

Knaith Parish Council would like to make the following comments:

1. We believe that the process and the application are fundamentally flawed and have been submitted in a way to make it difficult for interested parties to attend and submit any objections.
2. This is because deadlines for examinations are during the school holiday periods when the majority of people take holidays and are unable to attend or make submissions to the examining authority.
3. The scale and number of schemes in such a short space of time makes it very difficult for interested parties to engage and ensure all deadlines and timescales are adhered to. If they were treated as one project this would streamline the process and make it a lot easier and also highlight the excessiveness of the combined projects. Or, ensure significant time between each examination to allow interested parties to become involved, understand and comment.
4. It is easy to see that with these proposals running at roughly the same time, confusion could prevent any opposition and cause the general public to lose track of where each one is in the process.

For example, at the moment

Gate Burton Energy Park is under examination

Cottam Solar Farm is in Pre-Examination

West Burton Solar Project has just completed registered interest

Tillbridge is in Statutory Consultation.

These four huge proposals are not the only ones in Lincolnshire (there are many more proposed for this county). But these are all within a few miles of each other!

That is why it will be difficult for residents to follow all of the projects with the different stages especially when all of the above projects will affect a lot of the same people/communities. It is an unfair proposal to expect realistically. Especially as mentioned the time of year, how much time is needed to ensure everyone understands everything and makes necessary representation to the deadlines.

5. Two schemes have been submitted by the same developer, Island Green Power.
6. Could a venue closer to the proposed sites not have been chosen for the meetings, such as Lincolnshire Showground which has free parking and is easily accessible? Lincoln City is a nightmare to park and can be difficult to navigate it is also expensive to park. This may deter people/community group representatives from attending.
7. We have also witnessed some confusion over the different projects with West Burton Solar Project and Gate Burton Energy Park getting mixed up with each other.

This current examination format would be very difficult for us all to follow and participate in, and so we feel we are being unfairly treated and ultimately discriminated against.

We feel the solar companies are relying heavily on the fact that ordinary people do not have the time or money to understand and maybe object to these large projects and this should not be allowed to happen. These four projects (at present) are going to massively impact everyone who lives around them and their views and objections should be allowed to be heard and counted, especially when it is apparent that the majority of the representations submitted are against the plans. This process and timeline at present does not allow for that to happen.

Questions / Concerns raised by residents – Knaith Parish Council

- Scale of the development – The largest solar farm to date is in Pakistan and it's not as big as the proposal locally covering the three schemes.
- Solar panels will only be 27% effective. Residents raised concerns over this statistic.
- Will there be buzzing from the battery storage and where will these be placed? Is there likely to be any noise pollution from the site?
- Maintenance of the solar panels, what is the impact after they are installed. With regards the regular washing, what happens to the wastewater from this? Is it recycled or does it go to ground - if so, is there potential for contamination over time from this? Are chemicals used during this process?
- The obligation is to fence around the panels, but could it be hedgerow instead? The fencing off and visual aspects if solar panels were to be installed would turn it into an industrial area as opposed to the landscape that we are used to and that we enjoy.
- What happens at the end of the lease? Does the land revert to agricultural?
- Do Solar Farms affect house prices? Has there been any research undertaken?
- Is there any impact on human health?
- What is the impact on wildlife and the environment? Is the developer already planning any initiatives? At present the area is abundant with many varieties of wildlife; changes to their environment could have devastating effects.
- Bird and insect pollination - will the surrounding flora be affected?
- Are there more suitable sites for the proposed farms? Existing industrial sites becoming vacant or are already redundant. What is the reasoning for the development site?
- Will the land underneath be used for grazing?
- From what we understand trees cannot be cut to make way for the solar panels. Is this the case?
- Concerns about loss of agricultural land for food security, however good or poor quality it is. The landowners have made a living from the poor-quality land for decades and are still growing crops on it.
- Enjoyment of walking routes - it is likely the few walking routes and public paths will be encroached upon by the developments and thus, spoiling the enjoyment of walking in the countryside. How will the development impact the current walking routes?
- Outlook and skyline - how will the developments impact our view of the countryside?
- Construction damage and pollution - what controls will be put in place to ensure the developers refrain from damaging and polluting in and around the development sites with construction waste, litter and plastics?
- Drainage systems - will the controlled drainage systems, ditches and dykes be affected which could have a direct impact on dwelling areas?
- Disruption - how will the developer ensure there is no disruption in the area during the development? I.e., road closures, increased traffic.
- Exclusion zone - why and what is the reasoning for the exclusion zone?
- Development site - is the site likely to be extended, reduced or is it final?
- Installation - will power cables be underground or over ground?

- Re-wilding - is there any plans to re-wild areas that could be impacted on by the development to mitigate potential adverse effects?
- Recreation area (sports field) - is there any opportunity to provide Knaith Park with a small recreation or sports field?
- Broadband - will the developer collaborate with Open Reach to improve broadband speeds in Knaith Park by installing the appropriate technology as part of the development?
- Electricity Supply - can the residents of the affected villages be put on zero tariff electrical supply?
- Is Community funding/mitigation for local projects/improvements available?
- Do the solar panels cause any issue for aircrafts?
- Climate change - can the developer provide other climate change initiatives to assist residents to become greener in their own dwellings.
- Scheme motivated by money and because of the Government's Climate Change Agenda these projects are likely to be granted with no concerns about the impact on local areas.
- Do the farmers, whose land has been highlighted as proposed sites, get a choice in whether their land is used?
- Why can't housing be used as opposed farm/food production land?
- If the development is approved, what are the developers' obligations (as part of the DCO approval), for the returning of the land to its original state after the planned lifecycle end of the development? What assurances are there that the land will not be automatically considered as suitable for further developments (in whatever guise)?

Proposed Gate Burton Solar Energy Park Development

Knaith Parish Council COUNCILLORS Current Position / View

The following is the collective position / view of the Knaith Parish Council (KPC) Councillors in regard to the proposed Gate Burton Solar Energy Park development.

The position / view is **solely** that of the Councillors and **not** a representative view of the Parishioners of which an overall collective position has not to date, been sought.

The position / view is split into 3 broad categories;

- Current footprint of the proposed development
- Community Impact Zones
- Community benefits

Current footprint of the proposed development

The Councillors are of the opinion that the current footprint of the proposed development is **excessive**. Although Councillors are very aware of and support the requirement of the the U.K. Gov to drive toward green and renewable energy solutions, this should not be at the detriment of the hamlets and villages on or within the boundaries of the proposed development.

This view is based upon several concerning factors, which have already been submitted as part of the non-statutory consultation but broadly centre around, the diverse wildlife and nature which will be impacted, the loss of arable land and views & walks which also be significantly impacted.

With such a huge, proposed development so close to the hamlets and villages, the councillors believe this to be a significantly unique factor, which sets apart **this** proposed development from others that have been approved across the U.K.

Community Impact Zones

If the proposed development were to gain traction early on in the Development Consent Order process (at the current proposed footprint size), the Councillors would stringently attempt to curb the impact to hamlets and villages on or within the boundaries of the proposed developments.

Councillors would attempt to achieve these protections by proposing and pursuing Community Impact Zones (CIZs). Full proposals are still in an embryonic phase, however, CIZs would be a large buffer between the hamlets and villages and the nearest impacting solar panel sites, which would impact current rural community life and culture such as, views, walks, small holding farming, field sports and equestrian activities.

Councillors would be **robust** in the pursuing of said CIZs if planning in its current state gained early U.K. Gov. 'favour' or future approval.

Community benefits

If **any** scale of proposed development gains U.K. Gov. approval, Councillors would be **robust** in pursuing KPC community benefits, as a very close neighbour and stakeholder of any approved development, in the form of development compensation. Councillors would expect close

consultation and agreement of community compensation with the developer **before** DCO approval is gained.

Such compensation **may** include initiatives such as:

- Road traffic calming measures infrastructure
- Community broadband support
- Village Hall improvements
- Upgrade / maintenance of Public Rights of Way
- Community Solar Panel initiatives

Gate Burton – Representation Comments – Knaith Parish Council

- This application is just 1 of 4 (currently) within a few miles of each other. The total area would amount to around 10,000 acres of farmed land. These 4 projects, at present, are all going to be submitted and accessed individually. Surely it would be better that they are assessed as a whole. The impact of one project is far different than that of the impact of 4.
 - Do you think this is reasonable or should they be assessed altogether?
- The Parish Council are of the opinion that the current footprint of the proposed development is **excessive**. Although Councillors are very aware of and support the requirement of the U.K. Governments drive towards green and renewable energy solutions, this should not be at the detriment of the hamlets and villages on or within the boundaries of the proposed development. This view is based upon several concerning factors, which have already been submitted as part of the non-statutory consultation but broadly centre on, the diverse wildlife and nature which will be impacted, the loss of arable land and views & walks which also be significantly impacted. With such a huge, proposed development so close to the hamlets and villages, the councillors believe this to be a significantly unique factor, which sets apart **this** proposed development from others that have been approved across the U.K.
- Why are there sites where land is unused and does not affect anyone but are not being considered, for example moorland? This raises a number of concerns/issues:
 - The land in question is viable agricultural land. Food producing land will be lost.
 - The proposed project will encompass the hamlets within the proposed area. With the boundary of some areas of the project being close to residential property.
 - The affect this will have on jobs and skills within the farming industry.
- The combined construction time would be 4 years when combined with the other 3 projects. This will undoubtedly cause disruption in and around the proposed site, increased works traffic; mental health issues/wellbeing issues for residents and visitors to the area and will natural habitats and wildlife are affected.
- Solar panels are inefficient and a poor use of the land. We were given figures of around 27% efficient, which is a low level of energy gained. Surely these would be more effective covering the vast amount of commercial and domestic roof space where it can directly help with energy costs as opposed to inefficiently covering farmland. It is a nonsense that a 'new build' property has to have an electric charge point by law, but does not have to have any solar panels or heat pump.
- This proposal on open farmland would not only be visible from country lanes but also to the local properties in which this site would encompass.
 - Would this land covered by such structures blend into the landscape or dominate it?
- Were important factors such as panel height, glare, battery storage, generation capabilities, flood risk and brownfield site use accurately communicated.
- The solar panels and precious minerals are to be sourced and manufactured abroad in China and the construction (allegedly forced) labour sourced outside of the area.
 - This begs the question as to whether this is an ethically sound proposal. Will the human rights of these overseas works be respected and checked upon?
- When the developer consulted the public on this proposal the majority of people expressed that they are totally against these plans with approximately 78% against and only 2% in support. This is direct from the people that live in these small hamlets which are going to be swallowed up by these solar

farms. The people here have paid a premium to live in the countryside not only in the house prices but in Council Tax Rates too. The overriding opinion is against these plans; any other plans that would have been submitted to WLDC would be thrown out on this basis alone as this is a stipulation in the Local plan. So how can the opinions of local people count for nothing.

- A concern over how these projects will affect house prices. If accepted will have a massive detriment to the appeal and state of this area with building works lasting years and the loss of over 10,000 acres of farmland/public footpaths/beauty spots.
- Has any research been done into any health issues caused by having solar panels and the battery storage units etc. so close to houses? If not, why not?
- One of the world's largest Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) is a potential fire and chemical risk to life and property.
 - Is it acceptable to locate this kind of infrastructure on farmland?
 - Or is it better to locate this apparatus close to the Grid connection or a brownfield site?
- The Gate Burton Energy Park is in close proximity to many historic buildings and the heritage village of Gate Burton.
 - Has the land been selected on suitability or purely on availability?
 - Has the scheme been well planned and does it really consider the environment and wildlife?