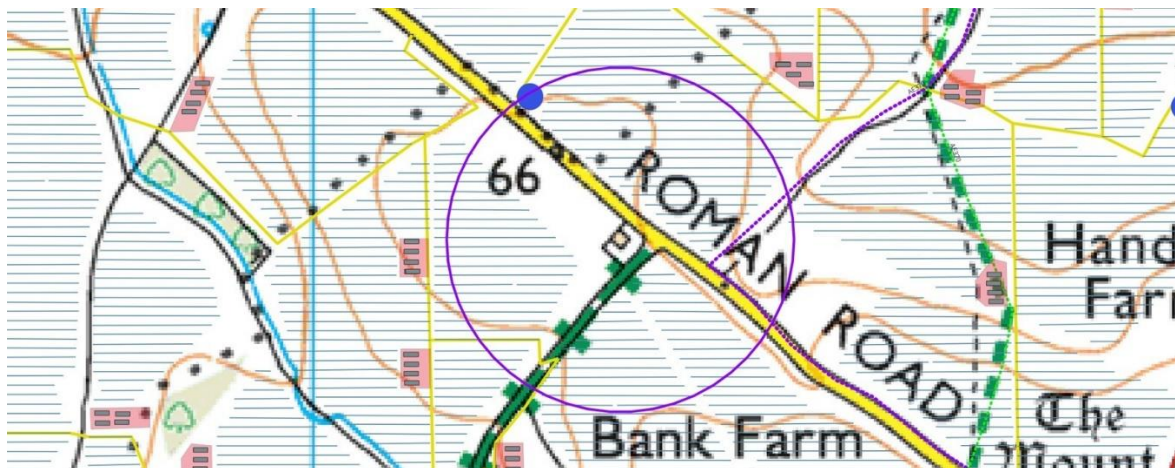


Transcript of verbal submission to the Open Floor Hearing

The following is a transcript of my verbal submission given at the Open Floor Hearing. I would also like to add the following:

It was so unfair of the developer's barrister to try and say that my complaint about the proximity of panels to my home was unreasonable. He said that his client had made some concessions (these are tiny as you will have seen from the plans) and he went on to say that anyway Bank Road and the nearby Byway greatly reduce the impact on my home. I have noted that my house has not been selected as one of your locations for a site inspection and I have therefore asked a friend to take some video from the house to give you an idea of just how horrendous this development will be for me if you recommend approval to the Secretary of State.

What I find so unfair about the developer's attitude is that the adjoining solar scheme (EDF Renewables) has designed its scheme so that no solar panels are closer than 150 m to any residential property. Below is a plan showing the 150 m radius superimposed on the developers layout plan and a friend has calculated that if they had provided this area to lessen the serious impact on me and my property it would only have removed 11 acres of panels from their scheme – a tiny percentage of the whole. Quite apart from anything else, I note the developers removed all panels from fields 26, 27, 28 and 29 which is a huge acreage. Why then couldn't they help me with removing a much smaller area which at the same time would benefit everyone else by removing panels from the highest land around here either side of Bank Road?



Finally, the developer has admitted that the efficiency of the solar panels, even by the date construction takes place let alone over the next 40 years, is bound to improve so this sort of small reduction in panel area would make a huge difference to me and only have a tiny impact on them. I do hope you will consider what I have said and that my concerns along with those of so many others about this development will mean that you recommend refusal.

Transcript from Open Floor Hearing

We have been asked to explain how this proposed scheme affects us personally and for me the effect is enormous. As you will see from the map, [REDACTED] of the proposed solar farm, a solar farm that will turn my beloved rural home into an industrial site.

I moved to the village with my husband [REDACTED]. We fell in love with [REDACTED] because of its views of the Kent countryside. Situated on a hill, you can see farmland all the way to the A20, from the front of the house. To the east, the land slopes down towards the village and to the west, you can see Ashford and the hills towards Charing. Looking south on a clear day, you can see as far as the wind turbines in the sea.

For [REDACTED], I have lived in a quiet and peaceful location. We **chose** to live with no immediate neighbours – [REDACTED] is overlooked by no one. We **chose** to live on a quiet lane with little traffic. We **chose** to live next to a farm – welcoming the periodic sounds from tractors, balers and combine harvesters as part of the rural life.

This rural life is now under threat as never before. If the proposed plans go ahead, my home will be surrounded on every side by solar panels. To the north, south, east and west, my view will be blighted. For as many months as it takes to install the solar panels, I foresee noise, disruption and traffic congestion down rural roads that were never designed for heavy vehicles. But the disruption caused by the installation pales into insignificance compared to the longer-term impact upon my life. I face the prospect of living next to the constant buzz and whine of noisy equipment. After three decades of having had no immediate neighbours, I now face the prospect of the area around me being illuminated by security lights. We have no street lights so it is very dark, and I enjoy watching the sunsets and star lit skies, but this is something else I will lose due to light pollution from the security lighting. The developers have made a paltry concession, offering to plant a hedge to obscure the view panels in **one** direction. However, I have little confidence in this offer, given how many years it would take a hedge to mature into a meaningful screen.

Of even greater concern to me is the fact that my water is supplied to my home by a pipe that extends for over a quarter of a mile from the village. Over the years, it has become clear that the local water authority do not know the exact route of this pipe. Given that the supports for the solar panels are sunk into the ground, the likelihood of at least one of them piercing my water pipe seems highly likely.

And what do I get in return for this industrialisation of my village? What do I get for the disruption to my peace, the blighting of my view, the despoiling of the home I love? I lose money. A very significant sum of money. Two different independent estate agents estimated that the value of my home will decrease by in excess of **one hundred thousand pounds** when the beautiful countryside that currently surrounds my home is hidden by 495 acres of solar panels. Surely you will agree that the sheer injustice of this is shocking. How can it be right to lose £100,000 and not be entitled to any compensation? This is basically theft.

I am a widow in my [REDACTED]. The uncertainty, the worry and the financial concerns are greatly impinging on my life and wellbeing.

My home is possibly the worst affected by the proposed scheme; however, there are many, many more villagers whose lives will be adversely affected by dumping this solar farm on us. Aldington is too small a village to be engulfed by such a massive scheme.