

15/04/24 Mallard Point Ltd and The Events and Tents Company Ltd Comments

In Response to the Applicants responses to The Secretary of State REP10 -013, request for Information dated 27th March 2024

I would Like to comment on behalf of the affected Business's (The Events and Tents Company Ltd and Mallard Point Ltd) the Following points:

Network Rail:

Mallard Pass has had since October 2021, and even before this date to have started negotiations and dialogue with this very important stakeholder. It is widely known how very long any works around or involving the Main Railway Lines and their assets, can take to get engagement let alone agreement on to proceed.

The applicant was questioned as to the date engagement started at CAH2 despite an initial date of 17th August 2022 being stated this was changed to November 2021 which the later date would not have explained the route and method of cabling. Network Rail put in an Objection. It is clear that Mallard Pass have overlooked the importance of securing this approval. The negotiation with the farmers, the buying of the network connection and the large plan of solar arrays All done in advance before the scheme was launched – but not engaged with in any meaningful way was the cable routing the key to linking the project together. Still Mr Fox on behalf of the applicant confidently stated in CAH2 on 26th September – over 6 months ago that “ Don't see a problem with in the application with Network Rail and it would be signed in good time before the end of the examination.....The option for the lease is expected to be made after deadline 7 but before deadline 8” he went further to say on 26th September 2023.

There clearly is a problem – which is Network Rail clearly have issues with this project and the Applicant have tried to buy as much time as possible. The Examination has finished and No Agreement is signed.

The routing clearly from Park Farm side had to get to the Transformer station either by 3 ways:

- 1) Through the embankment or culverts under the ECML
- 2) Through Essendine by digging up the road / pavements under Compulsary Purchases
- 3) NOT INTERESTED IN OR EXPLORED....

Route the cables in the land in the order limits crossing roads and 1 bridge – A very feasible option put on the table and dismissed due to compulsory purchasing of land – which the applicant is dealing with the land owner any way....

This option in view of providing the least amount of disruption to Essendine residents and Businesses and the lack of commitment from Network Rail should be looked at.

Local Councils:

A similar message of bravado in what the applicant feels has been agreed but in reality there is much more to do to get a more level playing field in the statements of common ground and general acceptance of conditions.

Not perhaps taken into account but the Application area was horrifically flooded in early January with ground saturated since early October 2023. We suffered considerably as a business from the January 3rd 2024 Flooding with the West Glen completely overwhelmed, which flooded our land and our buildings to a depth of 3ft + in most places, creating in Insurance terms- “A catastrophic Loss”, Surrounding areas along the order limits also fall into Flood zones which were breached in this incident including the village of Greatford- again experiencing Catastrophic losses as a village cut off by water. The flood maps the applicant use are not accurate for the time frames and the incidents are happening closer together that the applicant does not take into account, and will impact and contribute to in the construction of this solar plant with increased run off from panel's contributing to accelerated run off reaching land and property downstream of the higher planned installations

Our Businesses can not operate on the basis that access for Tourism and Hospitality as well as Events is and will be despite assurances from Mr Fox on behalf of the applicant as stated in hearings that access will be maintained and will continue talking to us. We have not heard regarding our legal right of way, permissive paths or access to our Main Farm driveway despite the applicant stating in CAH2 that thus would and should be undertaken by the applicant. (plots 0244 and 02138a)

Having a solar plant on the door step is not ideal promoting open landscapes and countryside for people to view and enjoy. Not only will the access be an issue due to cabling routing, but excessive noise from the 24 month construction period including Saturdays, will negatively impact the tranquil site our visitors like to visit for Tours, Tastings and Events. The Permissive paths close (but now moved) which took over a year to get a meeting to discuss this also create the unwanted attention and increased security needs due to the new access that will be imposed on us by the applicant Overall it is clear that in 2 1/2 years of our time given, along with countless others to scrutinise every word and statement from the applicant that much, still at Decision time is left unanswered and it is alarming that a potential project of such scale and with the army and cost of many professionals in its arsenal (that seem behind most NSIP Solar projects in hearings at present.....) that the applicant can present and hope that it is answers thus far are satisfactory and draw a line.

It concerns that many many questions on so many variables just plucking - types of panels, the life span of the panels 25 years or 40 years, replacing these panels, cabling route, times of work in construction- the list goes on and on that still need answering processing and agreeing and can not therefore approve this application on that basis as Mallard Pass Solar Farm will impose its own rules as it seems that Mallard Pass Action Group rightly state in Deadline 9 20036230 “The overarching message the applicant trying to give is concerning.....in reality if consent was granted based on the assumptions, it would be easier for the applicant to push through material changes given the limited resources of councils to contest, monitor or take enforcement action on. Any non- compliance.

A case in point is the trial piling holes conducted by the applicant all over the planned site, against the request of Rutland County Council this was done to suit the applicant with little regard to the rules.

This there for demands the robust scrutiny of this application at the highest level to ensure our community- Individuals, Businesses and our surrounding environment and community do not suffer unnecessarily from a project that would impact so much irreversibly.