

File Name: Open Floor Hearing Part 1.mp3  
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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:05:00 - 00:00:18:11

Good evening everyone. Time is out just after 6:00. And this open floor hearing for the West Burton solar project now open. Thank you for joining us today. Can everyone hear me first of all.

00:00:21:07 - 00:00:46:15

And a member of the team confirm that live streaming and recording started. Thank you. Then. My name is Andrea McGeehan. I am the lead member of a panel of examining inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State. The application made by West Burton Solar Project Limited for an order granting development consent for the West Burton Solar project. I'm not going to ask my fellow member to introduce themselves.

00:00:47:06 - 00:00:51:22

Good evening everyone. My name is Jonathan Medlin. I am the other member of the panel.

00:00:54:10 - 00:01:16:28

So you'll hear us referred to as the Examining Authority. Our role is to examine the application and, on conclusion of the examination, to write a report to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net-zero. The recommendation on whether the development consent Order should be made. Our examination started early earlier today following the preliminary meeting.

00:01:18:15 - 00:01:34:15

A case team. Sorry. A case team works alongside us throughout the process, and we have Louise Haraway and Simon Redwood here with us today. They should be your first point of contact. If you have any queries about the examination process or the arrangements for hearings.

00:01:37:12 - 00:01:53:07

Just a couple of house keeping matters. Could everyone please keep all devices and phones set to silent and toilets along the corridor on the left hand side, and there aren't any fire planned fire tests today? In the event that the alarm sounds, please. And

00:01:55:00 - 00:01:59:16

the fire assembly points, which is the secret act building on behalf of Wolf.

00:02:05:11 - 00:02:27:24

Just in terms of those joining us on Microsoft, Microsoft Teams, the chat function will not be enabled or in use. So please don't try and use that for questions or comments. If you're watching via the live stream, please be aware that it will be stopped during any adjournments to the hearing, and you'll need to refresh your browser to review the to view the restarted hearing.

00:02:30:05 - 00:02:49:00

A recording of today's meeting will be made available on the West Burton Solar Project section of the National Infrastructure Planning website as soon as practicable after the meeting has finished. And so, with that in mind, could you please ensure that you speak clearly into the microphone, stating your name and who you are representing each time you speak?

00:02:51:14 - 00:03:21:15

These recordings will form a public record and can contain personal information to which the General Data Protection regulations apply. The planning Inspectorate's practice is to retain and publish recordings for a period of five years from the Secretary State's decision on the Development Consent Order. So if you participate in today's hearing, it's important that you understand that you will be recorded and therefore your consent to the retention and publication of and therefore you give your consent.

00:03:21:17 - 00:03:24:21

Sorry to the retention and publication of the digital recording.

00:03:28:01 - 00:04:01:14

We will only ever ask for information to be placed on the public record that is important and relevant to the decision. It will only be in the rarest of circumstances that we ask you to provide personal information of the type that most of us would prefer to keep private or confidential. So please try your best not to say or reveal anything that you would wish to be kept private or that is confidential. If you want to tell us about where you live and it's relevant to what you want to say, and please just give a general location rather than a specific address.

00:04:04:23 - 00:04:13:21

So a link to the Planning Inspectorate Privacy Policy was provided in the rule six letter. Please ask a member of the case team if you have any questions about this.

00:04:16:18 - 00:04:45:03

You may find it useful to have the agenda that was published on the 26th of October at hand during the hearing, and relevant parts of that will be displayed. I think it's there in front of in front of you now. The purpose of this open floor hearing is for us to hear the views of those interested parties and other parties and other parties who requested this opportunity to speak to the examining authority. It's an opportunity for us to hear your thoughts about the application at first hand.

00:04:47:00 - 00:05:05:16

The applicant the opportunity to respond orally to all submissions and after the after the hearing, when we've heard from all of those who wish to speak sorry, we will give the applicant the opportunity to respond after hearing from all of those who wish to speak. Alternatively, the applicant may respond in writing at deadline one.

00:05:07:09 - 00:05:11:19

And ask who will be speaking for the applicant this evening, please.

00:05:20:16 - 00:05:27:00

Apogee, medical director at Pinsent Masons, representing the applicant West Burton Solar Project Limited.

00:05:29:05 - 00:05:29:20

Okay.

00:05:35:03 - 00:05:43:17

And was also wanting to ask if representatives of local authorities present. Want to introduce themselves at this stage.

00:05:52:00 - 00:05:52:15

Okay.

00:05:55:09 - 00:06:11:26

I'm not going to ask any further introductions at this stage, and there'll be an opportunity for those who've requested to speak to introduce themselves later on. Each time you do speak, please give your name and the organization that you're representing so that this is picked up for the formal record.

00:06:13:12 - 00:06:30:08

So in terms of the agenda, with just about to complete item one, I think it's up on the. He's on the screen in front of us. Or at least the joining instructions are, could we go down a little further, please, into the agenda itself?

00:06:32:29 - 00:06:51:27

Thank you. Just just a final point under the first item and subject to progress. We do intend to take a break in around 90 minutes or so, depending on where we're up to. And so at around 730. Any questions about the agenda or arrangements for hearing before we go on?

00:06:57:21 - 00:06:58:18

Okay. Thank you.

00:07:01:14 - 00:07:15:23

Thank you. So we're now moving on to agenda item two. Purpose of the open floor hearing. As mentioned, the purpose of the hearing is to give interested parties an opportunity to make oral representations about anything they consider to be important.

00:07:17:12 - 00:07:47:27

An open floor hearing is not about a particular location or topic. Topic is up to yourselves. This hearing is subject to the examining authority's powers of control over the conduct as established by the Planning Act 2008. Purpose of the hearing is to assist. Our examination should not be used as a political platform. Any attempts to do so will not be tolerated. Various powers within the Planning Act to address conduct or disruptions.

00:07:48:10 - 00:07:50:04

Please be respectful to other speakers.

00:07:52:03 - 00:08:27:16

To clarify, your submissions must focus on matters that are important and relevant to this examination only. Each interested party has indicated a wish to speak. You'll be invited to do so at the appropriate time. These are all submissions should be based on representations previously made in writing. However, they should not simply be used as an opportunity to repeat those things that have already been submitted in writing. They can and should provide further detail, explanation, probative evidence and so on that will help inform the examining authority.

00:08:29:01 - 00:09:05:11

You suggested in the in the letter and on the agenda that each speaker completes the submission within ten minutes. More generally, we ask that you keep your oral statements succinct and to the point. Simply repeating a point made by others does not add to its weight. When making your submission, it is not necessary to repeat points just to indicate that you agree with whoever said something that you agree with. We may, if you become repetitious, ask you to move on or to conclude your oral statements, as we want to hear from all interested parties who wish to take the opportunity to address us.

00:09:07:12 - 00:09:07:27

We will.

00:09:08:21 - 00:09:12:19

As we consider necessary, ask questions of the speaker.

00:09:14:05 - 00:09:38:20

It usually will be. Points of clarity. The applicant will be provided with the opportunity at the end to respond. Should this be needed? Uh, we have received notification that nine interested parties and one other person wish to speak at this hearing. That status is explained within the rule six letter of what other person means and in various forms of guidance.

00:09:39:24 - 00:09:40:19

The purposes of.

00:09:40:21 - 00:10:10:27

The open floor. Hearing all of those who have let us know will we'll be given that opportunity to speak. And we'll start by confirming whether or not those parties are here, either in the room or virtually, to run through the list in front of us. This list corresponds with the order in which they were received. We also hear from. We will also be hearing from speakers in the order in which those requests were received. Unless there are any particular request to various order.

00:10:12:08 - 00:10:45:01

Please remember to unmute your microphone when you speak. If you are joining via Microsoft teams, please switch on your camera when we invite you to speak if you're comfortable doing so. They switch microphones and cameras off again when we move on to the next speaker. The roving microphone, as you've seen, is available for anybody in the ring. That we invite a speaker who does not have a static microphone in front of them. It's important that all contributions are made using microphones so that they're captured for the formal record. If there are a number of people representing a party and please all join the screen.

00:10:45:18 - 00:11:21:06

If on the screen with cameras on together and introduce themselves one by one. When you introduce yourself, please indicate how you wish to be addressed. Example. Mr.. Mrs.. Etcetera. And whether or not you represent a particular group or organisation. So I will now start by checking who is here in the order of the request we received. That is the official notification sent to the case team. Will start please with 7000 acres. If you could introduce yourself and speakers and indicate how you wish to be addressed.

00:11:29:10 - 00:11:31:10

Send the roving mike round. Have you got it, Simon?

00:11:33:13 - 00:11:34:03

Thank you.

00:11:41:27 - 00:11:54:09

No. Liz Garbutt, 7000 acres. You're dressed as Miss Garbutt, and I'll be the only person speaking on behalf of the group. Believe you. Thank you.

00:11:55:09 - 00:12:00:22

We also received information from Nottinghamshire County Council.

00:12:02:26 - 00:12:06:17

They're representative of Notts County Council here or online.

00:12:09:02 - 00:12:11:01

I don't believe so.

00:12:12:23 - 00:12:17:29

Next on the list is Mrs. Christine Moran. Mrs. Christine Moran could make yourself known.

00:12:24:00 - 00:12:25:29

Hello, Mrs. Warren.

00:12:26:15 - 00:12:27:19

Mrs. Warren, thank you.

00:12:30:22 - 00:12:34:24

Simon Skelton, if you could identify yourself. Thank you.

00:12:43:19 - 00:12:49:15

I saw him. Skelton, a resident, Mr. Skelton. Thank you.

00:12:49:26 - 00:12:55:15

Thank you. And the next on the list is Mrs. Patricia Mitchell.

00:13:06:17 - 00:13:11:06

Hello. Pat Mitchell. Interested party. But Mitchell.

00:13:13:09 - 00:13:20:05

Knows that, Mrs. Mitchell. Okay. Thank you. The next on my list is Michael Dover.

00:13:22:13 - 00:13:23:19

Thank you. In the middle.

00:13:31:14 - 00:13:34:17

A Michael Dover impacted resident of West Lindsey.

00:13:36:05 - 00:13:39:17

Thank you. Is that Mr. Dover? Yeah.

00:13:43:02 - 00:13:46:17

The next on my list is Stoughton by Stowe Parish Council.

00:13:48:08 - 00:13:51:02

Excuse me. From the left. I'm looking.

00:13:52:19 - 00:13:58:00

Hello, Carol. Gilbert Stoughton by Stowe Parish Council. Mrs. Gilbert.

00:14:00:07 - 00:14:00:24

Thank you.

00:14:04:00 - 00:14:10:20

I have a note here. The bringing the Bingham family. Representatives of Bingham. Thank you.

00:14:15:24 - 00:14:16:23

Sue Bingham.

00:14:16:25 - 00:14:25:24

Representing a fourth generation family farm on grade three land at Willingham, Barstow. Mrs. Bingham.

00:14:25:26 - 00:14:27:03

Mrs. Bingham, thank you.

00:14:29:20 - 00:14:35:04

And next on my list is Martin Browne, who I'd leave. You'll be joining virtually.

00:14:42:05 - 00:14:47:11

Good evening, Martin Brown. I'm an interested party who lives locally.

00:14:48:23 - 00:14:51:19

Good evening. Thank you for joining. Is it Mr. Brown?

00:14:52:04 - 00:14:53:07

It's Mr. Brown. Yeah.

00:14:53:23 - 00:14:54:08

Thank you.

00:14:56:10 - 00:15:00:09

And on my list. Also Sir Edward Lee MP.

00:15:06:08 - 00:15:08:16

Edward Lee, Member of Parliament for Gainsborough.

00:15:09:28 - 00:15:12:14

Thank you. Is that surly?

00:15:13:15 - 00:15:14:04

Love you like.

00:15:16:12 - 00:15:16:27

Thank you.

00:15:18:21 - 00:15:42:05

Okay. We are aware of a number of other requests to speak. Procedurally, we do ask for advance notice of such requests, and that should have been set out in our letters. This really helps the case team to administer events such as this. In terms of these late requests, I have Mrs. Margaret O'Grady of Silicon Parish meeting.

00:15:48:27 - 00:15:57:02

Margaret O'Grady filling and parish meeting. I'm the chair and my apologies for omitting to submit it earlier. And Mrs. O'Grady.

00:15:57:25 - 00:16:05:22

Thank you. And were there others associated with filling the parish meeting? Who will be speaking? No.

00:16:07:09 - 00:16:13:20

Not just myself as filling in parish meeting. There are other residents here from Billingham who wish to speak.

00:16:13:22 - 00:16:17:02

They'll be on my list and I hope Callum O'Grady.

00:16:19:27 - 00:16:21:00

Kalama Grady

00:16:22:18 - 00:16:24:21

resident. Of.

00:16:26:23 - 00:16:27:18

Mr. O'Grady.

00:16:27:22 - 00:16:33:09

Mr. Grady, thank you. Uh, Harry Hepburn.

00:16:37:08 - 00:16:41:07

Hello. Perry Hepburn, resident of Billingham. Interested party.

00:16:41:28 - 00:16:45:12

Thank you. It's that Mrs.. Miss.

00:16:48:19 - 00:16:49:04

Thank you.

00:16:50:22 - 00:16:53:09

Okay. Joseph Cresswell.

00:17:00:21 - 00:17:09:00

Joseph Cresswell, local resident of the West Lindsey district. Mr..

00:17:09:12 - 00:17:10:00

Thank you.

00:17:11:24 - 00:17:14:15

Andrew Johnson is next on my list.

00:17:16:29 - 00:17:18:21

Andrew Johnson, local resident.

00:17:18:23 - 00:17:20:00

Mr. Johnson, please.

00:17:20:09 - 00:17:20:29

Thank you.

00:17:23:11 - 00:17:24:20

John Parkin.

00:17:30:12 - 00:17:38:16

Don Pakenham, a local resident also associated with 7000 acres. And I'd like to refer to Dr. John Buchan.

00:17:39:09 - 00:17:41:19

Dr.. Thank you.

00:17:43:13 - 00:17:45:28

Uh now a non.

00:17:46:13 - 00:17:51:23

John scores if I've pronounced that correctly. Over in the front here.

00:17:58:00 - 00:18:00:11

All schools resident of Ingham.

00:18:01:28 - 00:18:03:09

Interested party.

00:18:03:16 - 00:18:05:23

Thank you. And is it Mr.. Schools?

00:18:08:08 - 00:18:16:24

Scai. That concludes the list that I have in front of me. Is there anyone else in the room who would like to speak to me?

00:18:18:11 - 00:18:19:29

Okay, if we could.

00:18:23:14 - 00:18:24:25

Simon Stiles.

00:18:24:27 - 00:18:26:19

A peasant of Bentworth.

00:18:27:18 - 00:18:29:07

Okay, Simon Stiles and I.

00:18:29:09 - 00:18:31:18

Really don't mind what personal pronoun use.

00:18:34:10 - 00:18:34:27

Thank you.

00:18:37:28 - 00:18:42:24

Any others in the room towards the front. You.

00:18:46:27 - 00:18:51:18

Sarah Grady, resident of Billingham. Thank you sir. Mr. Grady.

00:18:53:15 - 00:18:54:00

Right.



00:18:54:08 - 00:18:55:00

Thank you.

00:18:59:25 - 00:19:07:21

So I think that's everybody captured within the room. Is there anybody taking part via Microsoft teams who would like to speak today?

00:19:16:03 - 00:19:24:08

It doesn't appear that we have anyone other than Mr. Brown virtually. Okay. Thank you.

00:19:30:07 - 00:19:54:09

Hey. Thank you. Just to reiterate and the question of the people that want to to speak. And it's perfectly acceptable if the point's already been made, it's perfectly acceptable for you to agree with the point that's already been made, rather than than go through that again and try and get through things, through the speakers as efficiently as possible in that space, in that sorry. In that sense.

00:19:55:27 - 00:20:24:04

All right. So we will hear oral submissions in the order that the parties have introduced themselves. And please, when we invite you to speak, come up to the the table in front of us and use the microphone there. Just to note that we will be we will be taking notes. So please don't be put off if we're not looking directly to you and think we can take down the agenda now, please.

00:20:25:27 - 00:20:31:11

So first of all, for 7000 acres.

00:20:33:22 - 00:20:48:24

No. Can I just say from the outset that it's really not appropriate that we have applause during the hearing? It really doesn't help us with and understanding the information that's being presented to us. And it can be off putting for for some speakers. So please, no applause, please. Thank you.

00:21:05:04 - 00:21:46:19

Alice Garbutt, 7000 acres. Thank you ma'am. This project comes down to three simple things. Need benefits and impacts. In terms of need, we do not dispute the need to decarbonise and that solar has a role to play. However, the first key question we would like the examining authority address in this regard is what is it? A specific need for large scale ground mounted solar development in the UK? UK Warehouse Association have found that by using only the largest 20% of commercial rooftops, this could double the UK's existing solar capacity from 14GW to 28GW.

00:21:46:23 - 00:22:22:16

And in May this year, Eco Tricity published a report that estimated that from what they consider suitable domestic rooftops, a further 37GW of solar could be installed. These examples highlight that there is a growing evidence that there is sufficient available rooftop solar capacity from suitable buildings for the UK to meet its solar requirements. In terms of benefits. It is clear that the developer has persisted in providing oversimplistic and misleading information regarding the role solar power can play in the future of electricity supply.

00:22:23:09 - 00:22:56:01

The fundamental. Principle for the electricity system to operate is that supply must match demand at all times. This is a challenge as demand is highly variable throughout the day and over the year. No solar scheme can power 100,000 homes, as a developer has repeatedly stated. Not even a scheme as vast as this, because solar schemes do not address the fundamental requirement to match electricity supply with demand in the moment.

00:22:56:19 - 00:23:33:20

Solar is an intermittent form of electricity generation. It also has the lowest load factor of any renewable technology, which is the actual yield from the headline capacity figure for the scheme. For a 500 megawatt capacity scheme using UK government energy statistics, solar delivers between 9 to 11% of this capacity on average, so around 50MW in practice. However, increasingly it is when power is produced that matters. Peak solar output is when demand is typically very low, when the country needs most power on a winter evening.

00:23:33:22 - 00:24:04:24

Solar produces nothing. What is worse is that the electricity system is already finding itself with too much power on summer days, resulting in a phenomenon the national grid calls curtailment, where excess renewable power is switched off, for which the generator concerned will be compensated. National grid for curtailment will grow to between 50 to 90 terawatts of energy per year by 2030. This is the amount of electricity that is hard to fathom.

00:24:05:03 - 00:24:57:15

The whole country currently uses around 300 terawatts a year, therefore wasting between 15 to 30% of the country's demand need because of excess installed capacity that the system cannot handle. All this means that the contribution this solution can make, the energy system is limited, and therefore the overall decarbonization benefits are also limited. Our second key question we would like to ensure the examining authority thoroughly covers is to what extent can the proposed solar scheme truly contribute to decarbonisation of the electricity system? In doing so, we would seek the examining authority to thoroughly understand and assess the potential role of this solar scheme, what it can contribute and, crucially, what problems it also causes for the future decarbonised energy system.

00:24:58:02 - 00:25:43:06

This question is crucial because these benefits will be weighed against the harms and consequences of the development. Therefore, developer must not be allowed to overstate and oversimplify the benefits of the proposed scheme. The next dimension is the impact the scheme will have. Harm stems from the fact that solar has an extremely low power density, which means that a ground mounted solar scheme of this capacity uses a colossal amount of space. Using so much land as a tremendous concentrated impact on the immediate area and its people, consuming such huge areas of land also puts a wider pressure on land use and on agricultural crop land in particular, which is facing many pressures.

00:25:43:22 - 00:26:16:12

UK Climate Change Committee asserts we will need to lose some of this land, to plant trees, to sequester carbon and for energy crops. There are fears that climate change will change the yields of UK farmland, and rising sea levels have the potential to have a further impact, all of which is before any renewed expansion of urban development is considered. In addition to this, there are growing demands to increase self-sufficiency of food production because of food security concerns in the wake of rising global political instability.

00:26:16:29 - 00:27:24:01

This is not about the land that is best and most versatile. Or what land is 3 or 3 B, which are frequent distractions used by developers to deflect from the fundamental need to use our precious land resources efficiently. Quite simply, overcommitting agricultural under such inefficient land use as ground mounted solar could very quickly become a cause for regret. But how so arise from the fact that by proposing 4.5m high tracking panels, the applicant has shown no sensitivity to the local area and its communities? Our third question to the examining authorities, therefore, what are the impacts of the scheme when considered both from the perspective of the immediate area, but also from a macro level that truly considers the wider impacts of consuming crop land at this scale? There was a huge challenge to decarbonise the UK and good progress has already been made, particularly with the closure of coal fired generation and the significant contribution by renewable generation, especially from offshore wind, to decarbonise power.

00:27:24:03 - 00:27:57:27

The challenges from here are in two main areas. The first main area is about getting power to the right place. By far the largest source of the country's future energy will be wind power, perhaps 50% or more, according to the National Grid. At a transmission level, it is essential that this has a necessary grid infrastructure so it can be used at a distribution level. We need to configure networks to enable charging infrastructure to power electric cables and decarbonise transport in the UK.

00:27:57:29 - 00:28:28:09

At present, there is a bandwagon for large scale ground multicellular development akin to the Wild West style goldrush, with over 130GW of solar currently in the national grid queue for grid connections, which is a significant contributor to the problem of massive delays in the process of securing grid connections. The second challenge is about being able to flexibly produce clean energy for when the wind doesn't blow or the sun doesn't shine sufficiently to meet demand.

00:28:28:15 - 00:29:05:03

This is about dispatchable, low or no carbon generation or in seasonal energy storage. These are the key areas to decarbonisation, but you don't need to take the words of 7000 acres on this. Three major reports have been published this year the necessity colonisation of the power sector in the UK and current progress towards delivering on that goal. In doing so, these describe the main challenges and extent to which solar plays a role. These reports are from the UK Climate Change Committee, the National Audit Office and the business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee.

00:29:05:24 - 00:29:53:16

Together, their most pressing concerns are the need for overall coordination and planning of an energy system, the resolution of grid connection issues especially to deliver offshore wind generation, the inadequate pace, deployment of wind and nuclear power generation, the need to manage energy flexibly, and intermittency of renewable energy sources. Solar simply does not feature in the landscape of key challenges to be overcome. For the UK to deliver on decarbonising the power sector, existing rates of solar deployment are not an area of concern for any of these reports, and the UK Climate Change Committee stated these rates are already close to the annual capacity required to be installed to meet government targets.

00:29:54:07 - 00:30:10:25

This entirely undermines the call by the applicants for extensive acceleration for solar deployment throughout through large scale solar ground mounted solar, as being necessary to achieve the 70 gigawatt solar ambition. Such schemes are redundant.

00:30:13:03 - 00:30:52:10

What is worse is that uncoordinated deployment of solar has a potential to interfere with efficient and effective decarbonization by exacerbating issues of excess renewable supply and curtailment, and that will be required for direct decarbonization measures. Providing additional clutter to an already overwhelmed queue for grid connection applications. Diverting skills resources away from delivering on key priority tasks for decarbonization and scale solar schemes are in fact, a massive distraction from meeting the challenge of decarbonization.

00:30:52:28 - 00:31:23:10

We accept we need solar, but we need to deploy solar in a way that acknowledges the limitations of its contribution to our country. Wherever possible, solar should therefore be delivered where it can make its contribution to the fewest adverse impacts, such as on rooftops. It should not be on ground. The ground mounted on this scale. In conclusion, the developer must not be allowed to overstate and oversimplify benefits and understate harm to financial advantage.

00:31:24:10 - 00:31:47:04

This proposed development, along with the other four in the Western District, have the potential to do significantly harm and even decimate communities for decades and in the worst case, all for schemes that could contribute very little to decarbonisation. It is essential that these decisions are right. They must not be for all. Fool's gold. Thank you.

00:31:48:21 - 00:32:03:08

Thank you, Miss Guard. But just just as I said, I understand that feelings are raised here, but it really isn't appropriate to to applaud or give direct indications of support. So sorry, could you just hang on a second, please, miss. But just just

00:32:04:25 - 00:32:18:29

in terms of what you presented to us, a lot lots of detailed information in there. And we'd ask that you submit that for the deadline. One, please. That would be helpful. Thank you. And just a very quick question. Um, what's the current membership of 7000 acres? Do you know.

00:32:19:16 - 00:32:26:22

At the moment I think it's about a thousand people, but that's members that are registered. There's a wider remit that.

00:32:28:08 - 00:32:36:14

Take the emails of information as such and then pass it on to neighbors and members. We have a wider remit than that, but yes, about a thousand.

00:32:36:24 - 00:32:38:17

Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you.

00:32:43:26 - 00:32:47:02

But I invite Mrs. Warren to speak, please.

00:32:54:13 - 00:33:05:12

Yeah. I'm not sure whether the microphone's on. Is it red? It goes red. It's on. It's the little button at the base there. There we are. Over to you. Hello.

00:33:05:18 - 00:33:08:09

My name is Christine Warren, and I live.

00:33:08:11 - 00:33:10:03

Underneath the towers of West.

00:33:10:09 - 00:33:11:04

And Power Station.

00:33:12:17 - 00:33:43:29

Um, the reason I'm here is in March this year, I had somebody photographing me and my own home, and so started to take an interest in what was going on around. Um, I think being called West Burton Solar is very misleading because I think within the area, people associate West Burton to the cooling towers, and nothing is actually on West Burton. It's in it's on the land around West Burton.

00:33:44:24 - 00:34:15:15

The lane in which I live on, um, I believe, um, well, I actually know that Declan McLaren, who are some sort of agent to the solar, don't know where they fit in, seem to put the applications for the

planning at the top of my lane, of which nobody walks past. Um, so there's only me that sees it, and it's a a saying.

00:34:15:17 - 00:34:53:13

Who lives down this lane? You can see my house, so don't know why that happens, but they do seem to do that, um, and can't seem to find out who is responsible for which part of it. Because we've got the battery packs, we've got the cables, we have the quarry, and we have the solar panels that are coming in at this moment in time, which is our. Yes. Um, and so started walking the lanes and everything. And the thing that's not being looked at is the Wildlife Act legislation, um, of the protection of.

00:34:54:18 - 00:35:27:14

The Wildlife and Country Act of 1981. This is primarily a mechanism for wildlife protection in Britain. The legislation covers four areas. Wildlife protection of wildlife, birds, their eggs and nests. Nature conservation, countryside and national parks, public rights of way, and miscellaneous. Um, and to actually put what you're going to put on the land of certain people, you're going to wipe out a lot of wildlife, which nobody seems to care.

00:35:27:16 - 00:35:59:00

I've got some dogs that walk quite often. Well, walk them every day. And and there's a badger set, according to somebody I talked to from the power station that they can move and you can move a badger set. Um, it's been there as long as I can remember, but apparently we can now move it because it suits. We've also got the hedgerow regulation of 1980, 1997. Um, and so we've got to protect those hedgerows.

00:35:59:02 - 00:36:23:15

We've got badger protection again. The badger setts. Wild Mammals Act of 1996. Um. You, you've got Natural Environment of Rural Communities Act 2006, which protects the animals, produce wildlife conservation, countryside act again, and

00:36:25:00 - 00:36:59:26

you've got section nine of the Wildlife Countryside Act of 1991, which prohibits the damage, destruction and obstruction of access for any for the animals listed in schedule five. You've got section 27 signposting of footpaths, bridleways, highways, authorities. We have a new landowner that's now put in to actually stop public rights of way for us to. Because if a footpath is or a right of way, it's been there for 20 years, you've got to apply to court to keep it live.

00:37:00:04 - 00:37:36:11

And the new landowners trying to stop the right public rights away. And the old landowner, we didn't need to do it because [Redacted] was an honorable man who kept the you didn't need to ask whether you could walk his lands. He was quite happy you did it. Um, and then you've got your countryside. White road. Um. Rights of way and footpaths. I think the other thing is that we're just completely. We've got restricted byways, um, which it's illegal to drive motor vehicles over them.

00:37:36:13 - 00:38:12:18

It's it's you're only supposed to have horses. Um, people are bikes that go on and we we've now, um, also adding to what's going on in there and we've got the quarry, um, which is actually moving sideways to allow the cables running down the old Quarry Road. So, um, so you've got the cables going from the solar panel. So what? Which part of the solar it is? Plus you've got the quarry that's having to move sideways to allow the cables to come in.

00:38:12:20 - 00:38:45:08

And then you've got the battery packs which, which are going to connect in to that. So you've just got too much, um, too many things going on in one area. Um, we are cloud based. Um, so the, all the water just sits on the top. Um, in the other week when it rained, certainly steeper was flooded. And, you know, it's got nowhere to go because it's all clear based. And there's a pond in the middle of certainly steeper that has a newt in it.

00:38:45:18 - 00:39:22:24

And we can't dredge that because it's we've got a newt that we don't want to hurt, but yet you're destroying all the wildlife within the area. Um. I can't find out who to talk to, because once you talk to one person, they don't want to talk to you again. Um, feel intimidated. Frightened in my own home because of the what is going on around me. Um, but you don't show the map of everything that's going on in the area, because if you look at what the, um, the sort of people the panel people are doing, they've got one part.

00:39:22:26 - 00:39:55:13

The quarry has got another part. The battery packs have got another part. The cabling has got another part. You don't nobody can see the whole map of what is going on in the area. So how can you how can you say that you can pass all the things that are happening in the area when you can't see everything that's happening? It's it's just you just destroyed certainly destroying certainly steeper. Because all that is left when you finished is the houses.

00:39:56:08 - 00:40:09:14

There's nothing else left. All the farming is going to go to raise coffee, give 30 million to underdeveloped countries to help their agriculture. And yet in this country, you just destroying it for solar panels.

00:40:11:02 - 00:40:14:21

It's just ridiculous. And we're supposed to.

00:40:15:03 - 00:40:20:21

Understand that feelings are running high. But please, could I ask you to desist from applauding? It's just not. It's not helpful. Thank you.

00:40:20:23 - 00:40:23:07

And we're told that sheep and.

00:40:25:28 - 00:40:57:01

And we're told that sheep are got to go underneath these solar panels. Street car swim. And that's exactly what they're gonna have to learn to do if you put sheep underneath solar panels. The destruction of the steeper. If everything goes on, there'll be nothing left. Absolutely. And the other thing I would like to know is, as anybody did any research into the health effects, that the amount of electricity and everything else that's being generated in the area.

00:40:57:03 - 00:41:28:11

[Redacted] Now is there any, you know, we had the um, the power station, West Burton Power Station there for a long time as anybody ever did any research of the effects of Westpoint and power station and the electric on, on, on the villages of, of around any villages.

00:41:28:20 - 00:41:45:11

And is the impact is there going to be any impact from to health from all this solar and this electric and the pylons and everything else that's going to happen within our areas, to our children and to the to to the people of, of the area.

00:41:47:25 - 00:41:49:10

Because I've not seen any.

00:41:54:01 - 00:42:26:11

But I would like to go home and not think that somebody is lurking around. I've been drawn over, I've been photographed. I've got cars parked down my lane. Where are the people in them? These people with long zoom lens cameras, you know. Shouldn't have to live like that. I don't think anybody should have to live like that. And the road to Westport and power station has got no culverts on it. So. So the water runs straight down the road and straight down my lane plot into the village and. No, but nobody's nobody's doing anything about it.

00:42:28:09 - 00:42:56:27

This is. We're just on ten minutes there. You've raised an awful lot of points. And again, as I've said before, I'd ask and if you could put those in writing tools as well, just so we've got a list of them, because you've made an awful lot of a range of considerations there. We obviously joined the course of the examination. We will be looking at lots of different elements of the scheme. We've got an issue specific hearing tomorrow where we're starting to look at and the ecology and biodiversity effects. And so we'll be looking at things in detail. So, so.

00:42:58:13 - 00:43:00:19

Again, your comments will feed in.

00:43:00:21 - 00:43:14:18

The one thing I would like to ask is that somebody actually comes and walks. What you're destroying, what is being destroyed. If somebody came to my house, they could walk with me and I'll show you exactly where everything is.

00:43:14:22 - 00:43:34:12

Again, just in terms of think, we explained during the preliminary meeting. If there are particular requests about areas that you'd like the examining authority to look at, then we could we will certainly accommodate that in site visits. Thank you. All right. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Warren. Can I back Mr. Skelton to speak, please?

00:43:53:22 - 00:43:55:00

Be comfortable, Mr. Skelton.

00:43:56:21 - 00:43:59:12

Hello. Simon Skelton, resident.

00:44:02:00 - 00:44:34:07

The island. Green power will have heard all this at the Cottam open floor hearing, but obviously it's a different day, so I'll say it all again. I have spent 37 years in the UK power industry. I would like to mention a few things about ground mounted solar in the UK to generate 100% of the UK's power from nuclear, or even gas for that matter, would consume only about 3000 acres of land.

00:44:36:05 - 00:44:47:22

Yet the West Burns Solar project will cover over 2000 acres of land and generate only 0.14% of the UK's electricity.

00:44:49:17 - 00:45:12:09

And this would arguably arguably but the wrong be at the wrong time of day and year. So in my opinion, it's hardly significant infrastructure. Stating that solar schemes will produce large amounts of low carbon electricity is misleading and totally without context and therefore wrong.

00:45:15:05 - 00:45:41:09

But to contact Sizewell C in Suffolk would produce 7% of the UK's power and only cover 170 acres. It really in relation to national need? The Western solar project would not produce large amounts of low carbon electricity, but it would consume large and proportionate amounts of farmland in the process.

00:45:42:26 - 00:46:13:08

To further highlights. It was extremely low power density, though purely hypothetically, solar would need to cover around 1.7 million acres of land to generate the current UK annual 300 terawatt power demand, and again, its supply would be totally out of sync with demand, providing nothing when the grid urgently needs generation generation such as during the dark winter, morning and evening peaks.

00:46:14:09 - 00:46:25:27

So there is not helping our electricity shortfall predicament. With its limited generation curve and peaking at midday, this cannot be relied on as a primary national generator.

00:46:27:17 - 00:47:00:15

Wind is many times more robust under fire and a far higher yielding green option, allowing agriculture to continue. So it's far better suited to Rooftop mountain, where it has an undeniably efficient and important role to play. Ground mounted solar is a criminal. Mismanagement of farmland is unnecessary and cannot and cannot be justified. These mindless inefficiencies are clearly not in the nation's best interests.

00:47:01:19 - 00:47:19:24

The visual impact of this and the other three ill conceived projects around here is significant. The devastation on the landscape and the harm pushed onto rural communities will not be tolerated for such little energy gain.

00:47:22:05 - 00:47:35:06

I'd just like to finish on a question. Just wonder what solar energy is actually doing at this moment in time. I think we all know that answer. Thank you.

00:47:36:11 - 00:47:37:15

Thank you, Mr. Skelton.

00:47:39:20 - 00:47:42:04

At Mrs. Mitchell. Would you like to speak?

00:48:03:18 - 00:48:04:21

Oh, you just switched it off.

00:48:06:21 - 00:48:07:06

Right.

00:48:07:28 - 00:48:08:13

Yeah.

00:48:10:13 - 00:48:13:06

That Mitchell interested party? Um.

00:48:15:10 - 00:48:20:12

2022, five months after the conclusion of Island Green Power's public consultations.



00:48:21:13 - 00:48:28:14

Sorry. Can I just ask you to move the microphone down a little bit so we can hear you a little bit better? That's. I'm sure that's better. Thank you. You want me to go back to the beginning.

00:48:29:21 - 00:49:03:12

In November 2022, five months after the conclusion of Alan Greenspan was public consultations and received a letter consulting on further proposals and changes for Bert and three asking for feedback. These proposals, in their words, included the introduction of certain infrastructure substation and the increased extremely hazardous energy storage infrastructure. Best batteries previously proposed within the West Bert and Substation site area to the northwest of West Bert and Power Station, i.e. the former West Bert and Foresight is to be moved to West Bert and three.

00:49:04:09 - 00:49:39:01

The changes in fact are substantial to the West Burton three scheme, and are not what was originally consulted upon with the public, and therefore required a much wider and fuller public consultation. There are people in the area who have no knowledge of these changes, let alone the scale of them, nor the hazards from the best batteries. They include moving a substation within West Bert and three from a compound area of one and a half acres to an area of four acres, almost tripling the compound area, but also doubling in height of substation Busbar from 6.5m to 13.2m.

00:49:39:13 - 00:50:10:24

Substation has increased from 132 kilovolt to 400 kilovolt, again tripling the capacity. Why can it not remain within the original proposed location of West Bert and four substation site area? Why did the letter I receive in November have limited circulation? There has been a lack of transparency and inadequate consultation with Bert, and three commences on the outskirts of Stirling by Stowe towards Stowe Park and Stowe, sniping at Martin Village around three miles away, and almost adjoins Brampton and Toxic villages.

00:50:10:27 - 00:50:48:23

The compound would be hugely visible for miles to everyone travelling the exceptionally busy arterial eight 1500 in both directions, as the solar panels will abut almost the entire length of the road side. Between Stoughton by Stowe and Martin Village, 400kW substation is still incredibly close to Martin Village Primary School and residential properties added to this Burton Solar project of 1690 plus acres, a short distance away from Martin and still Solar Park and Luminous Energy, who was proposing a 35 megawatt solar farm in the same location as Westborough and through.

00:50:51:11 - 00:51:22:07

My consultation feedback, sent via email on the 6th of January to Westport and Solar, was acknowledged by an automated reply from their input. West Bert and UK only for my feedback to be immediately returned, notifying me their mailbox was full and that this was a permanent error in recent email, and received the same response as the deadline. With the 8th of January, I rang the West Burton Team helpline no one to talk to and if messages on their answerphone and these occasions explaining the problem, asking them to contact me but no reply was forthcoming.

00:51:22:16 - 00:51:57:05

On the 9th of January this helpline was disconnected. I did not hear from them. I was concerned there may be other people like me who had responded by email, whose consultation feedback was not received in the West Berlin mailbox, and the senders were not aware of this issue. This, together with the lack of consultation, documentation and documentation and information distributed to the public in November 2022, can completely skew the percentage of respondents that West Burton use in their evidence. Documentation to the Planning Inspectorate give the impression that people have no comments on the very substantial changes to West Burton three to which I objected.

00:51:57:11 - 00:52:37:25

My feedback was not taken into account. Have the email audit trail and track messages, and can submit these to the Planning Inspectorate following this hearing if required. It is fundamental and hugely important that the consultation mechanism works correctly and accurately, so that people can engage and not be disadvantaged, as most definitely have been in this instance with one, 2 or 3 and cotton one, two and three. Both island green power schemes amounting to 5532 acres. The boundary of a section of West Burton two on the outskirts of Barstow between Barnsley, Ingleby and Saxby, indicates the solar panel, hardware, cameras and security fencing will be directly alongside the B1 241.

00:52:38:09 - 00:53:08:20

Both sides of this very busy road, which brings into question safety for road users from the risk of a lack of clear visibility from 4.5m solar panels and glint and glare as there are several blind spot pens on this route. Hedges are very low and sparse on particular sections of this road, and in some parts there are no hedges to are providing good visibility all year round for traffic and the cliff Jurassic escarpment and heritage aspects of the city of Lincoln, especially Lincoln Cathedral, and unmistakably be seen and appreciated in the distance by all who travel this busy route.

00:53:09:08 - 00:53:43:02

Wonderful expanse of the appropriate landscape value can be seen from the 1398 on Lincoln Cliff, West Burton. Two solar will be highly visible on this landscape from Lincoln Cliff notwithstanding the Cottam solar project a short distance away, Saxby and 30 villages affected by the four solar schemes totalling 10,000 acres are Lincolnshire's countryside. They are visitor destinations. They provide holiday lodges, B&Bs, fishing, holiday parks and activities and many shops. First canal rings envisaged all year round. There is history in abundance in and around these village and tourism is an important part of Lincolnshire's economy.

00:53:43:04 - 00:54:15:16

Along with agriculture split in two on the western side of the B1 241 will be highly visible to residents of Saxby village. Notwithstanding the proximity of West Burton one. Many new homes have been built on the outskirts of Saxby, particularly over the last two years, were these residents consulted, have witnessed flooding of my village time and again, and there is much photographic evidence to confirm this. Dating back 100 years. West Burton two, has the vivid hill on its boundary between the villages of brands B and Box Home, on the eastern side of the B1 241, travelling between Stoughton by Stirling Albion and Saxby.

00:54:15:26 - 00:54:49:16

There is historic flooding in this area, following a month's worth of rainfall in 24 hours. On the 20th of October 2023, the river burst its banks with far reaching flooding across farmland, with several roads surrounding villages impassable. There is photographic evidence of this of the extent of this current episode of flooding over this land, including images of Lincoln City again under a significant amount of flood water. As it was in 2019. Images of the flooded fields, villages affected and the city are also available. Funds B horses home was severely affected when a number of fields belong to the charity.

00:54:49:18 - 00:55:37:21

Were under flood watch in November 2019, had to move 100 of the 450 animals to an alternative site. The number of planned fundraising events were cancelled and they suffered losses of about £200,000. The flood water rendered these fields unable to support grazing for the horses. Sadly, Barnsley horses who again suffered from extensive flooding of the grazing fields two weeks ago, have significant concern at the rate at which surface water runoff during heavy, persistent rainfall will occur for millions of 4.5m high solar panels as it enters the land drains leading to the river to from Ireland, green powers West Burton to around Bruns, being box home, but also Cottman Solar, which has the

river running through the centre of that scheme, as both these areas are flood plains and in the hardstanding of the access roads and any concrete supports for the solar panels, the ground would be unable to absorb such excess.

00:55:38:05 - 00:56:12:28

What measures does Ireland green power put in place to prevent even greater flooding of the farmland on both sides from the solar panel runoff, which will lead to local flooding of roads which can be impassable, particularly as they have denied to local people who know about flooding that there has never been any flooding of these areas of land in flood prone areas such as cotton one and West Burton two, there was no amount of swales that could absorb or capture rainwater runoff and redirected the river. Chiltern flood will already be under considerable strain as all the lights that feed into the river still, as flood water finds a level, the fields and roads around these two sites would be under significant depth of flood water.

00:56:13:00 - 00:56:49:17

Where will it be redirected to? What measures are in place with the fire service to deal with a battery fire when the land for these proposed solar farms is flooded, especially if the local fire service resources are depleted while dealing with flood matters elsewhere in the county. Where will the water be obtained from to kill such fires? Thermal runaway. In the event of flooding in the surrounding areas, bearing in mind the above, what would be the environmental impact of a battery fire thermal runaway under such floodwater conditions? For example, how would dangerous toxins chemicals contamination be prevented from seeping into the flood water and then into the wider watercourses?

00:56:51:25 - 00:57:22:04

West Burton flood risk assessment environmental Statement appendix 10.1 March 20th 23.302. See some of the risk states for West Burton, too. The risk from the site from all sources of flooding is negligible to low. I don't know where that got that from. The West Burton scheme indicates in the draft. Also the removal of 55, 35, 55km, 35 miles of hedgerows or more on trees and the centre console soil. Why this is vandalism.

00:57:22:12 - 00:58:02:06

It is folly to remove established 30 plus year old hedges and replant with bear whips that will take 15 years or more to establish, in an attempt to disguise or mass millions of solar panels. Neither could it lessen our awareness of the whole scheme when driving, walking or cycling and generally just enjoying nature, the peace, the inner calm and feeling of freedom the countryside brings. Once the leaves have dropped from their native hedgerows, the entire West Britain one, two and three scheme would still be visible sore for half its lifetime. On the one hand, we have the government seeking to improve hedgerow protection, with a consultation launched in June 2023 to help make commitment to support farmers to create or restore 45,000 miles of hedgerows by 2050.

00:58:02:08 - 00:58:41:02

And on the other, these four initiative solar schemes moving them across make an incredible contribution to halting biodiversity decline and tackling climate change. The 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 runoff and support pollinators for food production. They also provide vital resources for mammals, birds and other species, act as wildlife corridors, allowing species to move between them. Between isolated habitats, and can also harbor beneficial insects that predate crop pests by supporting an integrated approach.

00:58:41:09 - 00:58:51:29

Now to the beauty of our landscape and our country's Lincolnshire countryside. The Climate Change Committee identified hedgerows as a vital force against climate change. The communities.

00:58:52:15 - 00:58:56:25

Sorry, I'm just going to work just over ten minutes now. Can I ask it? Just draw your.

00:58:56:27 - 00:59:29:18

About two minutes. That's all. A maximum. Thank you. The communities of 30 villages will be affected, including mine, which will be completely surrounded and overwhelmed north, south, east and west for miles. Whichever road travelled early and also along the narrow intertwining country lanes between these villages, it is an imagined one having to constantly live with this level of industrialisation of 10,000 acres of countryside for 365 days of the year, for up to 60 years, no escape, encircled, imprisoned by four solar projects of this enormity, a few miles from each other, with all the endless hardware, whichever direction we look.

00:59:30:16 - 01:00:03:18

You know, these four schemes are collaborating on the cable belt and each Pacific protective provisions in place in their relevant representations. I would like to know if there are other areas of these projects and are presently collaborating on, or are intending to. We have concerns of the amount of housing and rental accommodation that will be taken up by the construction workforce, not just for one of the schemes, but if all four schemes were to progress at similar times, and how this would affect the availability of housing stock purchase or rental for local people and the wider residents of the area? We know there is a shortage of rental properties nationwide.

01:00:04:07 - 01:00:35:10

No one has ever lived with long term soul where they are surrounded by 7 million panels, security fencing seats, dangerous best batteries, the size of shipping containers and so on. What do we really know of such effects or whether effects on people and wildlife on this scale? How can any of you here today be absolutely certain we will not be harmed? Britannia Island by comparison to other countries that have solar, the largest farm in the UK in 2023, was shot at 250 acres and others on a smaller scale.

01:00:36:06 - 01:00:46:02

With the right initiative from the government, we turn the rooftops of warehouses and car parks across the country into clean power stations, cutting carbon emissions, slashing energy bills and protecting our countryside.

01:00:47:09 - 01:00:57:20

Mrs. Mitchell, we're now on 12 minutes and we do need to restore to a close. I know you've got a lot of detailed information, and I would ask that you submit that to us so we can we can have a. Thank you.

01:00:59:15 - 01:01:02:08

Mr. Dober, would you like to come forward, please?

01:01:13:18 - 01:01:14:09

Just a moment.

01:01:19:02 - 01:01:52:08

Michael Dover, an impacted resident of West Lindsey. I'll not keep it long because most of the people have already spoken a bit. A lot of the points that I wanted to bring up. But yeah, the whole four and nearly five five coming up are wrong for this area. It's low lying land that is easily flooded. Homes are now in danger because the capacity that are in the waterways will be taken off by by swells from the runoff from millions and millions of solar panels.

01:01:52:16 - 01:02:23:14

And it will also probably increase or change the wind direction onto properties and farmland. We're in a very, very dangerous situation in the world now. Our supply routes are being curtailed, so food and imports be more expensive and less available. We're already seeing Ukraine and Russia not being able to export wheat in the numbers that used to.

01:02:23:16 - 01:03:03:13

We have a rice famine where the, um, the yield is down by a third for this year. So that is going to be taken up by somebody else. If we don't grow our own food, we're going to be more reliant on what is out there, which could be more expensive. And at a time where people just can't afford to heat their homes. It's going to be difficult to feed on heat and also the wildlife the lady brought up that is terrible that you can't desecrate and destroy a complete ecosystem and say you've got 10% net increase at the end of a 60 year period.

01:03:03:15 - 01:03:34:15

It might be wildflowers, but it's certainly not. You can't train wildlife to go away and come back in five years time. It's ridiculous, especially when it's surrounded by their fences, lights, cameras and it's just it's just not good. And solar, of course, as Simon said, it's so notoriously inefficient. It shouldn't be allowed on anything but a house to help you do your washing on a Sunday afternoon, and will put in a full report after this report.

01:03:34:18 - 01:04:09:06

Would have liked to have said, um, in my view. But I thank you for for letting me speak tonight. I hope that I commend to you that we do not have this or any of the other insects not mentioning the others that are going on. There's 12 insects in this county alone, something like 78,000 acres of land going to go on the solar. And that's not including the smaller sub 15 megawatt developments that are going out there and not including the the cabling.

01:04:09:08 - 01:04:43:04

Of course, also we're dealing with China. Germany is ruing the day it relied on Russia. It's trying to replace it with renewables. It's failing. Their economy is failing because of it. It's having to buy nuclear power from France just to get itself going. Are we going to get ourselves in the same situation by dealing with a belligerent country and finding ourselves in that trouble? We need to invest in nuclear power that will not only clean up more reliant and more dense.

01:04:43:17 - 01:04:45:26

So at that point, thank you very much.

01:04:46:04 - 01:04:50:20

Thank you, Mr. Dover. And yes, certainly, if you would like to submit your full comments in writing, we will.

01:04:50:22 - 01:04:52:00

Thank you very much indeed. Thank you.

01:04:54:21 - 01:04:55:24

Like Mrs. Gilbert.

01:05:11:21 - 01:05:15:29

Good evening, Carol Gilbert. Stone by Stone Parish Council.

01:05:21:00 - 01:05:43:20

One of my last comments during the initial preliminary meeting in August was to deal with the unreliable nature of the broadband connection in our rural area, and specifically for this reason, use for virtual hearings would be inappropriate if local residents were to engage in a meaningful manner.

01:05:45:08 - 01:06:18:04

And I would like you to note that had the examination process started on the 7th of September as scheduled. Anyone wishing to contribute via an online platform would have found that their broadband had failed. This idea commenced at approximately 2:30 on that afternoon and lasted almost 20 hours. And this was a village wide event, not a street or just an area.

01:06:18:06 - 01:06:27:09

It was a very large area. So I would say the use of virtual only events should be entirely avoided.

01:06:30:22 - 01:07:12:25

The applicant uses terms such as emergency, urgency, haste. And there is a pressing need for change. But this cannot be at any cost. The UK cannot shoulder a reduction of carbon for the entire world. The term net zero is used quite freely throughout the documentation. If this and other projects are currently in differing stages of application, are to be used for offsetting current carbon emissions for net zero, any potential for carbon reduction becomes a cynical tick box exercise.

01:07:14:08 - 01:07:44:11

This and other locally sited proposals are using the Planning Inspectorate in an inappropriate way. All of the currently three projects in this area have been submitted in concurrent form. This is not fair to the public, whom will bear the brunt of all the construction and the aftermath of the permanence of the proposals. The public, who are having to look at and make sense of these three complex projects are disadvantaged.

01:07:44:25 - 01:08:06:00

This is not their process. The amount of documentation, which is often repeating the same statements, processes, or arguments over several documents is nonsensical. Reading the same thing over several supposed differing documents is an excessive time wasting exercise.

01:08:08:09 - 01:08:24:29

Now, this is an aside because there are three different intercepts happening at the moment. Will the inspectorate be able to have the discretion if a submission contains an error whereby the references to a different end soap.

01:08:26:19 - 01:08:32:16

Within the informed and be able to correct their submission.

01:08:36:17 - 01:09:04:05

The applicant has one goal, which is not an altruistic production of energy for use by the UK, but to make money. The generation of electricity is a by product in order to realise profit. Many renewable sources already have to be recompensed to turn off the day of production. This is a complete waste of money. Solar works when the sun shines. This is generally when there's less need.

01:09:06:07 - 01:09:24:24

Play the game for this and the other applicants to have to stop production will be considerable. The draft consent order raises concerned the order, underpinned by schedules which are not final documents but illustrative suppositions and assumptions.

01:09:26:17 - 01:09:34:11

The applicant should be using defined plans showing actual placements of equipment, actual trench corridors and actual figures.

01:09:36:00 - 01:10:06:05

Why is the applicant not imparting definitive and factual information to comment on illustration. Supposition and assumption does not allow for informed decision. Why is this application termed West Burton and being routed to West Burton Power Station when it is actually physically closer to Cottam than the application turned cotton? This is nonsensical.

01:10:06:07 - 01:10:13:06

Again, it will result in destruction of flora and fauna, which could be entirely avoided.

01:10:17:21 - 01:10:31:06

So let in the right location on rooves of dwellings or warehousing or even car parks will be beneficial. But the enormous areas of productive farmland to be taken out of use and industrialize.

01:10:32:22 - 01:11:09:20

This beautiful part of Lincolnshire is reckless and lacking judgment. The applicant seeks to marginalise the area of great landscape value designation and local residents will be severely impacted by all of these schemes and we all disagree with that approach. There's no forethought regarding food security. You cannot eat a house, or in this case, approximately a million solar panels. Where will the products, which are no longer being grown, be sourced from? There's already food deprivation in other parts of the world.

01:11:09:27 - 01:11:47:15

To imply the UK can just import food. It's an arrogant stance to take. Cheap yet again. The applicant cannot seriously expect sheep to be used for consistent grass management, or to supposedly improve the soils in readiness for returning, potentially to agricultural use for many years. Hence, there are simply not enough sheep shepherds infrastructure. We cannot see that this land will be ever returned to agricultural cultural use so many years in the future.

01:11:49:25 - 01:12:01:15

The reference to the types of panel which could find. Does the applicant know what they intend to install, or will this be left to the ultimate developer? Post consent.

01:12:03:02 - 01:12:36:27

How much carbon will this and other projects release during the excavation of earth minerals? The manufacture, transport and installation. The carbon cost of these projects must be enormous. The only reference to carbon offset would appear to take into account an approximation of the amount of gas used, which may be reduced. The generation capacity of this project cannot guarantee what will be generating at any one time in order to facilitate this reduction.

01:12:36:29 - 01:13:06:02

Assumption. There's no upper limit to the draft consent order for generation capacity. Why? This will leave the site open to being used for additional development, using the excuse that the grid connection license will limit the capacity is not acceptable. This site could be used for additional forms of generation unless explicitly excluded from the draft consent order. Yeah.

01:13:06:20 - 01:13:15:21

But sorry, I'm just going to run 11 minutes now. Would you mind drawing drawing things to a close as quickly as you can? I just want to make sure that everyone's got the chance to speak. Thank you.

01:13:15:23 - 01:13:17:02

I do understand that.

01:13:19:25 - 01:13:22:09

On that note, I shall conclude.

01:13:22:17 - 01:13:53:05

All right. Thank you very much, Mrs. Gilbert. And obviously, please submit your comments. I've noted the points that you've made about procedural matters, which we think we've covered, and to a large degree in the preliminary meetings that we've had, I've noted those as well. So thank you very much for your comments. Thank you. Mrs. Bingham, would you like to come forward, please? What? What I'm intending to do is hear from Mrs. Bingham, Mr. Brown and Sir Lee before having a break.

01:13:53:07 - 01:14:04:21

So all the speakers that registered in advance that they wish to speak will hear from them all before the break, and then we'll have a break of around 15 minutes and come back to here and the other people who've registered. So, Mrs. Bingham, when you're ready.

01:14:11:23 - 01:14:32:09

Good evening. Um. I agree with everything that everyone has said so far. So you'll excuse me if my notes are a bit disjointed. Then add to that am a from a fourth generation family farm on grade three land.

01:14:34:17 - 01:14:45:06

As farmers, we are expected to take care of the land, keep our hedgerows, replace hedgerows, encourage wildlife.

01:14:47:18 - 01:15:27:03

And produce food for the nation. And yet these projects are going against everything that we have given our lives towards. We are talking about the mass industrialization of our countryside. Do not call them solar farms. They are not. This is not green energy. This is profiteering off the backs of rural communities and the environment. There is almost a sinister aspect to this attack on the breadbasket of the country, especially given the number of other solar industry applications in Lincolnshire.

01:15:27:25 - 01:15:38:15

Obviously, higher powers are making encouraging noises for these schemes. Otherwise, the applicants would not be spending millions to further their plans.

01:15:40:03 - 01:16:11:00

Is there a joined up energy plan? Think 7000 acres have a much better one and is a finite resource, and the demands on it are being felt like never before. Food production has to be high on the list in these uncertain times. Everyone wants access to land, right to roam and wildlife and the environment is suffering. Solar has its uses and its limitations, as we have heard.

01:16:11:09 - 01:16:36:22

It belongs on brownfield sites, on rooftops, warehouses, new builds, not on agricultural land and not in rural areas. But why are we not seeing this? Because there is no profit in it. There are hundreds of new houses going up around us, and not one of them has solar panels on because there is no profit in it.

01:16:38:08 - 01:17:09:18

The HS2 fiasco and the abandonment of the northern line is an example of what to expect on these end steps. Lives and livelihoods have been ruined with land being compulsory purchased and there is



no accountability or recompense. Be warned landowners who think this is an easy cash cow. Although I quite understand being a farming stock, it is tempting many to give up farming in these testing times.

01:17:11:01 - 01:17:37:17

If these schemes are sold onto foreign investors, will any of the safeguards be adhered to? And who will police a potential lifespan of 40 to 60 years? This whole area will be ruined for generations and may never be returned to farmland. I have no trust in the system at all. Excuse my cynicism. And there are impassioned feelings in this room tonight.

01:17:39:09 - 01:18:05:15

As for my plans for my village at Willingham, my Stow, they're planning to have an access route for heavy construction plant to come through along a quiet residential lane, which is used regularly by dog walkers and horse riders and children and myself. A dog walker and a horse rider. I don't think there would be anywhere safe for us to go. If all these schemes are put through.

01:18:07:03 - 01:18:37:29

It would involve some land being compulsory purchased, another quiet country, lanes being made wholly unsafe for locals to use. The battery storage and substation is proposed, which is a huge worry regarding fire risk and pollution. I was involved with a field harvest fire last year which was frightening the speed at which it travelled. Local farmers, along with two fire engines, attended and came together to stop the fire spreading.

01:18:38:09 - 01:18:41:18

But I doubt they could do any of that with a solar fire.

01:18:44:13 - 01:19:07:00

This referenced China is something to be well made of. We do not want anything to do with that country. It's a huge worry. I understand there'll be 5 to 7 years of construction work across the four schemes and then ongoing maintenance. So years of disruption and danger to come.

01:19:09:05 - 01:19:25:03

And then what? We need a coherent energy plan which properly, properly considers what finite resources we have. If we don't get one in the next ten years, then we are triggered. That's a polite term.

01:19:26:19 - 01:19:56:20

But these solar industrial estates have a lifespan of 40 to 60 years. So will there be obsolete before they are even finished? I don't trust the data the applicants have produced, because it has been manipulated to hide true facts and make it more palatable. Photos taken for their reports have hidden the vistas and important areas, though names low carbon and green power make them seem less threatening.

01:19:58:27 - 01:20:06:00

But the fact is, as someone, as always already referenced, is this is about profit and not about energy.

01:20:07:26 - 01:20:44:15

My grateful thanks go to 7000 acres group, without whom I would not have made any sense of this process. But so many of our community have failed to engage with the process because. Because it is complicated. They already have busy lives and the amount is overwhelming. And I think they probably think it's a foregone conclusion because higher powers are making noises. Meetings are difficult to attend when working. We have this meeting in Lincoln this evening at 6:00 on a work night, so I know a few people who couldn't attend.

01:20:45:21 - 01:21:23:11

Do we have any human rights here? Our rights to continue to live in a rural area, not a massive industrial estate. There will be mental health crisis as any report being prepared on that. Rural communities are already being stretched to breaking point. The Lincolnshire Rural Support Network has reported an increase of 229% over the last year in calls to their mental health and stress call line.

01:21:25:08 - 01:21:40:18

We all want to do our bit for our planet. But I truly believe this is wrong on every single count and would be disastrous for our way of life, our communities and the environment.

01:21:41:24 - 01:21:42:10

Thank you.

01:21:43:29 - 01:21:50:23

Thank you, Mrs. Bingham. Once again. But ask that you don't applause it. But it doesn't really help us in the examination.

01:21:52:29 - 01:21:53:14

It's.

01:21:55:29 - 01:22:00:14

No. You can submit written. You can make written submissions to us and we will take that into account.

01:22:02:29 - 01:22:04:09

Understand that? Yes.

01:22:07:12 - 01:22:24:23

All right, so we said we'd hear from Mr. Brown. And certainly before the break, I've also been reminded that Mr. Peter O'Grady and Mr. Styles did register in advance. And so on that basis, we will hear from them immediately after the break. But can I invite Mr. Brown to speak, please?

01:22:31:26 - 01:22:34:03

Oh, sorry. You're online. Do apologize.

01:22:34:19 - 01:22:35:11

Literally.

01:22:37:12 - 01:22:38:00

Mr. Brown, when you.

01:22:39:29 - 01:23:11:15

I have very, very little to add to following Mrs. Bingham's and all of the previous. The people have spoken. Information regarding these three currently. Insists that we've got. Can you hear me? Okay. Sorry, I've got headphones in. Thank you. Yes. Can hear you. Yeah. The information that put out by the developers is incredibly compartmentalized. You. You will only see one site at a time.

01:23:13:00 - 01:23:33:24

At 7000 acres. I've done a fantastic job of bringing it all together. But in getting that information out to people, it is a far more difficult thing. So engagement across the communities is poor. Regarding these sites. But other than that and the.

01:23:35:10 - 01:23:50:07

Potential overreliance on China. As a not potentially friendly state is a. I think as far as much as I need to say, it's all been said before so far. Thank you.

01:23:52:02 - 01:23:52:29

Thank you, Mr. Brown.

01:23:56:28 - 01:24:03:19

I'm Sir Edward Lee. Would you like to come forward and speak, please, if you would, might come to the table. I think the microphone is still on there.

01:24:09:05 - 01:24:10:03

Good evening and.

01:24:10:05 - 01:24:15:13

Thank you for listening to all of us. And we're very grateful to the careful way you've been.

01:24:16:28 - 01:24:24:10

Attempting to address our concerns. So my name is Edward Lee. I'm the Member of Parliament for Gainsborough, which is a large rural constituency.

01:24:25:09 - 01:24:25:24

Um.

01:24:26:13 - 01:25:04:10

It's got the normal population of any parliamentary constituency, say 75,000 people or something like that. But it's a huge area, roughly the same size as Greater London, although then one MP, you know, Lincolnshire people are very reasonable. They are quite happy to go along with some solar projects. It's just the sheer scale of this which is absolutely overwhelming. And if you're talking about an area the size of Westminster, I'm sure if there were just, you know, say a thousand acres, that might be reasonable.

01:25:04:12 - 01:25:35:10

But the sheer scale of this is enormous. The the cumulative effect of these proposals, I think, needs to be considered as a one holistically. This is the key point that we are making. That you cannot consider them individually. The combined impact on local communities as a country and the world, of course, is significant. These proposals cannot be considered individually. They must be considered as one.

01:25:35:12 - 01:26:11:26

That is the crucial point and I'm sorry to emphasise it. The proposals are legion. They include. Eight person energy park. Cottam Solar Park project. Tilbrook Solar Park project. Beacon Fen Energy Park, one solar project Eckington Fen solar project. Mallard path solar project. Springwell solar farm. Temple Oaks renewable energy park, Foss green energy together. As far as I understand it, these proposals are covering 26,000 acres of land compared to the value of the food produced over much of this land.

01:26:11:28 - 01:26:47:21

The amount of energy, these solar so-called farms. They're not, of course, farms, as we've only heard, they're industrial units, would prove the amount of energy they would produce would be minuscule. As we've already heard, Sizewell C nuclear power station will be able to generate 7% of the UK's electricity need on a site covering just a couple of 100 acres. And as we've heard, the time frame for construction is more than seven years over for these schemes. That's a long time for interference in our country roads, which we in rural areas are more reliant on.

01:26:48:00 - 01:27:15:07

It's also wrong that this project, and the ones like it, aren't being considered in a normal planning fashion. And this is what I feel most strongly about West Lindsey and the people who elect West Lindsey District councillors should be the people determining this application. That is a democratic way forward. The National Significant Infrastructure Project process is a flawed one. This this

01:27:17:02 - 01:27:49:28

type process was designed for things like HS2 and massive necessary infrastructure projects that benefit the whole country, or for instance, nuclear power stations. West Burton does not fill these character characteristics. The whole system is designed as a way to get past West Lindsey by producing so-called enough electricity. But if it's a proper if it is genuinely a national infrastructure project, then all these projects should be considered as one.

01:27:50:11 - 01:28:22:21

They shouldn't be considered individually. And the point has been made. It's of no benefit really, to local people. It's going to benefit a few very large landowners, a few shareholders and entrepreneurs, perhaps in London. Local people have not had sufficient time to respond to this onslaught of proposals, nor are they properly resourced. They just ordinary people. They're not going to make any money out of this. They're desperately running around trying to raise small amounts of money.

01:28:22:23 - 01:28:54:24

They're up against planning. Barristers paid huge amounts of money with vast amounts of resources. Now Simon Skelton, he's done a tremendous job, and our 7000 acre community group has done a tremendous job. As Simon has said, one is difficult enough to get involved in, but for once would be impossible for most and is therefore undeniably wrong. And I couldn't agree more. So my fear is the deck is weighted in favor of these energy companies massively.

01:28:54:26 - 01:29:33:20

It is really a David and Goliath situation and my constituents are David. It doesn't mean I hope that they're going to not be listened to. And I know that you are going to listen to them very carefully. What's at stake is a huge amount of rural Lincolnshire. If West Burton is approved, along with the other proposals, it would result in a massive loss of farmland as much as 15% of the area. Lincolnshire has traditionally been the breadbasket of England. Were very proud of that here. It's not just our history but our present day, and we very much wanted to be our future too, and thought that was such a powerful testimony that you heard from that tenant farmer.

01:29:33:22 - 01:30:04:03

We've just heard from the NPF already issues presumption against building these kinds of proposals on agricultural land. Grade one, two and three, as we know. But experienced farmers tell me that there is no real difference in three A and Freebee when it comes to wheat and grain. But these companies are going around doing so-called soil assessments, trying to convince the inspectorate that this, this, all this land is freebie rather than free.

01:30:04:19 - 01:30:38:18

But farmers traditionally in Lincolnshire have seen no difference between 3 and 3 b in terms of growing wheat and grain. As I've said, free beer just as good. Now, I've brought this up time and time again in the House of Commons. I've raised it in debates. I've mentioned the ministerial questions. I've written to ministers about it. The response has been consistent. Good agricultural land like this is protected by the National Planning Policy Framework. The presumptions exist for a reason and ministers have consistently said that they should be upheld.

01:30:38:24 - 01:31:09:29

Planning policy also states that brownfield sites should be given priority when building projects like this. Understand that West Burton doesn't use any brownfield sites at all. More and more people are

recognizing there needs to be a greater awareness of land use, and for the and the balance between the purposes land is used for. The government is developing a land use framework that should be released within the next few months. Food distribution networks worldwide and be disrupted by Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

01:31:10:05 - 01:31:46:19

Geopolitical strife in Eastern Europe and now the Middle East has only added to the lessons of the pandemic. We live in an interconnected but extremely fragile world. Problems far away can have a massive cumulative effect, an impact that's difficult to predict. West, Burton and the other proposals here in Lincolnshire are not just a threat to our villages and towns. They are a threat to our food security and therefore to world stability. The best way to maintain food security is to grow as much of your own food as possible.

01:31:46:21 - 01:32:21:25

Even better, grow enough to export your neighbours as well. And think of the poor people starving in Africa. They need all this food that we can grow here. The Middle East is particularly vulnerable thanks to its dependence on Ukrainian grain. The situation there is only deteriorating. Agreements have been reached to get Ukrainian grain out and export a safely, but they have not been uniformly complied with by Russia. Attempts at providing some community gain. And there have been pretty pathetic attempts in exchange for the problems these proposals will cause this.

01:32:21:27 - 01:32:34:25

On one side, there's the small so-called community gain, which will make no difference. On the other side is this massive geopolitical issue in terms of food security. Now I've put my name.

01:32:36:10 - 01:33:09:29

Organised by Alicia Cairns, another MP, which will be going out shortly to the head of the Solar Industry Association, where we're seeking to provide a universal level of community compensation for solar project proposals. The wind industry has already agreed similar such schemes. It's interesting that none of the points in the government's ten point decarbonisation plan specifically mention solar. That's because the government recognises we need a comprehensive, integrated approach rather than a mad rush.

01:33:10:08 - 01:33:40:21

We have nothing against solar energy itself. Indeed, it's to be encouraged, along with all other feasible forms of renewable energy. The more solar we generate, the better use we're making of our natural resources. We recognise that no one opposes this, but the way you do it is important. We should be encouraging solar installations. That's been said on rooftops, not on farmland. Projects should focus on industrial, manufacturing and logistics sites with large, flat rooftops.

01:33:40:25 - 01:34:01:11

We should also look at how to integrate further solar power into existing housing or housing under development. The Council for the Protection of Rural England have been arguing persuasively for a national rooftop strategy to do precisely this, and I've said this again and again to ministers on the floor of the House of Commons. They they

01:34:03:03 - 01:34:33:29

have highlighted the grave threat to farmland at projects like West Burton present estimates that without a rooftop based approach, current solar power targets could result in the loss of 280,000 acres of farmland. There are many unforeseen circumstances. For example, we have a fair amount of general aviation in England for small aircraft families, often essential ways people might not understand. If you're piloting a single engine plane, your engine cuts out.

01:34:34:01 - 01:35:18:08

Open fields are often the only safe option for an emergency landing. What assessments are the proposals made of? The impact of thousands of several metres tall solar arrays in these fields would have on aircraft safety, and there's many other points that could be made. [Redacted] Can the proposals give us their 100% guaranteed assertion that none of the products or materials used in these projects are made by slave labour? In China, we have received no such undertakings.

01:35:18:13 - 01:35:55:01

The government said more review into net zero also advocated a big push for rooftop solar, not ground mounted. The review advocated for consent through local energy planning, and said that ground mounted solar projects should never, quote, be imposed on communities. But that is exactly what the applicant is trying to do with West Burton. Opposition to West Burton. The other proposals here in Lincolnshire is both broad and deep. As a member of Parliament whose constituents will be affected by this proposal. I'm here to convey to you the inspectorate, the opposition of residents of the Gainsborough constituency.

01:35:55:03 - 01:36:27:14

I've spoken to county, district and parish councillors and there is near unanimity of opposition from the most level local level up to ministerial level. I think the message is clear and I end on this point. This proposal is unwise. It is environmental and it is unsustainable. It threatens our food security. It undermines our rural culture. It would result in monstrous overdevelopment, and it is opposed by local residents and stakeholders.

01:36:27:16 - 01:36:29:13

It must be turned down. Thank you

01:36:31:09 - 01:36:31:24

much.

01:36:37:18 - 01:37:06:22

Please ask if you. If you keep the applause down, please. It's not fair on all participants to the process. That's that's the reason I'm making it doesn't really help us with our understanding of the information, but I do understand that feelings are running high. And so if you wouldn't mind submitting your your written statement would be glad to receive that as part of the examination documentation. Thank you. All right. So as I've said, we will have a break. Now I suggest that we return at

01:37:08:10 - 01:37:14:20

755, please. So just over 15 minute break. Thank you very much, everyone.