



## Hearing Transcript

<b>Project:</b>	Byers Gill Solar
<b>Hearing:</b>	Open Floor Hearing 4 Session 1 (OFH4)
<b>Date:</b>	27 November 2024

**Please note:** This document is intended to assist Interested Parties.

It is not a verbatim text of what was said at the above hearing. The content was produced using artificial intelligence voice to text software. It may, therefore, include errors and should be assumed to be unedited.

The video recording published on the Planning Inspectorate project page is the primary record of the hearing.

# TRANSCRIPT\_BYERSGILLSOLAR\_OFH4\_SESSION1\_26112024

Wed, Nov 27, 2024 9:02AM • 21:42

Hello, good afternoon,

right? It's six o'clock now, so it's time for this hearing to start.

So good evening, everyone can I just confirm that everybody can hear me clearly.

Can I also confirm with production 78 that live streaming and recording of this event has commenced? Yes. Thank you very much for those people watching the live stream. Can I also advise that, should we at any point adjourn proceedings this this evening, we will have to stop the live stream to give us clear recording files as a result. At the point at which we recommend the meeting and restart the live stream, you'll need to refresh your browser page to view the restarted stream. We will remind you of this should we need to return it is now 6pm and it's time for this hearing to begin. We will aim to finish this hearing by 730

at the latest. I would also like to welcome you all to this open floor hearing in relation to an application made by RWE renewables, UK, solar and storage limited who will refer to as the applicant for another granting development consent for bioskill solar.

The development proposed consists of a solar farm with over 50 megawatts capacity, ground mounted sort of photovoltaic modules and associated mounting structures, inverters, transformers, switch gear and control equipment, a substation, energy storage equipment and underground on and off site cabling. Thank you all for attending this hearing. My name is Andrea Pinto. I am a charter town planner employed by the planning inspectorate, and I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for housing, communities and local government to be the lead member of the panel to examine this application. I will now ask my fellow panel members to introduce themselves. Mr. Wiltshire, good evening, everybody. My name is Max Wiltshire. I'm a chartered civil engineer employed by the planning Inspectorate. I've been appointed by the Secretary of State as a member of the panel of inspectors to examine this application. Thank you.

Good Good evening, everyone. My name is Alex oyebade. I'm a charter transport planner employed by the planning inspectorate, and I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for housing communities and local government to be a member of the panel to examine this application.

Chuck together, we constitute the examining authority, and we will be reporting to the Secretary of State for energy security and net zero with a recommendation as to whether the development consent order should be made.

The case manager for this project is Jenny savage Jenny. Jenny is being supported here today by Miss Rebecca Luxton. If you have any queries about the examining process or the technology we are using for virtual events, this should be your first point of contact. The contact details can be found at the top of any letter you have received from us or on the project page of the national infrastructure website. I will now deal with a few housekeeping matters for those attending in person.

Can please everyone make sure that they have all the devices and phones set to silent. Please

also the closest inclusive and female toilets are just outside this room on this floor, through the same doors you have used to enter the room earlier. There are additional toilets just by the snack bar on the floor below.

There are no fire evacuation tests planned for today. Should the fire alarm sound, please make your way to the nearest fire exit door using the fire doors marked in this room and head downstairs fire evacuation assembly point is at the square outside the main entrance to this building.

This is a hybrid event, meaning some of you are present with us here at the hearing venue, and some of you are joining us virtually, using Microsoft Teams for those people observing or participating through teams. Can you please make sure that you stay muted unless you are speaking, if you are participating virtually and you wish to speak at a relevant point in the proceedings, please use the hand up function. Please be patient, as we may not get to you immediately, but we will invite you to speak at an appropriate time. We will make sure that however you decide to attend today, you'll be given a fair opportunity to participate. In addition to the live stream, a recording of today's hearing will be made available on the bios, gills solar section of the national infrastructure planning website as soon as practicable after the meeting has finished.

With this in mind, please ensure that you speak clearly into a microphone stating your name and who you are representing each time before you speak. For those with us today, you can do so by coming to the table and pressing the large button at the base of the microphone.

If you are not here with us today and you do not want to come to the table, there is a roving microphone, so please wait for one of those to be brought to you before you speak.

If you are attending virtually and don't want your image to be recorded, you can switch off your camera for those in the room who don't want to be recorded. There is an area at the very back of the room out of camera shot. So please use that area,

because the digital recordings that we make are retained and published. They form a public record that can contain your personal information and to which the general data protection regulations apply only in the rarest of circumstances. Might we ask you to provide the personal information of the type that most of us would prefer to keep private or confidential, therefore, to avoid the need to add digital recordings, please try your best not to add information to the public record that you would not wish to diverge and you would wish to keep private, or that it is confidential.

If you feel that personal information is necessary, please provide this in a written document that we can then redact before publication. The planning inspectors practice is to retain and publish recordings for a period of five years from the Secretary of State's decision the

a link to the planning inspectors. Private notice was provided in rule six letter alongside notification for the hearings. I assume that everybody here today has familiarized themselves with this document. We said, which, which establishes how the personal data of our customers is handled in accordance with the principle set out in data protection laws. Please speak to Jenny savage if you have any queries about this. Are there any questions or comments on what I have just laid out?

No queries online. Can I just check if there is anyone joining us online that has any queries,

no queries online or in person. So I will continue,

and an agenda has not been prepared for this hearing, because its purpose is to hear representations of interested parties who have registered to make oral representations, elaborating on their written representations. To date, open floor hearings are your opportunity to raise anything directly to the examining authority that is important and relevant in that you think we should know about and consider

they are not about a particular location or topic. The topic of your representation, about the proposal, is therefore up to you.

I

propose that I start by calling those interested parties that have confirmed the desire to speak in advance. And I believe I only have one person that has signed that has confirmed from the participation form that would like to speak today, which is

Mr. Martin Philpott,

welcome. Thank you very much. Can I just ask, just so that we can manage the meeting today, in this hearing a little bit more easily, if there is anyone else that is anticipating that would like to speak to us today. Anyone else in the room that would like to speak to us today?

Okay, I don't see any hands raised. Can I ask if there is anyone else that would like to speak us today as well that is joining us online?

Yes, I have one hand raised. Is this

Mrs. Susan Malani,

hello. Can you hear me?

It seems that microphone might be muted. Can I check

if we can unmute the microphone? Can you hear me now? Yes, we can hear you now. Thank you very much, Mrs. Millennial, can I just confirm that you would like to address us today?

I would, I'd like to make a statement today. I'm a resident of bishopton village,

certainly in that case, I will call you after we have heard from Mr. Martin Philpott. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Can I ask if there is anyone else joining us online that would like to speak to?

Us today as well,

just so that we have an idea of the numbers.

I don't see any hands raised.

Mrs. Milani, can I ask you to lower your hand now I believe that it probably was left from previously. Thank you very much, right? If there is no one else that would like us to address today, either virtually or in person, I will now ask Mr. Martin Philpott to

come to us and speak to us. Please. You.

Good evening. Marc Philpott, I'm representing the great state and parish meeting. I

would like to refer to my previous written submission examination, reference, R, E, p4,

022,

summarize, in which I advise 100% of the residents a great state and are opposed to buyer skill due to the sheer scale of the Six panel areas of buyers girl and the closest proximity of the panel area d to the village and residents homes,

along with the fact that are already several other solar schemes in local area,

we advise that this presents an unacceptably high adverse impact On the residents of great state and the local community,

from the loss of open public rights away where we walk our dogs, they'll be turned into fence corridors, to the substantial adverts, visual impact by a skill will have on the village,

despite The significant and valid concerns raised by the residents

in the document, 8.2, point one. Comments on deadline for submissions, our W, E, S response was that in ES chapter 13, A, P, P, 036,

they included concluded there would be no significant adverse impacts

in the I, S, h4, hearing in October, we heard R, W, E's landscape and visual specialists claim to have detailed knowledge of local area and then make statements about hedgerows and fence lines that didn't exist.

Similarly, we heard from Darlington Borough Council's landscape and VISUAL EXPERT that the approach taken by RW he had not followed the standard industry practice of worse case views for the landscape and visual assessment.

We also heard earlier today from Andy Anderson, but found that some of the background documents, the information knows, did not match the summary documents in our W E s report.

So I suspect that there may be errors or omissions in our W's assessment, which has led them to conclude there would be no significant adverse impacts. My concern that if this is not checked and corrected, it could present the Secretary of State with an incomplete picture to its form, a decision. That's all I've got to say. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Philpott,

any questions from the resource panel, nope.

In the comments, no.

Mrs. Mullaney,

hello, joining us online. Hello, good evening.

Can I ask you to, before you make your representation to us to just confirm your name and your organization, if you are representing an organization, just for the record, please. I'm Mrs. Susan Laney and I am a resident of the village, bishopton village. Thank you.

Thank you for allowing me to speak.

If you would like to then make your submission to us. Please. Mrs. Mullaney, thank you. Okay,

according to the latest government data, and I looked at this in September,

we currently have 1336

operational solar farms in the UK.

The first solar farm in the UK was constructed, I believe, in November, 2012

In an old airfield in Leicestershire. It was about three acres.

So we've got to this figure. Currently, today, there are 142

solar farms under construction. 1957

are awaiting construction, and another 684

submitted applications hoping to join in on the solar revolution.

If they all overcome the planning and the building process, we will have more than 4000 solar farms on these shores, without doubt, there will be many more to come.



15 of the 684

submitted applications are within a four kilometer radius of our village, one of those fifteens buyers, Gill solar farm, is why I talking today.

My first thoughts when I heard of this application was, okay, solar technology. What? What's that going to mean to us. It's coming. It's going to help and we're secure our company's energy.

What impact is it going to have on our communities? How bad is it going to be?

And throughout all these hearings, I have heard how bad this is going to impact our communities and our lives. I have never seen and I have driven around and looked at solar farms,

anything that is so near to residential properties, so near to and so close to people's homes.

My neighbor has land at the back of our properties where she houses welfare, welfare colonies. I can walk from that yard to the field where these solar, solar panels proposing to be built. It is it took me 185

steps to reach the fence.

That is ridiculous, ridiculous. Far too close to properties, far too close to people's homes. Incidentally, that field, when I did that step out, was full of wheat. At that time, I didn't take a picture. I sort of wish I'd have my camera.

All the solar farms I have seen in this region are miles away from residential properties or on farmland where farmers have chosen to lease the land and have them placed that is their choice.

We have not got a choice. Our villages and communities have had no choice in this. But we do have a right. We do have a right,

a human right, to enjoy our property, to

find the words here, sorry with peaceful enjoyment of our possessions

and respect for private and family life. No doubt our government will get to net zero, but they do not have to decimate communities. They do not have to decimate people's lives. That's all I need to say. Thank you for listening to me.

Thank you very much, Mrs. Milani,

but those were the two submissions that we were planning on hearing. Now, at this hearing, can I ask if there is anyone else that would like to speak to us online or in person,

raise your hand. No,

okay. So,

as per the previous hearings, all participants are being asked for a post hearing, written submission of their oral case, as heard on this open floor hearing the applicant will be given an opportunity to respond to any matters raised once all speakers have been heard of, either orally or in writing, can I actually ask if the applicant would like to respond to any of the issues now i.

Uh, sir. Good evening. Alex menick, solicitor Robert salmon, representing the applicant, RWE renewables, no, sir, the applicant would not propose to respond to any of the submissions. Now we would propose to respond in writing as we intend to in relation to the submissions made at the earlier open floor hearing today.

Thank you. Thank you for that confirmation.

Therefore, then the applicant will be given an opportunity to actually reply in writing as well. In Can I ask for all parties that have spoken to us today to submit their post, hearing, written submission by the next deadline, which is deadline six, on the sixth of december 2024

following from the open floor, hearing, if any other person, any other interested party, which is to make a written submission, You can but please do so by the same deadline. So that's deadline, six, on sixth of December. Does anyone have any other comments that they would like to make?

No okay in that case. Thank you very much everyone for contributing so fully and usefully to this meeting. We have found it extremely helpful and will consider our submissions made carefully.

The time is now

21 past six and open floor hearing four for the bios, Gill solar energy is now closed. Thank you.

Applause.