

Dear Mr Kean,

I have had a chance to refresh my memory of the excellent Open Floor Hearings and would like to take this opportunity to comment on some submissions which are most relevant to my concerns.

I was very much struck by Councillor MacKenzie's contributions which gave a well-rounded description of the history and character of Worlington and what it personally means to her, at the same time conveying her enthusiasm for bats, an enthusiasm I share. I am very concerned about the welfare of bats in U6006-Badlingham Lane/Green Lane. There are three crossing points shown on the Tree Protection Plan [EN010106/APP/8.46, Sheet 14], two labelled Crossing Points 1 and 2, while a third can be deduced at the point where it joins the main cable corridor to East Site B. Crossing points 1 and 3 will inevitably be detrimental to the bats as they are in wooded areas. It is still unknown how bats react to construction disturbance and whether solar arrays are beneficial or detrimental but bats will be deterred if their foraging corridor is interrupted, as will happen if trees are felled. This could be avoided if Crossing Point 2 were positioned in the area of sparse tree cover and used the sole crossing point.

Bat Survey monitor points 1 and 2, as shown on the aerial view of U6006-Badlingham Lane below taken from our August 2021 Bat Survey, covers the area of Sunnica's 1st crossing point, which recorded rare and vulnerable Barbastelle and Serotine bats, these were also found at various other points along the Lane. The trees in the c.70m stretch earmarked for Crossing Point 1 are highly desirable as bat roosts with their flaking bark and broken branches – they should be left as they are with no felling or branch restriction. Crossing Point 2 approximates Bat Survey monitor point 5 which was the second most productive area of the Lane, recording five different species of bat including Serotine and Barbastelle Bats. The Lane is also a possible maternity roost.



Badlingham Lane [Green Lane]
bat survey 11th August 2021

- Common Pipistrelle
- Soprano Pipistrelle
- Barbastelle
- Noctule
- Serotine
- Myotis species
- Leislars

I am also concerned that Crossing Point 3 will have an adverse impact on a potentially historic Scots Pine which is significantly taller and straighter than the rest of the Scots Pines bordering the woodland; it may have been planted as a parish marker. I have recently discovered a Scots Pine of similar size and maturity at the Worlington entrance – perhaps the pair may have been planted to delineate the lane when it was the only track retained at Parliamentary Enclosure (Worlington 1799 and Freckenham 1824) while the other lanes and tracks shown on Hodskinson’s 1783 map were absorbed into private allotments. The 1st edition OS map shows the woodland area as a fenced lane bordered by pine trees, although it may have been in existence far earlier.

Following on from that, I endorse John Leitch’s concern that the ‘worst case’ of 3 weeks closure of PROWs is unlikely to apply to U6006 Badlingham Lane/Green Lane. It seems unlikely Sunnica would be able to complete all three cable crossings at one and the same time, which means the Lane will be closed for at least 9 weeks. While this is a great improvement on their original plan to close the lane for the entire 2 year construction period it still deprives the community of valuable exercise space for over two months. Of course, the question then remains will people want to spend their recreation time walking or riding in industrial construction site with its attendant noise, dust, ugliness and disruption instead of the beautiful, tranquil and ecologically fascinating Lane we know and love. I can only speak for myself; I know I will have no option but to drive to Cavenham Heath which is the nearest comparable Breckland PROW. As I pointed out in my Written Representation, Freckenham has only four footpaths worthy of the name (Mortimer Lane, Blanding’s Farm,

U6006-Badlingham Lane/Green Lane, and the circular river/Elms Road path) each of which will be impacted by the scheme either within, or in full view of, the construction zone.

Moreover, who is to police the 3 week construction time frame and what sanctions will be imposed if Sunnica, or whoever owns it after Sunnica sell it on, fails to meet their obligations? Cleve Hill is a case in point in that the scheme has changed hands before one solar panel has yet to be installed.

I also agree with Dr Fordham that a full Issue Specific Hearing should be held in relation to the BESS and that the HSE should be involved, the subject is too important, and potentially dangerous, to be tacked onto a general ISH. I also agree with Dr Fordham that calculations should always be on a worst case scenario; if an explosion or slow burning fire occurred at the BESS at East Site B the immense heat generated could have unimaginable consequences as a result of the high voltage gas main running through the BESS compound. Please, do not let this be a Grenfell Tower lesson that hasn't been learned.

At the same time, I was pleased Dr Fordham raised the issue of Atmospheric Change, a concern I raised in my Relevant Representation, referencing recent research by Lancaster University which shows up to 5 degrees cooling of land beneath solar arrays; anecdotally, neighbours with solar panels have found the air above their panels substantially hotter than ambient temperatures – what effect this will have on our microclimates is difficult to determine but given the Scheme will be using around one million solar panels some atmospheric change must occur. Perhaps this could be included in an Issue Specific Hearing on the BESS. Bearing in mind the Scheme, if approved, will be the largest in the UK if not in Europe, and unique in its disparate nature, its overall effects will be unknown. It is unfair to impose yet another unknown on our communities.

I was impressed by the passion shown by those who spoke, which I hope demonstrates to the ExA what this area means to us and the devastating effect Sunnica's scheme will have on our lives. For most of us everything we have is invested here, not just materially but emotionally, in our history, hopes, plans, and aspirations for the future.

While I was disappointed that OFH 2 was not immediately available it was well worth the wait. In view of the delay, can I respectfully request that the deadline for comments from those unable to attend can be extended to Deadline 5, in the same spirit of fairness which the ExA displays to the Applicant?

Yours sincerely

Sandie Geddes
Resident of Freckenham