

Good morning and thank you for giving me the opportunity to voice my concerns regarding the proposed Byer's Gill Solar Development which I feel is particularly relevant as we are the only property which would be in extremely close proximity to the location of the on-site Substation, although I would like to point out that it has been impossible to work out the precise meterage on Google Earth from our boundary and property as each map produced to date shows the Substation in a slightly different area. On the latest map it shows that the Substation as well as the huge array of Battery Storage Units have been moved even closer to our boundary.

Following my having raised the above location of the Substation at the Open Floor Hearings (16th October) RWE commented that the precise spot on which it would be sited could be found in AS-013 which I have found on 2.2 Works Plans however it would be interesting to know how far in metres from the watercourse in square wood it will be and also the precise meterage from our boundary.

I also raised an issue at Open Floor Hearing on 16th October following the photo montage image shown to the hearing by Mrs Mary Fisher (RWE) of the viewpoint from the roadside at the proposed Site Entrance showing an image of the substation. I felt I had to raise this issue as to the naked eye I could not see an image of the huge on-site Substation visible on that photo montage. Apparently RWE assured the ExA that the image was present but I would argue that the photo montage shown at the hearing was not an accurate representation from that Site entrance viewpoint, certainly not a worse case scenario as [REDACTED], Darlington Borough Council indicated the viewpoint montages ought to be. I would suggest that the photographer in question must have been on his knees when taking the photo. Also [REDACTED] quoted that the photo montage was of a winter scene however all the deciduous woodland in the background of the photo were in leaf???

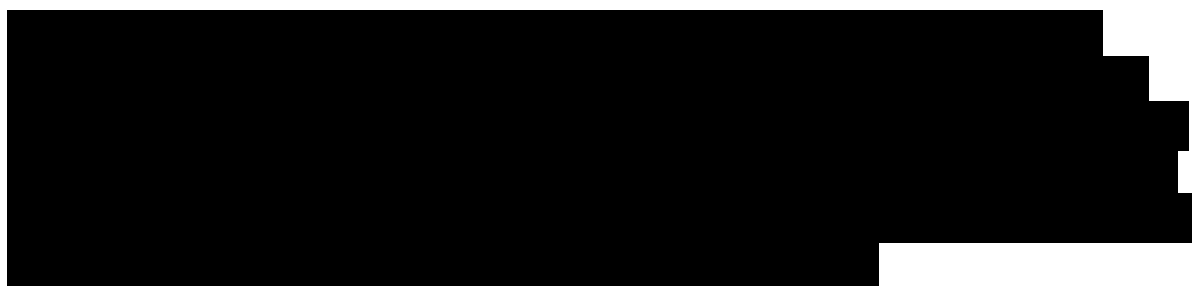
My Family and I have resided at [REDACTED], although I have lived and been involved in this vicinity all my life as my Brother farms our family farm at [REDACTED] as did my late Father and my Grandfather before him, so this area is very close to my heart.

I have worked hard all my life to enable me to acquire and become custodian of what I consider to be my dream home and the beautiful site it sits on, in fact it took me 10 house moves and renovations along the way. I attended junior and senior school with many of the landowners who have signed over acres

and acres of their land to this Development, many have been close friends for decades. It is I feel extremely sad that there appears to be growing animosity within the community as a result perhaps that little consideration has been given by those landowners as to the positioning of the huge panel areas, the long arrays of battery storage units and in our particular case the on-site Substation. When assessing the maps of all the panel areas it becomes immediately evident where the landowners reside as they certainly don't have panels or battery units within just a few metres of their properties so in my mind that speaks volumes.

The nearby solar development at Whinfield House which is currently under construction has been laid out on flat land and in such a way that, although in my opinion is an absolute eyesore, it does not surround local resident's private dwellings or inhibit or disrupt neighbour's views as the Byer's Gill project laid out on elevated ground in so many locations and surrounding many villages would undoubtedly do.

Now I appreciate that the saying goes 'no-one is entitled to a view' but I am afraid when someone has strived their whole life as I and many of my friends and neighbours have done to purchase their dream homes in my opinion a pleasing outlook does and should have a huge impact on their decision to purchase that property and subsequently on their day to day lives and to have that taken away through no fault of their own is soul destroying and I have no doubt that there would be a dramatic impact on those property valuations and would limit the market as to interested parties should they be put up for sale.



In those Regulations under Section 5: Suitable Environment it stipulates that Animals must be kept at all times in an environment suitable to their species and condition and with respect to noise levels that dogs must not be restricted to areas when climatic conditions may cause them distress.

At the present time we have several generations of Labradors ranging in age from 6 months to over 12 years. My dogs are working strain and as such need

plenty of stimulation and exercise. I carry out training on our land to Field Trial standard and have set up our site to enable me and colleagues to accomplish this. Due to the life and surroundings in which they are trained and brought up they are happy, healthy, content dogs. Our puppies are brought up in a safe, calm environment where for their first few weeks of life they are well socialised and from 4 weeks of age enjoy plenty of outdoor play ensuring that by the time prospective puppy owners visit to choose their puppy and subsequently when the time comes to take their puppy that puppy is healthy, well balanced, confident and happy.

As we are able to provide our dogs and puppies with an enriched life it results in them being calm and quiet. The only occasion when there is noise and uproar is when strangers arrive or sometimes when noisy vehicles or machinery go by so I am sure you will appreciate how anxious and distressful it would be for them to have continuous noise from piling equipment being drilled into the ground and noisy workmen being at such close proximity all day every day for months on end. During the construction phase of the development at Whinfield House 3.5 miles from us we could hear that continuous piling equipment from our location so the thought of it being within a few metres is unbearable.

Our puppy facilities would be within just a few metres of what would be a massive and extremely noisy construction site for a very long length of time during construction and also due to the substation being in such close proximity the following 40 yrs of maintenance of the site. The increased volume of traffic including wagons, piling equipment, excavators and vehicles utilised by sub contractors will undoubtedly cause a significant detrimental impact on our lives, our animals lives and my business.

RWE state in their application that and I quote ' Work involving heavy plant on an open site is likely to generate vibration, which may, in certain circumstances, propagate beyond the boundary of the site. In situations where particularly heavy plant, vibrating compaction equipment or piling rigs are being used close to the site boundary, nearby properties may experience ground-borne vibration'

Under the above circumstances how is it possible that the landowners and designers of this development can justify allowing the panel areas, battery storage units and huge substation to be placed in such close proximity to our

boundary, our animals and all the animals, invertebrates, insects and mammals that cohabit alongside us on our site.

Our site is classified as a SNCI or Local Wildlife Site and comprises 6.22 acres of wildflower meadows, wooded areas and a beautiful pond. Local Wildlife Sites fill an important gap not covered by other designations and are vital in maintaining the full range of wildlife across the country. The boundary of our site is going to be within just 4m of Panel Area C and our pond is within a few feet of that boundary.

Over the years we have carefully managed the site by keeping certain patches closely mown and by cutting pathways through the wildflower and grass areas to allow wild orchids and varieties of wildflowers and grass species to flourish and create suitable habitats for ground nesting birds such as snipe and grey partridge both of which have successfully nested there this year. The grey partridge is a red listed ground nester and priority species for conservationists. With declines of 92% (since 1967) in various parts of the UK these birds are testament to the benefits of habitat management, without which these birds would simply disappear for good.

We have a huge abundance of wildlife visiting and thriving and making their habitat on our site. The pond itself is one of the original claypits from it's days as a brickworks. It is spring fed and is full to the brim with different varieties of fish. The marshy boggy areas encourage frogs to spawn and newts and water voles to make their habitats. We have herons visiting daily, coots, moorhens and ducks floating around with their young, visiting swans and wild geese, barn owls, buzzards, sparrowhawks and bats swooping around at dusk. The roe deer and muntjac graze and rest in our field at night and foxes, badgers and rabbits are everywhere. As I mentioned we have nesting grey partridge and snipe, lapwings and curlews overhead and as I was leaving the premises the other day a hen harrier swooped overhead. There have been sightings of otters in the vicinity and there has been evidence that they often frequent our pond. Our smallholding is a haven for bumblebees, worker bees, moths, butterflies, damselflies and dragonflies. We feel extremely fortunate to have all this on our doorstep and feel passionate about protecting it for future generations to come. There is absolutely no doubt that the construction of this industrial development will jeopardise this. It will destroy their shelters and habitats and I would urge everyone concerned to give utmost consideration to relocating the panels from within 4m of our Local Wildlife

Site as well as the arrays of Battery Storage Units and the huge on-site Substation to a location much further away should this development go ahead.

Solar panels are designed to reflect light in a smooth uniform way, similar to a lake or pond. The polarized light can attract polarotactic insects and induce drinking behaviour in some birds causing them to dive into them and due to the shininess they mistake them for water causing death in many instances for water fowl and migrating birds. As our Local Wildlife Pond would potentially be so close to Panel Area C the volume and variety of birds visiting our site would certainly be put at risk.

Personally my thoughts are there are so many issues of major concern with the whole application in every proposed panel area for it even to be given consideration would be disastrous for the entire community.

Another issue for our Local Wildlife Site is that following heavy rainfall as there was on the 9th October the flooded area in our neighbour's field pours onto our land causing our stream to overflow and subsequently back up into the wildlife pond. Should there be contamination from the development the impact on the fish and mammals etc would be catastrophic and I would suggest this matter is given utmost attention. The installation of the framework with the piling equipment would undoubtedly damage the ancient land drain network in the field behind our site resulting in even more surface water pouring down the slope onto our Local Wildlife Site.

No-one from RWE over the past couple of years since the very first indication that this application was to be submitted have contacted us or visited us to assess the noise implications or visibility splays or the enormous impact which this development would have on our lives, our livelihood and the wildlife in this area. We feel the above have all been overlooked and I would ask that should the application be permitted to go ahead serious consideration ought to be given to moving the on-site substation to a different location. The area on which it is currently proposed to site it has been waterlogged again recently. It is the wettest part of the whole development and the fact that the proposal suggests completely cordoning off a large area of ancient woodland thereby trapping many vulnerable species inside and constructing a wide road around the whole perimeter of that woodland is in my opinion totally unfeasible and unjustified.

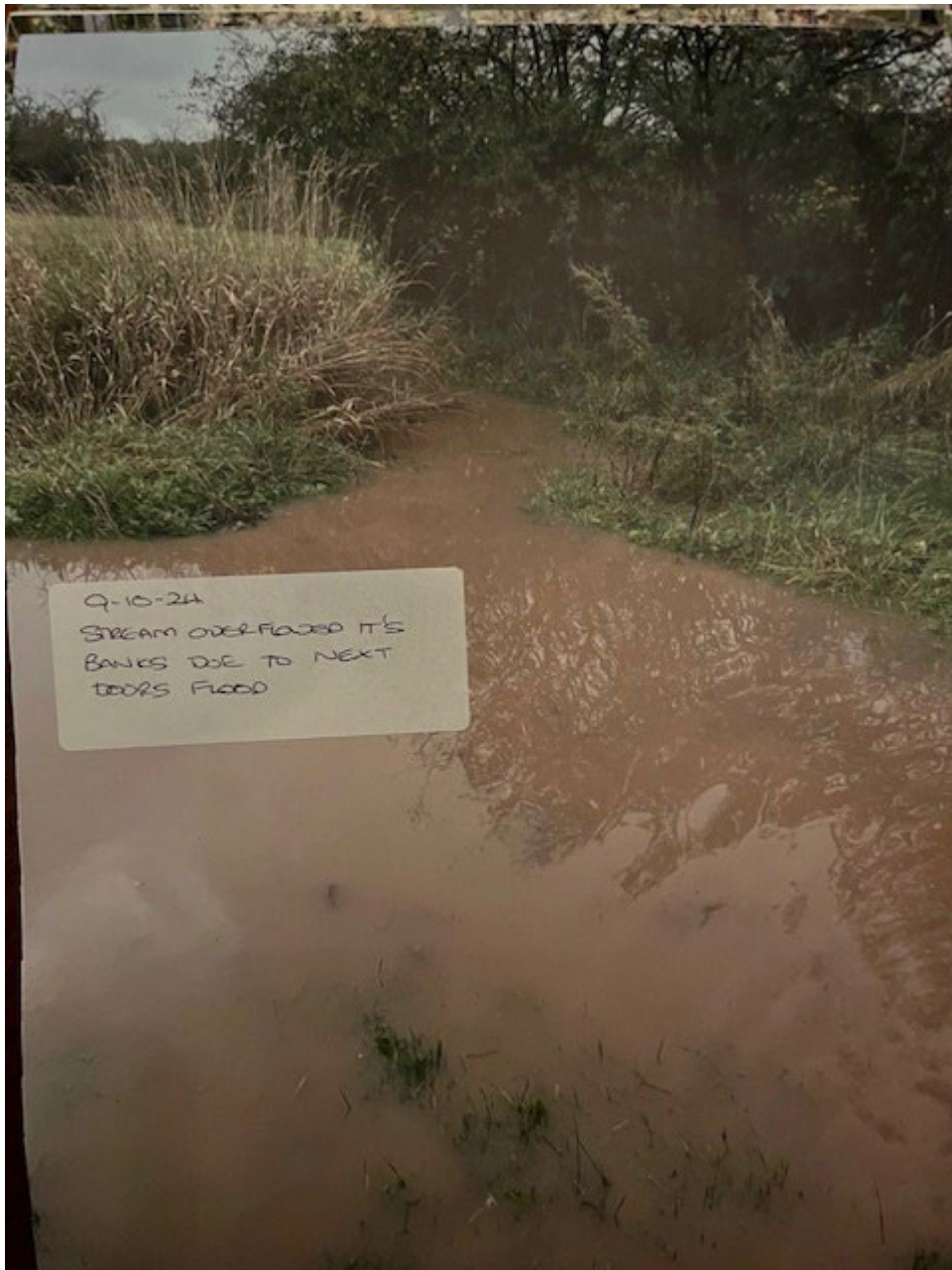
I would strongly suggest that the ExA give serious consideration to conducting a site visit to the area RWE propose to place the on-site Substation and assess the ancient woodland which would be fenced off and surrounded by a wide access road, particularly as the Substation is the beating heart of the whole development to which and from which all cable routes would be directed.

If the substation were to be relocated to the west of square wood on higher, drier ground it would be totally out of site of anyone travelling down the highway as well as to ourselves which in turn would enable Square wood to remain accessible to all the wildlife. I would also make the recommendation that the battery storage units and panels close to our boundary be moved considerably further away from our Local Wildlife Site to ensure a safe area for the various important species many of which are on the endangered uk species list to find solace particularly during the construction phase.

I would also like to convey my gratitude to the examining authority for kindly agreeing to make the accompanied site visit to our site as I do feel it is impossible to gauge from a map or viewing from a 'drive-by' the huge implications I have described above.

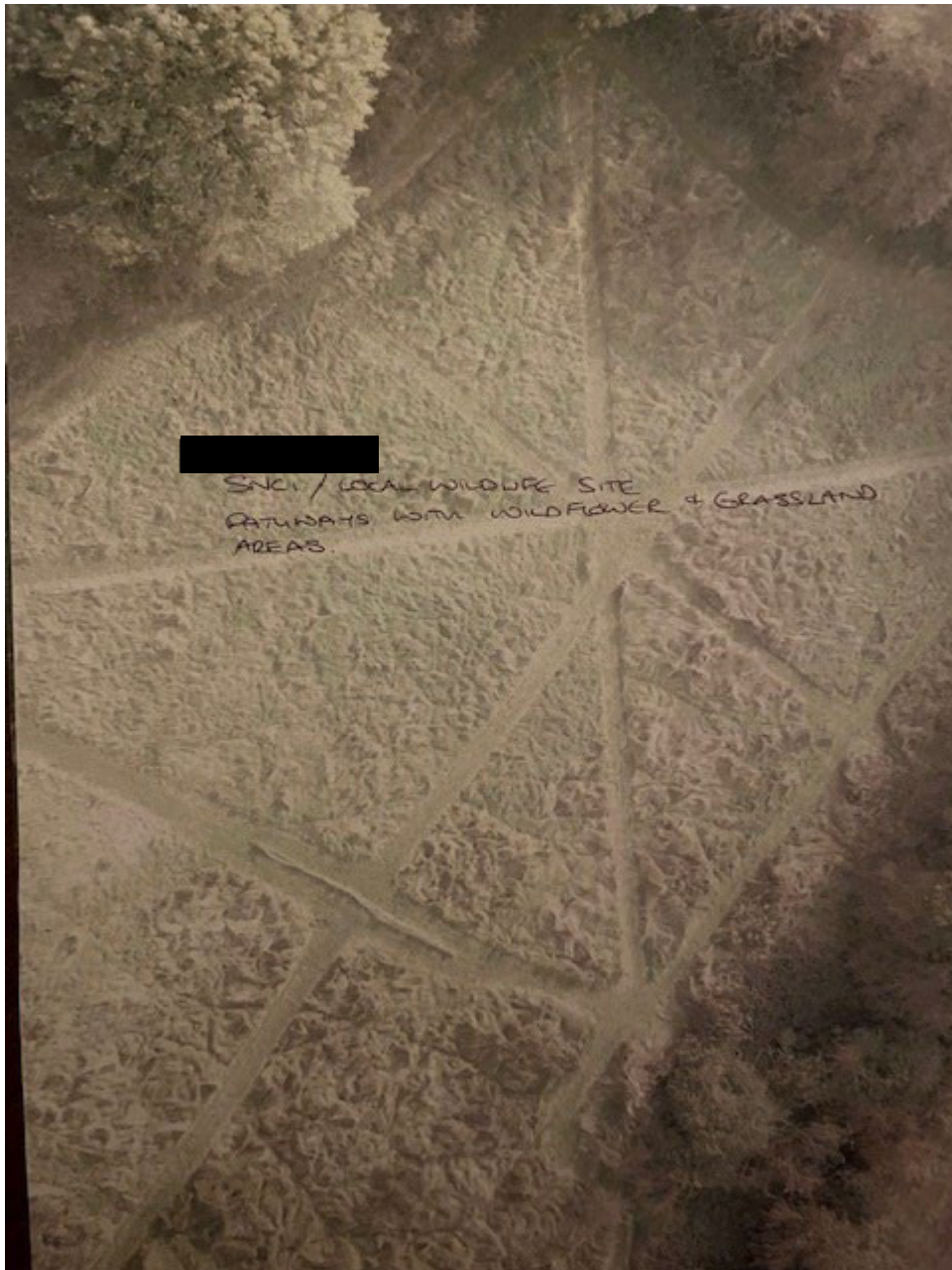
Suzanne Springett – October 2024 Post Hearing Submission











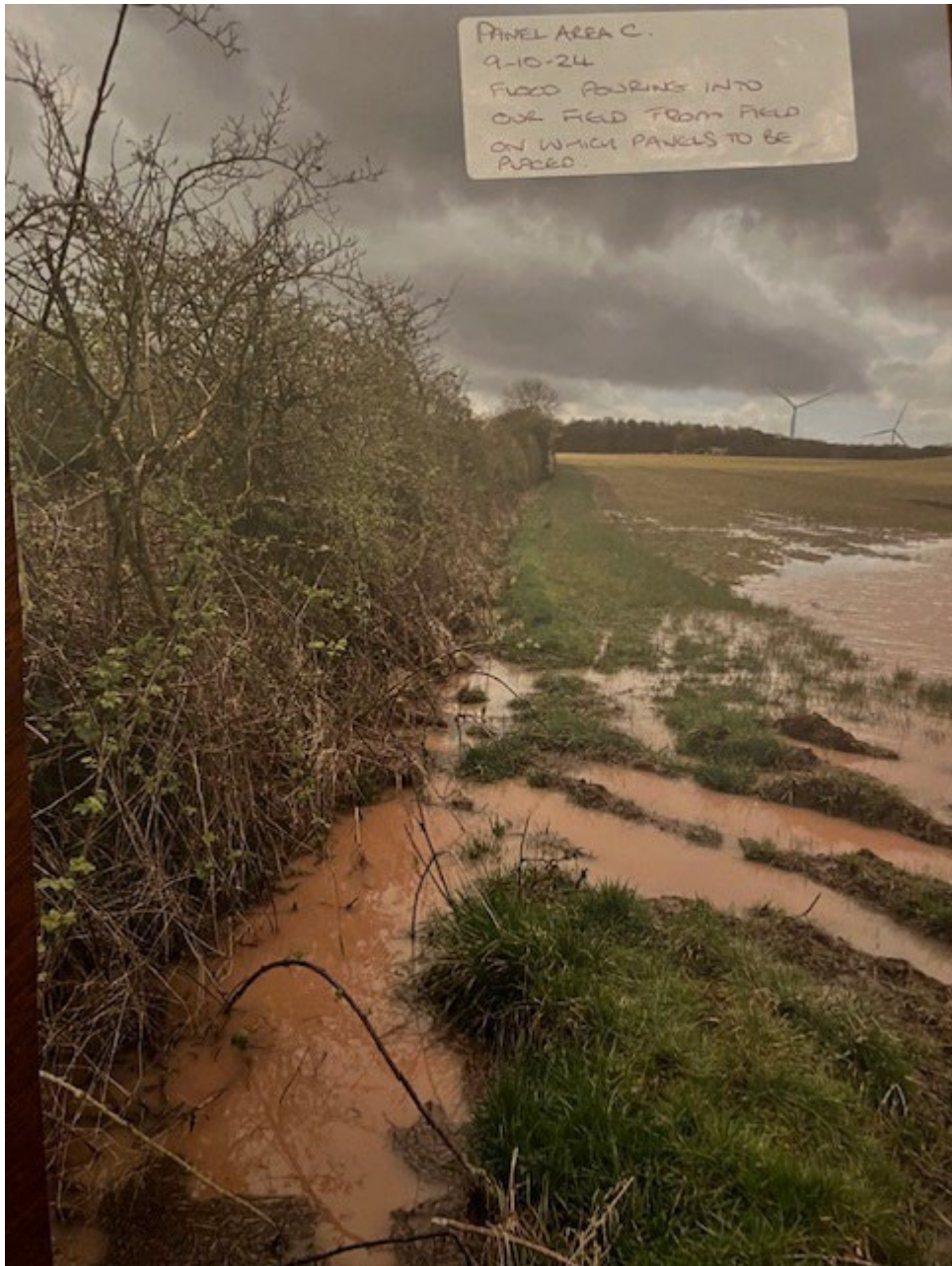
[REDACTED]
SNCI / LOCAL WILDLIFE SITE
PATHWAYS WITH WILDFLOWER + GRASSLAND
AREAS.



PANEL AREA C
9-10-24.



PANEL AREA C.
9-10-24
FLOOD POURING INTO
OUR FIELD FROM FIELD
ON WHICH PANELS TO BE
PLACED.



Visitors and residents of our SNCI / Local Wildlife Site.









