

I wish to make further comments, to support my views that the Planning Inspectorate, should recommend the refusal of the Mallard Pass Solar Farm application.

Our food security has never been more important to this country. Since the war in the Ukraine broke out in February 2022, the UK has suffered many food shortages of basic commodities such as cereals, bread, eggs and cooking oil. This has been largely due to the embargo of grain exports of Ukrainian cereal crops by the Russians upon which we heavily relied. Our reliance on these imports caused much misery to millions of people in the UK, and particularly affected many who were already struggling to feed their families in the post recovery period of Covid 19. The Office for National Statistics has published much data, highlighting the dependence we have had on imports from all over the world, but also how much damage the war in the Ukraine has affected us. They quoted the following:

"Ukraine was one of the UK's top trading partners for vegetable oils and fats in 2021. The UK imported £138.3 million of vegetable oils and fats from Ukraine in 2021, dropping to £43.5 million in 2022 as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Despite the shortfall being covered by increasing imports from Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany, the reduction in supply of vegetable oils and fats from Ukraine increased global prices in 2022, leading to higher imports in value terms".

During World War 2 and in the subsequent years when food still had to be rationed, all available land was cultivated to increase food production to meet the needs of the growing population. Farmers made sure all their fields were as productive as possible. Sadly today, farmers are incentivised by money alone and when approached by these hastily put together companies, offering them easy money, (at around a £1000 an acre) , to lease their land for solar farms, they are taking up the offer. The long term damage of their 'rash' decisions, has not been carefully thought through. The UK government needs to pay farmers fairly for the production of crops and thus negate their need to seek making ' a quick buck' to our detriment.

The land on which the solar farm is mainly planned is rated as BMV, (Best and Most Versatile) and National and local policy clearly state that this land should not be built on. There is some irregularities in the way this land has been classified, so that the developers can justify the use of this land. This type of solar development, does not belong on this type of agricultural land.

The UK is currently suffering a mental health crisis. This is in part due to the Covid pandemic of 2019 to 2022. When lockdowns were enforced, by the government, most people were able to try and keep themselves healthy by walking in the open countryside. Many residents in Essendine and the surrounding villages did just this, enjoying walking around the many, bridleways and footpaths in the area. When you look at maps of how this area may well be affected if the solar farm were to be granted permission, Great swathes of the countryside will no longer be available to people to enjoy walking, cycling, riding horses and driving through the area. The landscape will be changed forever by narrow corridors of high security, fencing, flood, lighting, and CCTV cameras installed along the perimeters of the areas where solar panels are constructed. Having visited places like Auschwitz concentration camp in 2015, I understand how devastating it will be, to be controlled within these depressing corridors of high wire fencing, when out walking.

One of the great pleasures of walking out in the countryside is to enjoy the wildlife that you come across. We are fortunate to have large populations of deer, badgers, foxes hares and other small animals, as well as magnificent birds, such as the red kites, buzzards, kingfishers, kestrels and large population of many species of owl. All these will be very badly affected, firstly by the construction traffic and disruption to their daily routines, and the corridors and pathways that they have historically followed for many hundreds of years. The wildlife will be displaced from their natural habitats, perhaps never to return. How sad this will be for the area to lose its wildlife population. Just a loss of one species will have a serious knock on effect for others. Looking on the RSPB website, there is much evidence to prove that bird populations are directly affected by solar farms, as the insects that they so heavily reliant in the food, chain are confused by the shimmering panels of the solar rays and try and lay their eggs on them. Birds dive onto them to try and catch the insects, only to become casualties themselves.

The plans submitted by Mallard Pass supposedly put in place larger areas of mitigation, which will be planted with hedgerows, wildlife meadows and thousands of trees. What's the plans don't indicate is how much of the current landscape will be decimated in creating the solar farm area. Mature trees hedgerows and historical wildlife areas will be destroyed. No amount of planting schemes will ever put this back in place, and anything that is planted, will take many many years to mature. The 'Blot on the Landscape' will be there for many generations to come.

There has been much discussion about how the land will be affected with flooding as a direct result of the run-off patterns onto the land being affected. Essendine and surrounding areas such as Greatford, are already struggling with problems of flooding. It was only a couple of years ago, that. our church was completely flooded and adjacent properties and businesses were at risk, as a result of the West Glen river breaking its banks after heavy rain. I have attached photographs to support this.

The issues of traffic greatly alarms me throughout the construction of this site if it goes ahead. Roads are far too narrow and not suitable for long and heavy HGV's to pass along. The local people will have their daily lives disrupted by the sheer volume and slows speeds of the traffic, making daily commutes to work and school very difficult. Many of our local small roads are a haven for wildlife. Many of the roadside verges are protected with SSSI sites. Should HGVs, which are too wide, and too heavy for these roads be in use, it will require these verges to be turned into additional road, and therefore the benefits of the wildlife flora and fauna populate the verges will be lost forever. In May, we are fortunate to have large carpets of cowslips and other wildflowers dominating the verges between Essendine, and Uffington; the loss of these wonderful displays would never be recovered.

Much has been talked about making solar farms like this, carbon neutral. There is absolutely no way Mallard Pass Solar Farm could be carbon neutral, given that the solar panels are constructed in China, which has a very poor record for their carbon emissions. The panels would then need to be transported halfway around the world and then from the UK ports, on low loaders to the site. This is incredibly shortsighted by the government; we should be producing our own carbon neutral products and if we don't have the infrastructure to do this, the government should be investing heavily in this area of technology. Furthermore, China has a terrible human rights record for slave labour, which is used to produce these panels, from forced Uyghur labour in the Xinjiang province. We need to take the lead as the US government have, and stop the import of any Chinese products of this type.

There is no real benefit to this community, this country, or this government to have this solar farm application approved. We need to put our long term thinking caps on and think how we can best balance our food security needs and the need to provide cheap Green alternative technology to coal gas and oil. Technology is changing all the time and already much smaller more efficient. Solar panels are being produced which are best located on Brownfield sites and the roofs of houses, factories, supermarkets and industrial buildings. No solar farm here!



Yr1 Photomontage uses the seasonal colour and light to hide the visual impact of what is being proposed, the PV arrays, Substation and Control buildings





Representative Viewpoint 9 (Right) - Essendine Road near The Freewards

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