the proposed Mallard Solar Farm.

We moved to Essendine 10 years ago to enjoy having the countryside on our doorstep. We enjoy walking, cycling and waking up to the perfect views across the fields from our windows and the end of our driveway. Presently there is nothing spoiling the views. We cycle across the fields taking beautiful pictures of the countryside, animals and beautiful butterflies. (Pictures attached taken of our trips around Essendine).

So, why would we want to see fields full of plastic panels and extensive fencing to keep us out of the main reason we moved to Essendine and Rutland. To stop us from seeing the wildlife, countryside, farm animals, children enjoying walks with their families, cycling and walking around the fields where we live.

Why would we want hundreds of lorries and vehicles crushing all of this. We don't and we are so against for this to happen. Look at my pictures see the beauty of where we live.

I have lots of pictures of the beautiful area we live in and call home.

Please, please stop this from happening. Do we really want our future generations to miss out on seeing the beauty of our land. No we do not.

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I have lived in the villages of Ryhall and Essendine since 1964 when we moved to the area from Leeds. This is a beautiful area, typical of rural England, with undulating countryside populated by small quintessentially English villages, separated by swathes of agricultural land upon which the products which go to make the food that we eat are grown.

The proposal to install over 500,000 solar panels on over 2,000 acres of this agricultural land will change this rural landscape from one of ever changing beauty with seasonal colours

from brown to green to gold and then back to brown, to one of industrial solemnity. A sea of constant blue/black never changing, always boring.

People move to the countryside to enjoy it and all it offers. I am no different. To impose the industrial solemnity on me and on people as we go about every aspect of our daily lives will have a hugely negative effect on my wellbeing and of the wellbeing of the other residents of Essendine and the surrounding villages, and, I daresay, of the people that pass through the village have sight of the ugly monstrosity of an installation.

The village of Essendine has never fared well in the beauty stakes, being the dumping ground for much industry. It does not have the lure of picturesque stone cottages, thatched roofs and winding streets and a pub that sells traditional ales and food. It does not have a shop, and the post office is only part time. It has a village hall.

It does not need this proposed monstrosity to turn it from what we have come to accept as somewhere nice to live, into the Chernobyl of Rutland, where nobody lives or wants to live.

For a small village, Essendine has enough industry and associated heavy traffic movements.

I do not want this proposed solar installation. Not now, not ever. Never. The village does not want this proposed solar installation. Not now, not ever. Never.

We have lived in the village of Essendine since 1990. We chose to live here because of the beautiful undulating countryside, which we decided was a wonderful rural environment to raise our family. Still living here since the children have flown the nest to make their own way in the world, we have had the free time to explore all the local bridleways and footpaths in and around Essendine with our dog. We have been so lucky to see and appreciate the rich diversity of the wildlife, including birds such as the Red Kite, Buzzards, Barn Owls, Herons and Kingfishers. We often spot Deer, Badgers, Foxes, and Hares, as well as admiring the rich flora and fauna throughout the changing seasons. We also see the wonderful colours in the fields as the crops grow and ripen. All this will be lost if this solar farm is allowed to be built. Our farmers should be encouraging all the wildlife to live in the fields which they currently sow and then harvest. This will be lost forever should the fields be filled with concrete and glass solar structures. Our food security has never been more important, and our farmers need to embrace continuing to produce all the cereal crops we need in the UK. We embrace the need for green technology and we need solar, but efficient, discreet panels on the roofs of all houses, factories, industrial units and supermarkets. These are the only areas solar panels rightfully belong.

END OF CONTRIBUTIONS FROM SOME ESSENDINE RESIDENTS

Submission to Planning Inspectorate by Mr John Hughes

Essendine Parish Council would like to draw the attention of the Examining Authority of the Planning Inspectorate to the work carried out by Mr John Hughes his submission can be seen by pasting the link below into any search engine.

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/EN010127/EN010127-000514-John%20Hughes%20-%20Written%20summaries%20of%20oral%20case%20at%20Open%20Floor%20Hearings%20and%20Applicant's%20post%20hearing%20responses.pdf>

Mr Hughes work contains many pictures and narrative about the countryside that will be negatively affected by the construction of the proposed Solar Farm.

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New and additional planting to screen solar panels – the developer has provided information re the planting of new hedges and trees.

The agricultural land surrounding Essendine is not flat it is undulating with hills, hollows and differing elevations.

Undulating country side, the Solar Farm is planned to be set in over 2000+ acres across rolling countryside with many hills and hollows and differing elevations, it is highly unlikely a 3 metre+ high Solar Panel installed on a field with differing elevations will be screened by hedges planted on the perimeter of the field.

The Solar Panels to be installed will have a height in excess of three metres, it will take many years for newly planted hedges and trees to grow to their full height, leaving the Solar Panels unscreened for these years whilst the local population wait for the hedges to grow.

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Locally walked and cycled footpaths and bridleways negatively affected.

- 1)Bridleway from A6121 to Careby Road Map Ref 042121 to 032126
- 2)Bridleway from Careby road to Pickworth (Pickworth drift) Map Ref 031128 TO 995138
- 3)The footpath between Map Ref 060107 and 062131
- 4)The road between Essendine and hangman's corner Map Ref 042120 TO 055105
- 5)The Pickworth Road What3Word (W3W) location identifier lipstick.soonest.circle in a northerly direction from Essendine and returning along the same road.
- 6)The Pickworth Road in a northerly direction from Essendine, W3W location identifier lipstick.soonest.circle the end of the Pickworth Road turn right to Carlby W3W location identifier tens.exporters.wedge over the river and under the railway onto High St Carlby W3W cured.wake.super and traverse through Carlby and travel back to Essendine via the A6121 or through the fields via the field margins and public footpaths.
- 7)The Vistas likely to be destroyed are

The view looking North and Northwest from Map Ref 037124 accessed on the bridleway.
The view looking East Northeast from the railway bridge on Pickworth road Map Ref 042129
The view looking East from any point along the footpath running between Essendine and
Carlby Map Ref 046131 and 049135

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Conclusion - Essendine Parish Council strongly oppose and do not agree with any part of the applicants DCO application (the Solar Farm project). It brings only negative impacts to our community and unacceptable upheaval for the very inefficient production of electricity.

The construction and operation of the Solar Farm will significantly compromise the daily lives and health and wellbeing of all Essendine residents.

End.