

Fordham Parish Council

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Clerk: Mrs Christine Standley

Chair: Mr Philip Rampley

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General Information of Fordham.

Population: 2712 (2011 Census)

Of that population 1362 members are male, and 1417 members are female.

Ages:

0-17 years - 637

18-64 years - 1523

65+ years – 619

When the scheme was initially proposed, we were told and understood that the scheme would have very little impact on Fordham. It seems this is because the scheme will be hard to see if you are in our village. However, we disagree that this means there is little impact. The scheme is going to change the whole nature of the landscape around us. The appearance of the solar panels imposing on us will disconnect us from our neighbours, the villages and the outdoor space we enjoy as a wider community. Walking, travelling and enjoying the connections to our friends and neighbours in other villages will be changed for the worse. Because the site is in so many places, it is almost like we are being surrounded to the west and south. We are also unhappy with the harm it does directly to our friends and neighbours. This scheme will have an effect on us all.

General Objections:

As a village we feel that there has been very poor communication from Sunnica. We were visited once in 2017 but the evening produced truly little information apart from a few maps, all of which have dramatically changed since this "consultation"

Sunnica have distributed leaflets around Fordham, but again with very little information on the impact to our village and the surrounding landscapes etc. There is no mention of the impact to the village in terms of their construction and employees' vehicles to the highways traffic, and this is of concern to our residents. The high amount of traffic from such vehicles will make our roads less safe and make people more reluctant to enjoy the village.

FPC are concerned of the scale and size of this project. It will be spread out throughout our wider communities, and we feel that there will be no escape from its visual impact. It will be an ever-felt presence from roads, public footpaths, bridal ways and elevated positions in our area and this will rewrite the landscape as we have known it for generations. We are deeply concerned that any mitigation will take 15 years plus to be effective (if it can be effective at all) and in some cases the mitigation itself will be incongruous with the current landscape. We do not want to see our surroundings and landscapes made worse.

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FPC are also deeply concerned of the loss of good quality agricultural land that has been farmed in this area for hundreds of years. In a time when global conflict is on the rise and none of us know what is around the corner, we feel we cannot afford to lose more of this precious land. As a nation we must be able to feed ourselves. If the scheme is built, we do not think the area will ever return to rural land. This just isn't something we can lose in the large scale that is being proposed by this site. With regards to the batteries that will accompany this site, there seems to be a deliberate lack of information available as to their safety and impact. What will be their proximity to homes? The safety of our community is not something we will gamble with and more information on this must be provided.

FPC has concerns that this project is not necessarily as "green" as is being sold to us. This will make the situation even worse and even the promised benefits from Sunnica will not come, yet we will be left with the area around us made poorer and less desirable because of the scheme

Our personal views and why this land/area/community is important to us.

We have spoken at length in meetings and personally as to how a scheme of this size and scale will affect us on a more personal level. The following is a collection of the general feeling of councillors and parishioners.

Something that strikes us as odd, has been continually hearing that the area in which we live, is not an area of outstanding natural beauty and therefore is well suited for a site on the scale of this one. As a community, we feel it is important to impress upon you what it means to be a part of this small corner of England and what it is that is being taken away from us.

We are the people of the land. We are born of it; we spend our lives working it and we do so in the knowledge that one day we return to it. Cut us open and you will see that we bleed as black as the fen soil. We are the generations of farmers and farm workers, landowners and horse trainers, the stable hands, and flower growers.

This may not be an area of nationally recognised outstanding beauty, but we know it. We know every dip and swell, where to pull the horses up and where to let them have their head. As farm workers we know to look to the horizon for rain and the loose soil in summer for fen blow. We watch as the corn ripples across the fields and remark how it looks like waves, this is our ocean. We know better than anyone what the land gives, we watch with every passing year, and we see the damages of climate change. We understand that we hold a responsibility to those that come after us to preserve this land and perhaps fields of solar panels will be the cross we must bear for the generations that come long after we are gone.

But in all our dealings with Sunnica it is becoming more and more clear that green energy is not what they are offering. It is more and more clear that the harm to our area is so great, when the benefits are so little.

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They are taking a constant from our lives. This land has always been. It does not waver, it remains steadfast. When our Grandfathers and Great Grandfathers lay in the muds of France, it was this land and the right for it to remain that they fought for. Some were lucky enough to return to it, continue to work it and live out their lives, others returned only to lay beneath it and many did not return. But the land remained the same.

No matter what is happening around us, the land is our constant. Even as recent as 2020, when a viral pandemic forced us all into solitude and separation, we found ourselves returning to the land. We walked it and waved at each other from afar. The old showed the young the pathways of their youth and our young will pass along this knowledge to their own children.

Do you know what a crisp September morning watching the horses run the gallops feels like? The cool air, the crunch of leaves underfoot, the sound of hooves pounding the earth. These places are holy to us, this land is our church. If Sunnica is built, that will all change. The fields will no longer be fields but miles of shiny solar cells that cut us off from our surroundings, that take away our land that will stop people going out and waving to each other across fields. The scheme will take away this land that has been with us for generations, which has supported our little villages. Whether or not the scheme is eventually removed, the harm will remain as the links will be destroyed to other villages, the communities will change and become more isolated, the place will become quiet with smiling faces and friendly waves gone. This is what we face for a scheme which gives us back little and harms us much.

The trade off from Sunnica is not worth it to us. We are being forced to give up too much, to lose too much, we are being asked to sacrifice too much. We are losing the one thing, that no matter what life brings, is a constant to us.