

Careby with Aunby and Holywell is the next Parish north of Essendine on the East Coast Main Line. Mallard Pass Solar Farm starts very close to Aunby. The main issues of the parishioners I represent are

1. This development is highly contentious and in the wrong place. The Planning Inspectorate is being asked to consider what is the largest solar development in the UK. There is no precedent. I would respectfully suggest that the Planning Inspectorate proceed with great caution and if in doubt throw out this proposed development. Mallard Pass has been 'shoe horned' into land as close as possible to the existing substation near Ryhall that feeds the East Coast Main line to make maximum profit for the developers. There are real concerns that if this development is granted there will be further additional planning applications for further developments particularly battery storage.
2. The general principle behind the UK planning system is to create as attractive an environment as possible for the people of this country. Most decisions are taken at a local level and reflect local views. Occasionally major projects (Heathrow's 3rd runway or HS2) upset many people but the decision in such cases is based on the national interest where there is no alternative solution. Mallard Pass does not fit this category. There are many alternative, less contentious sites for solar panels in the UK. The use of the term Solar Farm is a deliberate attempt to disguise the fact that this is an industrial development. Would planners approve covering the Mallard Pass's 2000 acres of countryside with factories? No. Why are we not fitting solar panels to every industrial building, to every new house, and every car park instead of a green field site? Because it is easier. Did the developers consider any brownfield sites?
3. It seems grossly unfair that local individuals are having to spend so much time and effort in a battle with a multi- billion dollar company as well as attempting to understand the complexities and rules of the planning system.
4. The developers Windell Energy seem to have no experience of anything other than small solar projects, indeed Gary Toomey, the CEO, manages to be a director of a further 25 companies. Canadian Solar is a major manufacturer of solar panels in China and has been reported as having links to the forced labour of Uyghur people in China. The UK should not be supporting China in general and this company in particular. Windel Energy and Canadian Solar are unattractive and dubious companies and should not be considered.
5. The site is predominantly grades 2 and 3 arable mainly growing wheat, barley and oil seed rape. The UK climate is very good for growing these crops and with correct use of fertilizer and sprays high yields can be achieved. In a world with population growth, how do feed the hungry? Every acre lost in the UK means more grain has to be produced somewhere else. That means places like the Amazon rainforest and other virgin wild spaces will have to be cleared for food. In the UK there is a trend towards less intensive cereal growing with increased demand for organic crops, fewer chemical inputs as they may cause river pollution, wide margins round fields to create 'wildlife corridors', and for affluent landowners 'rewilding' when all cropping ceases. All these trends have much to commend them but will reduce the yields of cereal crops putting further pressure on feeding the world. Solar farms should not be built on greenfield sites unless there is no alternative.

6. How do you measure landscape? This area to the north of Stamford is typical English countryside: gently rolling chalk land, with predominantly arable cropping but some grassland for sheep, cattle and horses with hedges and woodland, and a few small villages connected by narrow lanes. This swathe of countryside 4 miles in length will be blighted by an industrial development of hundreds of thousands of black panels. The developers' glossy brochure of Nov 2021 says 'Windel Energy is committed to responsible land use and believe that the development and delivery of a large scale solar farm can be achieved in harmony with its surroundings'. In the glossy brochure of May 2022 we have '...solar offers the potential for land to be used for clean power generation, environment enhancement, soil quality improvement and landscape and ecology improvements...' What an insult on the intelligence of those in the area of this monstrous development.
7. This area to the north of Stamford with its narrow lanes, paths and bridleways provides recreation for many walkers, runners, horse riders and increasing numbers of cyclists. The developers offer in mitigation of some permitted paths sounds wonderful but do you want to walk alongside 3.3 metre high panels? Concerns about increasing mental health issues mean that tranquil quiet places are essential for wellbeing.
8. Among the mitigation measures proposed are extensive tree planting and hedgerow planting. Throughout the developers' proposals they consistently quote 'best practice' and 'best scenarios' For a native tree to be worth calling a tree it has to be 20 years old and will need protecting from rabbits and deer. Ideally the developers should be planting 5 year old saplings but will probably use 1 year old whips. Whatever is planted, frequent watering in the first year is essential. In Cambridgeshire 850,000 trees were planted on the A14 scheme. 12 months later 60% had not survived. Hedgerows are interesting. In summer in leaf many hedges produce a good screen, but look again in winter and it's staggering how different and open they are. Most existing hedges to produce a year round screen will require a second, closely planted line behind probably predominantly hawthorn. They will need watering for the first year and probably after about 5 years layering in a semi horizontal way.
9. The effects on wildlife on a development of this size are unknown. There will be many miles of perimeter fencing and lighting. The warm words of the developers may fool some people but how nature evolves is unpredictable. There are many deer in the area. They currently can be a problem crossing roads at night with little warning as they can usually find hedgerow gaps. But when they hurtle through a hedgerow gap into a perimeter fence what happens? Badgers and foxes are common. They will not be able to move freely. The construction of the site will cause unmeasurable effects on all sorts of flora and fauna. Grazed grassland under the panels sounds wonderful except sheep are selective grazers and soon nettles, docks and thistles will develop followed by brambles and other weeds.
10. Who will police the Mallard Pass development? Who will check that all the promises made will be kept? Will fines be payable for breaches of rules? I assume the Planning Inspectorate has no further involvement after it has handed its decision to the Secretary of State. It seems

totally unreasonable for SKDC and Rutland CC to have the task. Perhaps a substantial financial bond should be held by Rutland CC and SKDC and handed back after the development is completed (though highly unlikely) less any local authority costs.

11. Construction of Mallard Pass will take between 2 and 3 years to build. This huge construction site will affect the lives of 30,000 people who live in Stamford and the surrounding villages with extra traffic on roads that are unsuitable. All panels will be delivered along Ryhall Road from Great Casterton which is unsuitable for articulated lorries. Casterton College with 800 pupils lies on this road. The developers' warm words claim they will not use the road at both ends of the school day when children and parents are on the move to and from school. How these articulated lorries will return to the A1 is not clear but I would hazard a guess that through Stamford on the A6121, again highly undesirable. On the great majority of the lanes serving the site it is difficult for 2 cars to pass, particularly given the seeming reluctance of local authorities to mend roadside potholes. No mention has been made by the developers of funds for local authorities to mitigate wear and tear on the roads of Rutland and Lincolnshire. All building sites are messy: muddy in winter and dusty in summer. The relentless sound of pile drivers putting hundreds of thousands of posts for the panels in place and 400 workers going by car to the site daily with their onsite mess requirements will be unbearable.
12. Solar Panels are the least efficient of all forms of green energy. 6 wind turbines in the North Sea would produce as much electricity as Mallard Pass would. This project if given permission would be unlikely to be producing electricity until late 2027. Around the world scientists are looking at a myriad ideas for green energy and it would seem more than likely that less invasive schemes for green energy could be on the horizon. Solar Panels could well be redundant well before Mallard Pass's suggested shelf life expires in 25/35 years' time.
13. The completed site with its 3.3m high panels, high security fences, security lighting, and low level sound will truly be a 'blot on the landscape' of our 'green and pleasant land'. We must stop taking easy options and stop despoiling our countryside for the sake of our children and grandchildren.