

I support the proposed Solar farm.

I believe it is imperative we take action to reduce CO2 emissions and move to a low carbon economy.

Climate change is a existential threat to all of us - as a father of three and chair of governors of a local primary school, I worry that concerns over perceived visual impacts should not distract from critical change that needs to happen to protect our young peoples futures.

Allowing the development will help the UK in meeting its commitment to reaching net zero by 2050.

The UK Climate change committee advise the UK and devolved governments and reported this year -

'The Climate Change Committee's assessment is that only a third of the emissions reductions required to achieve the country's 2030 target are currently covered by credible plans'

I believe it is important to give permission for projects that have early access to grid connection as is found with the Stonestreet Green Solar proposal reducing delay in generation start times.

As a resident of Aldington for over fifty years, I enjoy walking in the area and value the rural environment we live in, however the visual impact of the proposal is not my greatest concern, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, I personally do not think fields of solar panels are ugly and recognise they will become a common feature in the UK landscape with the harvesting of solar energy becoming an important part of agricultural diversity.

Mitigations such as hedge and tree planting will result in very few vistas with wide reaching views across the solar array.

In regard to change of agricultural land use in the village I quote from National grid / solarenergyuk.org. 'To meet the UK government's net zero target, the Climate Change Committee estimates that between 75-90 gigawatts (GW) of solar power will be needed by 2050. Analysis by Solar Energy UK indicates this would mean solar farms would, at most, account for approximately 0.4-0.6% of UK land – less than the amount currently used for golf courses' - I believe that even if we reach national green energy targets by 2050 the impact in loss of agricultural land will be insignificant. The loss off agricultural land specific to this proposal is also limited as grazing can continue.

The proposed biodiversity gains are likely to be significant - I myself look forward to the development of wildflower meadow, orchards and the extended Stour valley footpaths.

'Well-designed and managed solar farms contribute to a range of ecosystem services. They support sustainable agriculture, regulate air quality, mitigate flood risk, generate new habitats, and reduce carbon emissions. Solar farms that have been monitored regularly by ecologists demonstrate an increase over time in the local abundance and variety of plants, pollinators, birds, and other wildlife' - Solar energy uk briefing.

Solar panels are not permanent - if removed the land is undisturbed and very likely improved without the pressures of agricultural practice. Aldington is significantly more threatened by housing development over the next four decades, change that would be irreversible and lead to the loss of our village community forever.

I only speak for myself but have had conversations with young people who are passionate about the environment, worry about the impact that climate change is going to have on their lives, and they are bemused as to why developments such as the Stonestreet Green Solar are meeting resistance. I tend to agree.