

I am concerned about the loss of prime arable land in the current era of climate change. Scientists are increasingly publicising the likelihood of reduced yields and crop failure due to rising global temperatures. Additionally as a country we have seen the dangers of over reliance on grain importation with last years issues in the Ukraine affecting grain deliveries. This had the potential to have been much worse than it was. It seems to me as a country we need to be increasing our arable acreage not decreasing it and not being as reliant on importing from other countries. Scientists are predicting global famines and wars over food and water in the not too distant future. I fully understand the need for more sustainable energy production and that this can help lessen global warming. However there are alternative sites for solar panel locations, roofs being the main one, brown field sites rather than arable land, even the central reservations and sides of motorways as undertaken successfully in Germany. There is a lot of non utilised space which would not have such an impact and I firmly believe we need to look at these alternatives. If permission is given for these solar panels it seems like it will be a decision which will be hard to come back from. Twenty years of no fertilisation will surely affect the soil here making it hard to ever grow crops on the land in the future. We need to protect our land for future generations not keep on wrecking it. Solar panels will also seriously impact wildlife. I frequently walk on the local footpaths and cycle down the lanes and often see deer in the fields. With fencing, etc where would they go? We're already locally seeing deer drown in the local rivers as they struggle to navigate around. On a smaller scale with less plants growing this could impact insects and bees. We need these insects for pollination and again a decrease in numbers could affect crop production. Bird populations in the U.K. are in free fall, 48% of all bird species have declined in the last few decades. For farmland birds this figure is 67%. Sparrow populations are at a tenth what they were 50 years ago. We could easily soon lose many species permanently with loss of habitat seen to be their biggest threat.

I really hope that you will consider this matter very seriously as I'm afraid that if the wrong decision is made that in years to come we will all realise what a mistake was made but that it will be too late to reverse the effects.