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To: [West Burton Solar Project](#)
Cc: [Cottam Solar Project](#)
Subject: Solar farms in West Lindsay
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To whom it concerns

I am concerned about the process for the approval of all the solar development proposals in West Lindsay (Tillbridge, Cottam and West Burton etc.)

Renewable energy is useful in principle but it is important to consider how and where it is implemented. I do not believe that it is a good use of our limited resources of viable, productive farmland to be taken out of production to be replaced with an extensive solar panel array. Instead, they would be better placed on brownfield sites, on large, flat buildings and industrial structures. There is no evidence that I can find that the West Lindsay schemes have explored these options.

Whilst solar energy has its place, the pursuit of Net Zero is unlikely to be achieved by 2050 targets. I therefore think the Schemes are presumptuous and rushed in conjunction with the other schemes that have been proposed in this small area all on the back of the Cottam Power Plant situation. It is opportunism at the expense of a carefully thought-out proposal that could have been better considered to leave agricultural land alone and one that could benefit local communities affected. I see no awareness of the needs or well-being of the local community in your proposals.

I am totally opposed to the proposals for all these proposals, I shall begin with general points and move on to specific and personal issues.

General points:

This is one of 4 schemes in a small area of rural Lincolnshire which, if built will become the largest solar farm in Europe – all where communities and people live. Local residents are faced with the prospect of a cumulative total of 10,000 acres of solar, industrialised development in this area of West Lindsey where productive farmland, currently used for food and the food-chain, will be removed from production at a time when we need it most. This is completely counter-intuitive given the cost of living crisis, the costs of importing food from abroad and the uncertain future the world faces at the moment. These are not only financial costs but green costs. Why import food from abroad with the consequent carbon footprint, when we can produce food at home? Contrary to the beliefs of the developers, as evidenced in the consultation meeting, the local agriculture is thriving, producing wheat, barley, rape seed and animal feed.

This acreage is totally disproportional and represents an unprecedented industrialisation of this part of Lincolnshire and a huge loss of rural land, the size of the City of Lincoln, decimating communities, farmland, local livelihoods and agriculture.

Not only will farmland be lost to industrialisation but jobs and skills within agriculture will be seriously undermined. Solar panels simply should not be placed on useful farmland – wrong plan, wrong place. These acres of solar panels would dominate the landscape for miles around

As a result, I am concerned that no precise information was forthcoming from Tillbridge Solar representatives at the consultation meeting in Glentworth. I raised concerns over the precise boundary between my property and the solar farm, possible noise from the sub-station (as the crow flies, less than 500 metres from my house). On your map, my land abuts an area designated for potential woodland but no details about the precise nature of this and who will decide were forthcoming. This is of great concern when it's next door to your house. My requests for information about noise factors also met with no detailed response nor data, even though I'd left my email so that I could have been given this information subsequently. Both I and another resident raised concerns over access to the site which were also not addressed convincingly.

This is all apart from the issue of health and safety and the possible consequences for local wildlife which are of great concern to me. My wife and I are [REDACTED], living in an isolated property with our [REDACTED] on the edge of what could become an industrial complex with on-site staff, cameras security etc. We moved to our house to give our [REDACTED], in open fields, surrounded by wildlife. She is [REDACTED] and there is evidence that large-scale solar farms can adversely affect [REDACTED]. Our [REDACTED] which could now be taken away from us. We relish the glorious wealth of wildlife – hares, deer, rabbits, migrating and ground-nesting birds which could be severely impacted by solar industrialisation. It is a heart-breaking prospect for a family who has chosen to build their home here for 23 years. Where are the considerations in Tillbridge's proposals for human cost?

Compared to my concerns over the potential solar complex so close to my home, the cable route corridor is of far less consequence but yet another desecration of this area and disruption to those who live in it.

I consider that the scheme is flawed and should not be granted operational consent. The plans are based on modelling which we have recently had cause to question in other areas of planning. I believe that the local impact of this scheme in terms of traffic disruption, noise and social disruption in all phases of the development have been underestimated. I have no confidence that the representatives of Tillbridge Solar have the local knowledge nor interest to mitigate local worries if given consent for development.

Access to the area is via two roads: Middle Road and the A631. Both are narrow, potentially hazardous roads with potential disruption to a site access causing delays and diversions. This is a rural area with a concomitant road infrastructure. Once again, the consultation meeting gave me no confidence that Tillbridge Solar would address these issues properly.

The clear sensitivities relate to the visual impact of a possible large-scale solar array from the local area because of the topography. Many people will be travelling along Middle Road (Lincoln Cliff Road) and see the solar array from miles around. The visual impact will be massive and certainly difficult to ignore. In my opinion, no amount of hedging will obscure this.

The solar farms would have potentially catastrophic effects on the landscape for decades to come, as discussed earlier. A bit of hedging will not mitigate these impacts.

All the factors listed in this section are of great concern There are no issues listed here that are not a cause for worry and the developers have done nothing to alleviate this.

There are no apparent community benefit plans only community disadvantages.

I should like to comment on the paucity and flawed nature of the whole consultation process. The main representative of Tillbridge Solar began the meeting I went to by stating that the proposals were designated as a “nationally important infrastructure”. However, the problem with this is that decisions will be made in Whitehall, not locally. I believe that such applications should be subject to local approval, not Westminster. Thus, the process is flawed, at heart. Ultimately, the final decision will be made by the Secretary of State for Climate Change and Net Zero – clearly not an independent adjudicator.

The ‘experts’ present at the local consultation meetings were employed by the developers. How impartial is their advice to the organisation paying for their services? Furthermore, at the end of your consultation form (What happens next section), respondents are told that “we will set out a summary of the responses that you have given in a Consultation Report”. A summary selected by the proposing organisation seems, therefore, to be the only record of peoples’ concerns. Despite this, I can only hope for an impartial review to be passed on to Planning Inspectorate for consideration. I shall be studying this with interest.

Additionally, the local consultation meetings have not been at all helpful. For example, the representatives of Tillbridge Solar simply repeated what had been said at the local Parish Council meeting in Glentworth a few weeks previously and were no more informative at the meetings with ‘experts’. The latter also failed to answer detailed questions and anxieties.. This made me feel more concerned and failed to allay any of my worries about the proposals. There appeared to be no empathy for the worries of local residents nor any attempt to respond to their concerns. I felt there was a clear failure of any of the representatives to speak from a position of knowledge rather than sound-bites and conjecture.

My over-riding impression is of a rushed and ill-thought out scheme that is going through the motions of consultation rather than actually consulting. The definition of consultation is not simply a period of time.

We moved here

Now, the beautiful, productive farmland surrounding us on all sides could become an industrialised monitored and fenced-in wasteland. Our area will become a place you drive through but will not want to visit. The walkers, ramblers and riders - all part of normal rural life here - will rightly shun this area. It is unimaginable what the difference to our area this scheme would make if allowed to go ahead. Rural areas and other economies need farmland. If we lose farmland, we risk untold damage to local communities and to the stewardship of our countryside. How much harm will be done to wildlife and the character of Public Rights of Way?

Solar farms are inefficient and whilst solar plays its part in producing energy, farmland should not be sacrificed for these inefficient structures.. What is wrong with solar farms?

1. Clustering of development around sub-stations has disastrous consequences for the landscape

and local amenity. The cumulative effect intensifies the harm caused.

2. Solar panels dramatically alter views of the countryside and its key features

3. Farmland (including 3b, used for barley and wheat, as in the local area) should not be used for industrial purposes.

4. Solar farms are NOT environmentally friendly: they pollute the environment, the panels are not fully recyclable, will add to land-fill and have a huge carbon footprint.

5. The amenity of neighbouring property can be seriously harmed by secured boundaries and intrusive CCTV

6. The land will not be returned to agriculture for at least 40 years by which time, it will have deteriorated to the point of probable no return. What will be the future then for this area?

Reinstatement bonds are worthless

I do not believe that any of these schemes come near to addressing, let alone to providing answers to the above issues. The scheme's documentation is vague, lacks depth and detail and fails to answer the valid concerns of local residents

There are better alternatives that could produce more renewable energy without removing farmland from production and ruining this community. For example, in comparison to off-shore wind, solar panels are hugely inefficient. A 400 acre solar park is said to be capable of supplying energy to 9,000 homes. One North Sea wind turbine has the capacity to power 16,000 homes. In terms of the amount of power exported to the grid, solar's rating is 11 - 15% whereas off-shore wind achieves a figure of 50%+ - and it doesn't destroy the countryside and communities.

In my view, these are opportunist schemes; just another part of the \$1.6 trillion global climate change industry which has not paid due diligence to the need for this country to keep farmland for essential food production, the needs and wishes of the community in this area of Lincolnshire nor the well-being/mental health consequences of local residents.

Yours sincerely

Nicholas Mapstone

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