

After attending the first consultation at Ryhall Village Hall last year I wanted to gain more information and at that point I came away none the wiser. The displays were vague as well as their documents and representatives not forthcoming in approaching members of the public to address any concerns/questions that they had. I had signed up to receive further information/updates yet to date I have not received anything from Mallard Pass.

Thinking that the statutory public consultation sessions and additional information would alleviate some of my concerns this sadly has not been the case. The map given in the documents was poor to read and did not even include Ryhall! In fact it has further raised my concerns about the project and the company behind it.

I think we all agree that there is a need to look at alternative renewable energy and as a society we all need to do our bit but at what cost? Destruction of prime agricultural land? Destruction of bio-diversity? Destruction of habitats? Destruction of the countryside in which I chose to live for my mental and physical well-being? Not to mention the human right concerns that have been seen in the reported evidence within the supply chain of Canadian Solar?

My comments to the Statutory Consultation were as follows and still remain.

#### 1. Size

The installation which was originally 2175 acres of land the majority of which is rich arable farming land in a rural location. Has increased in size to 2238 acres? Looks better if you write in hectares does it not? Only 906 hectares? Why did you feel the need to change from acres to hectares? The increase in the site is apparently for the highway changes (many single country lanes) needed for the numerous HGVs and abnormal loads going to the site.

This proposed site will be eight times larger than the current UK's largest site. Why does this need to be so big? Is this due to the nature of the panels? i.e. static, only facing one way? Not all the land is facing the correct way to maximise harvesting of the sun? Therefore is this the right site choice? The largest solar panel farm in the smallest county? The actual solar panel area has decreased by 263 acres but can still deliver the 350MW quoted in stage one so which is right? What are we to believe? Just another example of a company that in my opinion cannot even manage the basics so how can we believe that they can manage a project of this scale?

The decision to choose this site was predominantly for its easy access to the grid which currently has the capacity. How do we know that the solar panel area will not increase in size at a later date?

#### 2. Location

As previously mentioned we all need to play our part in looking at ways of renewable energy but why are we not utilising brownfield sites? There are plenty of areas of disused land i.e. closed military bases, disused airports, old quarries etc Why is arable farming in a rural location being used? Why are new build houses not being built with renewable energy solutions? Why are we not using the rooftops of commercial buildings surely these are better solutions but I suppose they are more costly?

No need to build the infrastructure i.e. sub-stations when you find one with capacity – just destroy habits, food producing land? But that is okay as it is more cost effective and will deliver profits? So are we now a society that feels that it is acceptable to ignore the negatives as long as profits can be made?

#### 3. Infrastructure/traffic/transport

Construction traffic would have to use minor roads throughout the construction, many of which are single track in places and in poor condition. My initial concerns were that I assumed that the panels, materials etc would be brought in via the A1 (a road that is already overused and frequently closed due to accidents) through Great Casterton, via Ryhall on to Essendine. The material published shows that this is the case and one of three routes to be used. These roads are heavily used throughout the day with levels increasing before and after school (on the rural school runs). The road passes one nursery, one primary and one secondary school (that is if the lorry drivers stick to the route?) where these schools are located there are in places no pathways and the road narrows – this would be an accident waiting to happen? Many of the local roads have weight limits.

The material confirms that there will be 400 workers (worse case scenario that is 400 cars twice a day, 800 car journeys once a day, working 6 days a week that is 4800 journeys over just one week.) 4800 car journeys is the worse case scenario but even if that was halved by car sharing (that would be more environmentally friendly) that is still 2400 car journeys alone in one week. Move away from the poorly maintained A roads and look at the single lane country lanes that will need to be used to access the main construction compound plus the six secondary compounds. This does not take in to consideration the 54 lorries (including abnormal loads) which will visit the site each day (that is 108 journeys a day, 648 lorries Monday to Saturday).

The main hours of work are stated as 7am to 7pm so these traffic movements will impact school runs, commuter traffic, leisure traffic, we live in a rural community where private transport is required whether that be a car, a bike, our feet or even a horse.

As noted previously the site size has increased and the reason for this is the changes to be made to the highways to allow for the abnormal loads and the increased traffic movements. These changes will destroy further habitats, in places the roads cannot be widened – has the company even visited the site? If so they would see junctions that are already dangerous. They would see the secondary school where the path disappears? They would see the bends where the road cannot be widened? What are the solutions for these problems or is it a case of just ignore them.

Local drivers on these roads during the winter months already experience hazardous driving conditions including flooding, ice and closure due to snow – you are now adding drivers that do not know the roads, driving in the dark in the winter months. There is no doubt that there will be accidents – how many or how serious cannot be predicted.

The area is rural and I feel no consideration has been taken on the impact of the pollution (fumes, noise, dust) that this site will bring when being constructed, will the road widening which you state as temporary be left or will the roads, verges, habitats be restored after you have destroyed them?

#### 4. Increased Flood Risk

From Greatford, to Ryhall, to Essendine to Carlby the area is at risk of flooding and does regularly flood. The local landscape helps with limiting the flooding. How would the solar farm decrease this? With the destruction of plants, land, run off areas, increased surface water run off on the panel etc I can only see this increasing the risk further. The new permissive West Glen River path and wet woodland would probably be impassable in the winter, as locals we watch that area regularly flooding.

## 5. Environmental Impact

What environmental damage do the panels produce? After their use what is the cost to clean them up and how are they disposed of? I quote from one letter that has been made public and sent to the Mallard Pass Solar Farm:

"Hello Mr Davies and the representatives of Mallard Pass.

I am a resident of Toft, my intention in writing, is to establish if the proposed solar farm will be utilising lithium-ion batteries for energy storage?

Having just completed a two-year research project on the use of these batteries in electric vehicle production, even I am shocked at the potential danger these batteries present. Just one small example.

When these things get damaged and begin to pop and hiss, one sees a grey "smoke". This in fact is not smoke, but hydrogen fluoride gas, which is extremely toxic!

Please see "EV-stranded-Energy" attachment.

Also attached is a piece from Stamford Mercury, in which I was interviewed for my views on energy storage.

I know how busy you are, but if you could spare the time, please see this video about lithium-ion batteries. It really does show just how underestimated the danger from these things are!

I really do not understand why no one is talking about this! Yes, of course we want green energy, but at what price?

Finally, if Mallard Pass uses lithium-ion batteries, having spoken to an eminent fire prevention specialist, if there were to be a battery fire there, the exclusion zone would be upwards of 12 kilometres!" Stamford, Bourne and the Deepings are all within 12 kilometres from

Essendine. If there is a fire in a lithium-ion battery, what plans are

being made for the evacuations of these areas depending on wind direction? It reminds me of trying to predict nuclear radioactive fallout in the Cold War!

Liquid Bromine is already stored in large quantities in Essendine. The dangers of it are detailed in the plant's emergency plan – "Liquid Bromine is a fuming brownish – red liquid. It has a sharp irritating odour. The short-term affects are corrosive, resulting in burns and possible ulceration. If inhaled or ingested you could experience sore throats, dizziness and headaches, nose bleeds, coughing, abdominal pain and sometimes a rash. As a vapour the eyes can suffer redness, pain and blurred vision. The long-term affects could be chronic bronchitis, contact and allergic dermatitis."

When lithium-ion batteries are a light hydrogen fluoride gas is produced and that exposure to the gas, even in small concentrations, is likely to be fatal. If it is the intention to use this type of battery then it should raise considerable doubts about the safety of the project, given its proximity to housing as well as the livestock and wildlife in the area. If containers containing liquid bromine were to be damaged, the bromine would vaporise into a dense, acutely toxic gas and one that could accelerate the burning of combustible material. It is particularly concerning"

I am not an expert in Solar Panels but the above does concern me. Battery storage is key in helping to achieve net-zero. Mallard Pass have omitted the battery storage at this stage? Why? Will it be added at a later stage? The storage of these batteries is a huge concern and I have no reassurance that there will no battery storage at any stage of the project.

## 6. Wildlife Impact

In my first letter to Mallard Pass I had asked the following been considered:

Local deer herds (road warning signs on the A6121 from Ryhall all the way through to Carlby show how far they roam) from the material there has been no provision for the deer, they are shut out, their living area will be decreased, we will see more of them on the roads, more accidents waiting to happening.

Birdlife – owls, nesting red kites, skylarks, kingfishers, house martins, swifts, swallows. Again I am not expert but would assume that there are plenty more other species in our area. Taking their nesting away (hedgerows, trees etc will diminish their numbers) The only thing that I have read is nesting for skylarks!

Bats – I know the church in Ryhall has bats so would assume they are in the local area including the woodland. I have seen no acknowledgment of these?

Bees/Butterflies – how are these impacted? As far as I can see they will be impacted. During construction (two years) their habitats will be destroyed and what is left they would be disturbed.

Other animals – badgers, foxes, hares, rabbits, field mice, hedgehogs, voles. So there will be gates for mammals (all of them) to use? Will this take in to consideration their usual tracks etc? Why would some of the mammals use these gates in which their predators use? The fencing being used will not stop mammals trying to get through, they will get stuck and we will see deaths of mammals which can be avoided.

How has the wildlife impact been assessed? The assessment started in October 2021 and runs through to February 2022. This will not take in account any species 'routines' weather nesting, or just not around due to the weather i.e. butterflies.

Have they conducted another assessment?

## 7. Flora Impact

In my first letter to Mallard Pass I asked:

As with wildlife impact how has the impact been measured? The assessment started in October 2021 and runs through to February 2022. This is out of season when many of the plants are dormant for the winter. Are you able to answer? Around the proposed site we have many roadside verge nature reserve? How will these be impacted? Will they too be destroyed to make profits?

## 8. Loss of Arable Farmland

There will be a loss of good farmland which is now more than important now when the UK is importing more than producing. Why are we losing valuable farmland?

Loss of farmland will also mean loss of local jobs. If the land cannot be farmed then local residents whose skill set is farming will be unemployed. Once the farm is up and running I would assume that there would be no more than 10 employees?

That was my statement from my first letter. Upon investigating further the development is proposing to use 53% Best and Most Versatile Land. Government policy is clear that ground mounted solar panels should use previously developed land, contaminated land, industrial land of grade 3b 4 and 5, not best and most versatile land. The latest government food strategy policy June 2022 states it clearly wants to maintain agricultural land. This project would clearly reduce this and in light of recent activities with the war between Russia and Ukraine with the subsequent food shortages and increases on

cost of food should we not be protecting one of our most valuable assets? A valuable asset that not only feeds a nation but also allows bio-diversity and animal habitat.

#### 9. Visual Impact

The scale of the project is huge and looking at the maps all your eyes would see for miles would be large glaring solar panels. Would there be high level fencing? That was my first statement but now I am even more concerned than ever. Solar panels 3.3 metres high, 2m security fencing, 1320 CCTV cameras at 3.5 metres high, security lighting, 85 containers housing inverters/transformers. It will take at least 15 years for any screening to be effective, the above will change our local area both visually and also the character. The cameras will apparently face inwards – is this guaranteed? Security lighting - how will this affect those living closest going on and off? We live in the rural countryside for a reason. We frequently walk our dog around the area, do I want to be walking amongst 2m high fencing, 3.3 metre high solar panels, these will destroy our local environment.

#### 10. Recreation

I have already touched on impact of living amongst solar panels above. Some of the public rights of way will be closed or diverted during constructions. There will be three permissive paths totaling 2.9 miles and a few picnic benches. Will these compensate for the loss of pleasure when I am walking between solar panels, ditches, muddy areas, large lorries, workmen and much more? Will I want to walk amongst the solar panels when they are constructed – I enjoy using our local countryside looking across the plains as far as the eye can see. I love cycling through the country lanes – will I when a large abnormal load tries to pass me? Will I want to cycle past containers that will block the views across the countryside? Will the already poorly maintained local country lanes be destroyed further so I am unable to cycle on them?

#### 11. Noise Disturbance

During construction (remember 7am – 7pm working hours Monday to Saturday for two years), the structures that are used to mount the panels will need to be 2.5 metres deep so piling driving for these will be extremely noisy. The tonal noise of the primary sub station will be higher than that experienced at night time. What tonal noise will be emitted from inverters/transformers? Plus, during the two years of construction we will experience noise from the construction, the traffic and the workers.

#### 12. Archaeology and Heritage

It is noted that there are archaeological remains dating back to the prehistoric period in abundance and it is yet to be determined if all areas can be built on. The development would change the character of land parcels and it also has to be noted that there several listed buildings within or close the development.

#### 13. Human Rights

There is reported evidence of Uyghur forced labour used in the supply chain of Canadian Solar and this is currently under investigation and scrutiny by its own shareholders.

#### 14. General Observations

- Rutland is a small county which relies on mainly tourism and farming this development will impact that and in turn impact the local economy.

- House prices will decrease, who would want to buy a house next door to 3.3 metre high panels?

- Solar Farms produce about 11% of their stated capacity over the year when they are Mallard Pass stating much higher unachievable figures?

- How is the site decommissioned? Further construction traffic? Environmental waste?

- Feel that the project is purely driven by money not the environment.

- Very concerned that Windel has not delivered any project as yet but is looking at delivering the biggest one yet?

- There are no benefits to the local community so why are we suffering?

- Surely nationally significant infrastructure projects should be driven by the government not private developers. Is the government in control of projects such as these?

- Mallard Pass note many adverse environmental impacts! So why develop?

- We are industrialising the countryside.

- How will this affect my mental health and wellbeing?

- There will be loss of pathways, cycleways and bridleways.

- Yes we are in an energy crisis but why are we sacrificing food producing fields? As mentioned previously build on brownfield, commercial rooftops.

- - Solar Farms are the least efficient forms of renewable energy with some of the highest lifetime pollution. Mallard state that carbon payback will be in ten and half years! Is it not the next ten years critical?

I am now concerned to read about compulsory acquisitions no where in the initial consultation was this mentioned. Time and time again we are being lied to not told the whole story.

I am no expert and the above are just my views and concerns on the solar farm and its impact. Given what I have researched I am strongly opposed to the project.

Tracey Miles