From: Penny Foskett [redacted]
Sent: 04 October 2020 17:36
To: Aquind Interconnector <aquind@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Subject: Application for Aquind to lay a pipeline in Portsmouth

To whom it may concern:

I am concerned that the previous promise from Aquind that the allotments would be untouched has now been broken. There is a suggestion that the cable will no longer follow the path in the allotments but will now go through the allotment patches meaning that sheds, trees, wildlife and plant life will be demolished and destroyed to make way for this cable.

A number of the allotment patches have been tendered to and nurtured for decades by the same families and every single allotment holder has taken significant time to establish the beautiful plants that they have grown there. Many of the allotment holders grow fresh fruit and veg which they often donate to the community to eat allowing healthy eating and a more varied diet – something that is especially important considering the levels of obesity in Portsmouth.

Also these allotments are vital towards people's mental health, especially in the times we face with limited contact with family and friends. It is an outlet for many people and is a comforting place to go to and enjoy. If you take that away from people, it will be extremely detrimental towards resident's wellbeing.

There is also the fact that there is a species of newt (the Great Crested Newt – Triturus cristatus) that has been sighted a significant amount of times all over the allotments. This species of newt can live up to 25 years and its population is rapidly declining. Therefore, this species and its habitat is strongly protected by law (under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981). It is also a priority species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework and is listed as a European Protected Species under Annex IV of the European Habitats Directive. On the government's own website, there is a page dedicated to the great crested newt and some of the activities the government themselves have said could harm great crested newts includes: excavating the ground, filling in or destroying ponds, removing materials such as dead wood on the ground, removing dense vegetation and disturbing the ground.

I would like to know whether this has been taken into consideration when considering changing the route through the allotments and also, with the original plan to follow the allotment path. Has Natural England been briefed about this as I have not seen a mitigation licence from them or a report from an ecologist on the planning inspectorate's documents online. The government cannot put up rules about protecting this rare species then allow the wanton destruction of their environment by Aquind and their cable.

With regards,

Penny Foskett

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