

16.11.23

IP 20033952

Dear Sir,

Thank you for listening so carefully to all our objections and the replies from the developers.

I enclose my summary.

I am a local resident in favour of green energy, both wind and solar. However, I am opposed to the proposed oversized plans from Windel Energy for Mallard Pass solar installation at Essendine. It is described as being alongside the railway but only 4 fields are adjacent to the railway the other 50 fields sprawl between neighbouring villages - very little is close to the tracks and some is a considerable distance from them.

I consider the land is unsuitable for such a huge industrial project as it consumes too much good quality arable land. It threatens the existing excellent biodiversity, infringes on the quality of life of six Rutland and Lincolnshire villages and threatens the drainage of the West Glen.

From a personal view, it fills me with horror that everyday, when I take walks, cycle and take local car journeys, I will have to face 56 industrial black glass fields instead of my beloved rural countryside. I published my nature journal, Lincolnshire Lockdown, just as the Mallard Pass plans were published. The natural world is at the heart of my world which will be shattered and my journal will become a history book.

This money-making project uses the new substation, but also requires an additional substation very near to Essendine. It may pass the 'Design Principles for National Infrastructure' but is an ill-conceived sprawling design by an inexperienced small firm and a big Chinese backer, we deserve better than this for the future of the UK energy supply.

Some of my concerns are -

#### 1. Visual Impact

Situated in a rural area with undulating fields the 3.3metre high panels will be seen from a great distance, no amount of planting (which takes 15 years to grow) will hide this industrial installation. Why don't they build an earth bund to hide their installation as quarries do? Unfortunately, it has a 22 miles long perimeter. It is a big black blot on the landscape.

## 2. Size

The response to the strong local opposition is to reduce the original size 2,238 acres by 264 acres which is minimal and was planned for anyway. There will still be around 50 fields of panels with the possibility that some more agricultural land could be converted once permission is given. It is the biggest installation of solar panels on a green field site in the UK.

## 3. Minimal Compensation

They promised support for the local recreation, however, no new sports facility for the blighted villages but only 2.9 miles of new pathways through their beautiful black glass fields.

## 4. Negative impact on biodiversity

For the initial environmental assessment, the developers have red penned out all 22 mature woodlands that are embedded in the fields as well field margins and hedges and the west Glen River.

So the 10% net gain of biodiversity assumes that there is not a good environment in the first place. This is total misrepresentation of the truth and Natural England and others are turning a blind eye to such sharp practices.

The saplings and tiny hedging will take 15-20 years to mature if well-tended taking a long time to provide suitable wildlife habitat. Please see the photo of 5 year-old planting to hide Ryhall substation it has not reached grass height!

## 5. Loss of good food producing land

They intend 2,238 acres of productive arable land to be taken away from our food producing economy. To achieve the approved statistics in mitigation their installation will use 420ha of arable land landscaped to hide the eyesore. This inefficient sprawling site with a 22 mile perimeter requires a lot of mitigating planting. A compact rectangular site would be much more efficient but local geography does not allow this.

## 6. Adverse effect on drainage

The West Glen periodically floods and the high watertable creates intermittent spring action, consequently building along its banks would be too difficult and costly. Instead, they intend to enhance the West Glen for wildlife. It is already very rich in wildlife with brown trout, otters, water voles, little egrets and a small heronry. They will be making it much worse ecologically but can gain positive statistics by new inappropriate planting of Carr and wet woodland which would hinder its flow.

## 7. Failure to acknowledge traffic impact

The industrial size construction traffic from the A1 will thunder past ancient village churches, c17th grade 2 listed farmhouses and barn conversions and over the Roman Villa adjacent to the Great Casterton Roman fort and the Essendine Motte and Bailey. Added to this the lanes are not big enough and go directly in front of 2 schools at Great Casterton. It will be much too dangerous. Many of the roads have a 7.5-ton weight limit already. The

alternative is Investment in a railway link to keep the local community safe, our children deserve.

Yours

Pauline Crampin