

Information for Planning Inspectors re: Tillbridge Solar – impact on landscape

In 2018, members of the Harpswell and Hemswell Neighbourhood Planning Team commissioned Darren Carroll of Carroll Planning and Design to undertake a Character Assessment of both villages at part of their overall their Neighbourhood Plan, so that the ‘special qualities’ that give an area its sense of place and unique identity could be recorded.

Although Tillbridge Solar has referred to this document, they have been highly selective in their choice of information. I would ask that the planners actually read this document, not just selected excerpts, so that they can gain a full understanding of the landscape, and the need to protect important views, not just from the cliff edge but also the views towards the cliff edge and across the landscape. (Page 9 – Hemswell and Harpswell Character Assessment).

In their planning documents, Tillbridge Solar propose to ‘screen’ the worst impacts of their scheme. However, what this means is that they will effectively block these views for the lifetime of the scheme, severely comprising the visual amenity of the area.

Specifically, views from the A631 and from Common Lane (on the Heapham and Harpswell border (from Harpswell Wood) where one can see the contrasting character of the flat, open landscape of the Till Vale and the rising, wooded nature of the Cliff. This would be blocked should the solar scheme proceed. Yet these views are one of the defining characteristics of Harpswell Village and its surrounding landscape. (Photographs 10, 12 and 19, in the Hemswell and Harpswell Character Assessment document).

Travelling along Common Lane, between Heapham and Harpswell, the open views across the landscape are extensive. (Photos A, B, C, D) The hedge-lines are discontinuous, not solid, which is a characteristic of the landscape. Filling in hedgerows (part of the planning proposal) again removes characteristics of the area and will create a ‘tunnel’ effect when travelling along Common Lane, and to a certain extent along the A631.

In respect of St Chad’s Church (Grade 1 listed), the Scheduled Ancient Monument (the field opposite the Church containing the remains of the early medieval settlement at Harpswell, the site of Harpswell Hall and the medieval Moat), and also from the village, the scheme will still be visible.

- View from the village (Photo E)
- View from the raised bank where St. Chad’s Church sits (Photo F)
- The proposed site for batteries and other installations behind the behind Kealey’s barn will impact on the views south of the site of the Harpswell Hall (Photos G, H, and I) and Moat (Photos J and K). The solar scheme will also be seen from the Moat bank (Photo L). These sites are within the Scheduled Monument.
- Views from Common Lane out of the village (Photos M, N and O)
- View from Middle Street between Glentworth and Harpswell. The proposed ‘screening’ will effectively block this view. (Photo P)

The proposed solar scheme will adversely affect the character of the landscape and remove characteristic features of the landscape, completely changing a person’s appreciation and experience of the open landscape of the Till Vale. It is acknowledged that the two Solar schemes already given approval will be visible in the distant landscape from the Cliff. Should the Planning Inspectorate approve the Tillbridge Solar scheme, the culminative effect of these schemes and change to the landscape and its appreciation cannot be underestimated.

Johanna Gray

Resident of Harpswell and Harpswell representative on the Harpswell and Hemswell Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

October 2024

Photo A – View from Common Lane towards scarp slope/Glentworth (just past Harpswell Wood)



Photo B: View from Common Lane towards scarp slope/Glentworth (on approach to Hermitage Low Farm)



Photo C: View from Common Lane towards cliff edge and Hemswell



Photo D: From Common Lane towards cliff edge / Hemswell



Photo E: View from Harpswell Village. The Solar scheme will be visible.



Photo F: Photo from the bank outside St. Chads. The scheme will be visible.



Photo G: View from Old Hall looking South-West. The scheme will be visible.



Photo H: Close up of same view (but still within scheduled site)



Photo I: View south-east of the Scheduled site, where the planned installations at the back of barn will be very visible.



Photo J: View from the Moat looking south-west, where the scheme will be visible.



Photo K: View south-east of the Moat, where the planned installations behind the barn will be visible.



Photo L: View from the outer bank of the Moat, where the solar scheme will be visible.



Photo M: View from Common Lane, looking south-west.



Photo N: View from Common Lane, looking south.



Photo O: View from Common Lane, looking south.



Photo P: View from Middle Street looking over the landscape between Glentworth and Harpswell. The proposed 'screening' by Tillbridge Solar will block this view.

