

## GABE – IP248

Since the proposed scheme was announced I have engaged with the process, read so many documents published which is a monumental and complicated process for an individual, attended in person meetings to make sure I am informed and able to make what I believe are sound decisions based on information provided by the applicant. I would point out the convenience of a connection onto the national grid is not a good enough reason for the Low Carbon Gate Burton Energy Park project to be given the go-ahead, nor the 3 further solar projects totalling 10,000 acres in this small area of Lincolnshire countryside.

## COMMUNITIES

The communities of 30 villages will be affected, (including mine which will be completely surrounded and overwhelmed North, South, East & West for miles) imprisoned by 3.5 to 4.5m (15ft high) tracking/static solar panels, highly dangerous BESS batteries, sub-stations, 'shipping containers' in the hundreds, security fencing, intrusion of CCTV not seen on this scale in a countryside setting, notwithstanding all the associated paraphernalia on both sides of the A1500 and the B1241 that I and others travel daily and also along the A156 and the narrow, inter-twining country lanes between these 30 villages. Despite Low Carbon's statement to the contrary, cameras will undoubtedly capture the image of a person(s) across the diagonal walking along the perimeter fencing.

## HEALTH & WELLBEING

I can think of no more a soul destroying, demoralising and depressing existence for all who will be affected by this and the other three proposed solar developments in such close proximity to each other. Individually each Project is of such magnitude that combined they are almost 20 km (over 12 miles) from one end to the other with a perimeter stretching over 80 km (50 miles). The impact on the lives of the residents including my own family, my grandchildren, and the well-being and mental health of others by the cumulative nature of these solar developments will be appalling. We can already see the effects on mental health and well-being as there is anxiety, stress and upset within the affected communities which, along with many other concerns, is also elucidated to in the Relevant Representations from interested parties that have been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. This is despite Low Carbon's attempts to mitigate the mental health and well-being aspect through reference to documentation EN010131/APP/3.3, Environmental Statement Volume 3, Appendix 14-A: Health and Wellbeing Legislation and Policy. January 2023 there is no mention in that documentation of either the visual effects, nor the 24 hour, 365 days per year daily noise, from a solar scheme on this scale on a person's health and well-being and the significant Loss of Amenity Use and Visual Impact affecting a far greater area than the boundaries of the scheme. Assessment by Low Carbon that 'During construction, the impact on Human Health and Wellbeing is assessed as: neutral • During operation, the impact on Human Health and Wellbeing is assessed as: neutral • During decommissioning, the impact on Human Health and Wellbeing is assessed as: neutral' will be shown to be an inaccurate narrative. The harm caused to landscape character and visual amenity and the environment as a whole is significant. Too much land risks being lost to decisions being 'noddled through' under the banner of 'climate emergency' in a headlong rush that totally ignores that any climate response will also need a coherent response to sustainable food production.

## TERM OF SCHEME & NEW TECHNOLOGY

We are facing industrialisation and annihilation of beautiful, wildlife diverse uninterrupted countryside and productive farmland around our homes - in the case of Low Carbon Gate Burton it will be for 60 years minimum. As I have quoted before this term is far from temporary as it is a generational period of time. There is no other solar development that has been in-situ for 60 years that can be used as a measure and such is the possibility of the Gate Burton development becoming obsolete long before that time as new technologies emerge, ie domestic and commercial solar glass windows, solar roof tiles, and to power vehicles integrated solar panels and solar glass windows. One only has to consider the speed of change with the 'www' and mobile phone technology as an example.

## ENERGY PRODUCED VERSUS CARBON SAVINGS

There are questions over the accuracy of the forecasts by Low Carbon for the amount of energy this project is likely to produce for the amount of BMV farmland that is being plundered, 1690 acres (648 hectares) particularly in the depths of winter when energy is most needed. On average solar can only deliver 11% of its stated output in the UK. The applicant has provided no evidence for the actual carbon savings that this scheme will produce. Until we see this evidence then the scheme has to be seen as not being carbon neutral. A Green Solution: No ! Together with sourcing concerns for industrial scale solar panels (from China) and with its recorded human rights abuses and the carbon footprint to ship panels to the UK. The risks of these proposals very much outweigh the hypothesised/speculated benefits put forward by Low Carbon.

## WILDLIFE & HABITAT/ECOLOGY & NATURE CONSERVATION

- i) The effects of EMF on people is known and Low Carbon has referred to this in their response to Relevant Representations. I question the effects of EMF on wildlife entering and / or making a home in the solar compound as I have seen nothing in Low Carbon's documentation on the health and safety of wildlife in this regard ?
- ii) I would like to know what the rate of EMF will be in the centre of the Gate Burton solar project on the basis that EMF exposures were low (less than 0.5 mG at the site boundary measurements taken at the three commercial PV arrays in Massachusetts) based on distance from the source.
- iii) Chapter 8: Ecology and Nature Conservation (APP-017/3/1) states that 'deer fencing' 3m in height will include gaps in the base to allow mammals, including small deer, badger, etc to move across the Scheme. The smallest deer in the Lincolnshire area are Muntjac which stand 15 – 25 inches at the shoulder and are quite stocky. The adult male badger is a stocky animal reaching 25lbs and more. The size of gap needed to allow these animals to move freely without harm or hindrance through the space would probably also enable a small young person/child to enter the compound. In ensuring the safety of wildlife how can you also prevent a young person gaining access through such a gap as you make no mention of the gap size in your response to a relevant representation.  
What size gap is being proposed in the fencing for the larger wildlife ?
- iv) The larger deer in the area are already a risk to road users, sadly having been witness to such an event recently of a deer in collision with two vehicles. They roam over very large areas and distances and by curtailing their movement further and their feeding areas by fencing off 1690 acres, permanent or temporary, will change their behaviour with a greater risk to the animal and road users.
- v) I have been privileged to witness as many as 5 brown hares in a boxing match darting back and forth across open

grassland unhindered. Mixed arable and livestock farms and a mosaic of fields at different stages of crop and grass growth, are their preferred haunts. Removing these areas of agricultural farmland puts the brown hare at risk.

vi) Hedgerows make an incredible contribution to halting biodiversity decline and tackling climate change so it is folly to remove established 30 year old hedges and replant with bare root whips that will take 15 years or more to establish and obscure solar panels. They are crucial for climate adaptation and storing carbon. Hedgerows are the very essence of our countryside, they are important boundary features, help to manage livestock, slow soil erosion and water run-off, and support crop pollinators for food production. They also provide vital resources for mammals, birds and other species. They act as wildlife corridors – allowing species to move between isolated habitats and can also harbour beneficial insects that predate crop pests, thereby supporting an integrated pest management approach and they add to the beauty of our Lincolnshire countryside.

Overall this proposed solar development will destroy the environment.

P A Mitchell

8 August 2023