

**SUMMARY OF 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 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.

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.

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 maintains its previously communicated position of;

“Essendine Parish Council are vehemently opposed to any compulsory acquisition of any land belonging to the Essendine Parish Council by anyone at any time”.

The above resolution was resolved unanimously by the councillors at a meeting of Essendine Parish Council held on Tuesday 11th July 2023.

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.



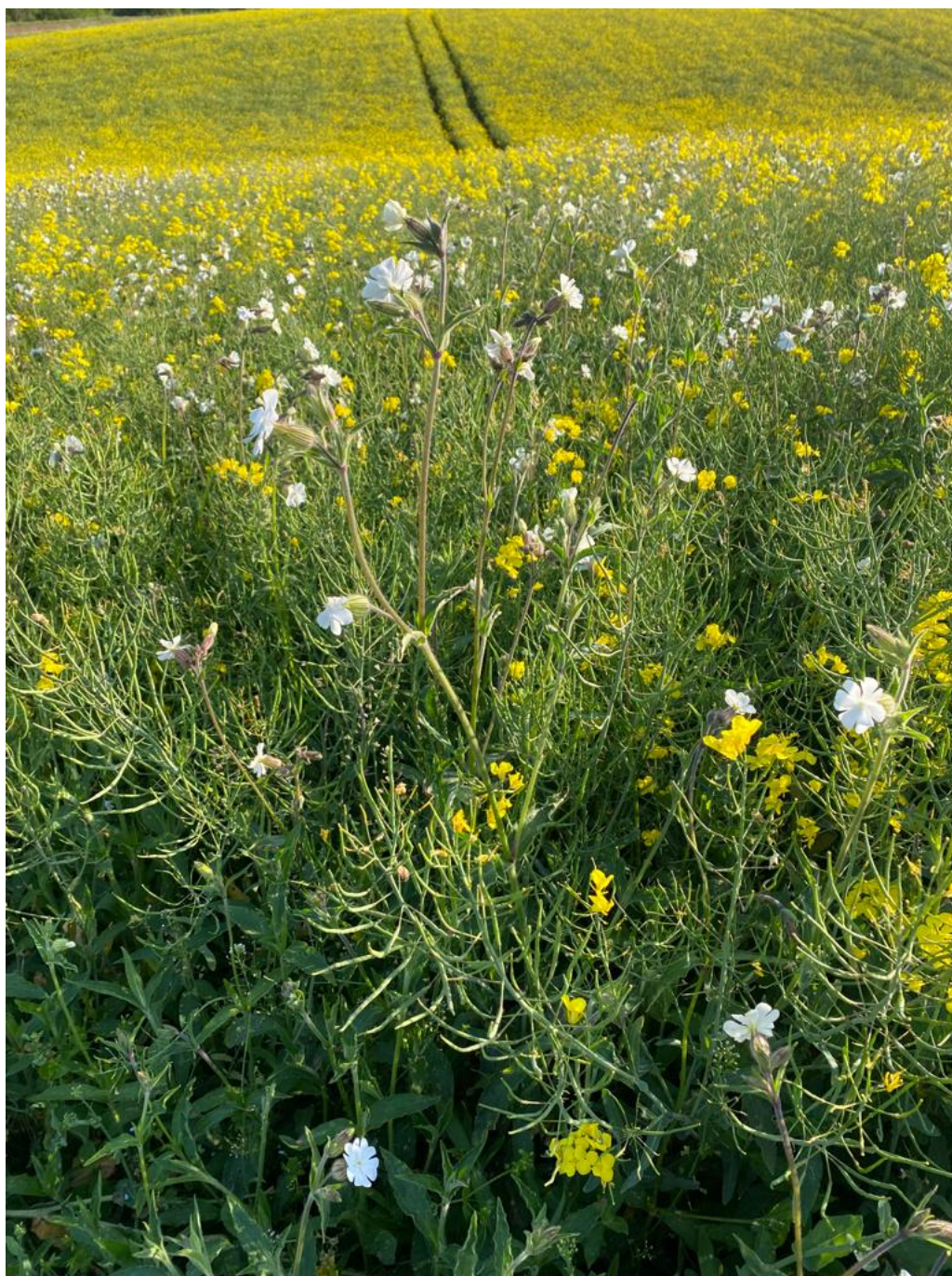
Bridleway from Essendine towards Careby Road.
Two old oak trees in this area of field which has been left as nature area for many years.
June 2023.



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.

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.