

Objection to the proposed Tillbridge Solar Farm
Submitted on behalf of Glentworth Parish Council

The submission is made on behalf of Glentworth Parish Council and should be considered alongside our previous submissions and objections, including those where we have made joint submissions with other Parish Council's affected by this and adjacent solar farm proposals as well as our support for the objections lodged by 7000 Acres.

In summary, our previous objections to the proposed Tillbridge solar farm development are that:

- Scale – the overall scale and impact of what is proposed is too large and especially when considered alongside the other solar farm developments in the immediate area, two of which have already been granted consent. The Tillbridge development constitutes a very significant industrialisation of what is currently open farmland and wooded countryside and is of an inappropriate scale in this location.
- Cumulative impact – reinforcing the point about scale, taken alongside the other proposed solar farm developments, a total of 10,000 acres of land will be taken up, an area equivalent to the size of the City of Lincoln.
- Loss of productive farmland – as already stated, the proposed development area includes a very significant amount of farmland that is currently used for food production, either for direct human consumption or as animal feed. The loss of this productive farmland is likely to result in the UK needing to import foodstuffs to replace the lost production, with the consequent carbon impact of those imports.
- Viability – in previous submissions and in support of the case made by 7000 Acres, we question the claimed energy production of this solar farm, in particular the amount of electricity that would be generated at those times of year when the demand would be at its highest, i.e. during the winter.

Glentworth PC wants to emphasise that it recognises the threat created by the climate crisis and the need to seek alternatives to fossil fuels, but the Council believes that sacrificing such vast areas of productive farmland in this way is not the way to achieve the aim of reducing carbon emissions.

In addition to the grounds for objection above, Glentworth PC wants to make further comment following the Open Floor Hearings, highlighting some specific issues that have been flagged by parishioners.

Impact on residents: we believe that the development will have a detrimental impact on the mental health and well-being of people living in the village and parish. That impact will arise from the very extended period of construction, which is likely to go on for many years and then the projected 60-year lifespan of the solar farm, including disruption caused by ongoing maintenance. Noise, disruption, the loss of countryside and the impact on visual amenity will all contribute to a significant reduction in the quality of life for people in the area and the consequent impact on their health. The PC is concerned that there has not been a proper, independent and comprehensive assessment of the impact on the health and well-being of those affected and we request that the Examination requires such an assessment to be made.

Further the PC and those it represents are concerned about the impact on wildlife, both through disturbed habitats, the loss of habitats and the disruption that will happen to the movement of animals and birdlife in the area.

Further to this there are two specific issues that we believe the Examiner should take into consideration:

Glentworth to Harpswell PROW – the Parish Council has long been seeking to reinstate the public right of way between the villages of Glentworth and Harpswell, which was inadvertently removed from the definitive map although the PROW was never expunged. The Applicants indicative plan identifies a biodiversity area with an access route for maintenance that would effectively end the prospect of this PROW ever being properly reinstated. The footpath in question is a section of PROW that connected all the villages along the Lincoln Edge, it therefore has historic significance and would be lost should the Applicant proceed.

The second issue that we do not believe has been properly considered, in fact the Applicant appears to be unaware of, is the existence of a granted consent for the establishment of new oil drilling within the proposed development area. These consents (LCC PL/0135/22; EIA/31/22; and PL/0007/22) were obtained by Igas and fall within the areas designated as 75, 76 and 68 on the Applicant's indicative map. Aside from the potential conflict of solar panels, battery storage and oil extraction, the cumulative impact of construction of these oil drilling sites alongside that of the solar farm proposals, greatly increase the sense of the industrialisation of the countryside in the vicinity of the parish of Glentworth and the destruction of a rural culture and way of life that has existed for hundreds of years.

John Latham

Chair, Glentworth Parish Council

14 November 2024