

TILLBRIDGE SOLAR PROJECT – DEADLINE 4 – 28 JANUARY 2025

I attended the Open Floor and Issue Specific Hearings held on 14th/15th January 2025 at the Lincolnshire Showground. I listened to the recordings of those events published on 22 January 2025 by the Examining Authority.

I also repeat I concur and fully support those Interested Parties who spoke so eloquently against the Tillbridge Solar Project at this Open Floor Hearing and Issue Specific Hearings. I also wish to register again my objection to this solar development, which I expressed in my Relevant Representation dated 30 July 2024 and subsequently.

Health, Safety and Well-being – Item 3a

The effects of the proposed development on Human Health including the long-term well-being of the adjacent affected communities and the risks presented by the incidents of battery energy storage systems (BESS) adjacent to other major hazards and the cumulative effects was to be discussed at Issue Specific Hearing 3 on Wednesday, 15th January 2025. The Applicant's Consultant was unable to attend the hearing therefore we were unable to explore the Health, Safety and Well-being subject in the depth that is needed.

The Applicant states they have taken the approach to consider specific elements of the schemes individually *which they believe could affect mental health* and the Applicant finds there are no significant adverse impacts identified with regards to human health as result of the 'mitigation' proposals they propose.

The specific elements of the impacts the Applicant refers to are :--

Landscape

Visual Amenity / Impact

Noise

Access to Open spaces

Employment (note: this will include enormous transport congestion issues).

Further for my part, being witness to the wholesale destruction of Biodiversity and Ecology by the Applicant's project during construction and beyond, would also have an adverse impact on mental health and well-being. Therefore, Biodiversity and Ecology should not be excluded from the full health and well-being impact of the project on the affected residents and communities and I request this should also be included in the specific elements of the impacts.

The statement prepared and read by Mr Ray Stansfield, an Academic in Nursing and a member of the 7000acre Group at Issue Specific Hearing 3 (ISH3) on Health, Safety and Wellbeing and the Visual Environment was hugely informative ***and affirms the need for a much more in depth, thorough Health Impact Assessment.*** His expertise and knowledge, having worked in this field for over 50 years, made it abundantly clear that the visual and other aspects of this project are capable of inducing negative and harmful effects on individuals.

I and others have noted the anxiety and strain that is being caused to affected parties from the Compulsory Acquisition of their land. It is wrong for the Applicant to exclude the adverse impacts of this from their examination on the Health, Safety and Well-being aspects. The whole cumulative effects of the Tillbridge Solar, Gate Burton Solar, Cottam Solar and West Burton Solar projects became a mental and well-being health issue from the very outset 3 years ago. Not only

has it continued to be so but has increased people's nervousness, stress and anxiety and for Tillbridge Solar to dismiss so readily such concerns out of hand beggar's belief.

We have a great deal to be nervous about. Our communities do believe Lincolnshire is being unfairly targeted and this discrimination has propelled despair, misery and anxiety as these industrial scale solar projects are consented. Lincolnshire is absolutely and unquestionably under threat. An unremitting stress pervades these multiple solar project examinations, not only for those residents who have challenged the solar applications so far, including myself, but for those who also have been unable to participate because of the complexities of the process. This constant stress is damaging to even the strongest of us affecting our mental and physical health. It is not only the uncertainty of what will be consented or otherwise, it is the Carte Blanche approach to do whatever, at any cost to get to Net Zero by 2030. Where is the democracy here ?

It was clear to see from those who spoke at the Hearings against the project of their concern, the affect was palpable and distressing to witness. They were also standing up for their communities who see complete destruction and total disregard of the areas in which they live by the Applicants, destruction of the farmland and landscape, destruction of this uplifting visual amenity and access to the open space, destruction of the peace and tranquillity from noise on a landscape where sound can carry across considerable distances not only throughout the construction period but beyond from the on-site paraphernalia of Sub-Stations and tracking noise from solar panels. BESS is a weighty health and safety concern. There is much unease about the destruction and effectively vandalism of Lincolnshire County as a whole from solar NSIPs. Tillbridge Solar can only be described as negative for the County and its people and the unease that brings – solar on this scale is wholly inefficient for the agricultural land being seized.

If all four projects. Gate Burton Solar, Cottam Solar, West Burton Solar and Tillbridge Solar are under construction they will employ 3000 construction staff a day over a 4-year period, peaking for the whole year of 2027. To transport these employees to the sites will mean that over 1400 cars, minibuses and coaches will be on our six local roads accessing the construction sites each morning between the hours of 06.00 am and 07.00 am and then again between 7.00 pm and 8.00 pm as they return home.

In addition, between the hours of 08.30 am and 4.30 pm there will be a peak of 1800 HGVs and vans daily delivering materials, including over 5 million solar panels to the sites for a year between mid-2026 and mid-2027. Over an 8-hour period there will be 3.75 vehicles a minute on our six local roads. 08.30am is a time when pupils are either making their way to Sturton by Stow Primary School or secondary school children are waiting for their school buses on the routes below. It is also a hugely busy time when local and further afield people are travelling to work - much of this traffic is passing through the village of Sturton by Stow on the A1500 between the village of Marton and the A15 and the B1241 which crosses the A1500. This increased number of vehicles daily will cause mayhem.

Lincolnshire, its food producing agricultural land with an ever increasing UK population to feed, expected to be nearly 5 million more over the next 7 years driven almost entirely by net migration. Food scarcity is of concern and we should not be relying on imports. Lincolnshire and its communities are in peril from NSIP solar projects. We are not naysayers or NIMBYS. The NSIP schemes are not responding to the demands of the people, nor do they have green credentials but play out only to the interests of predatory capital from UK and overseas investors. We have much to be concerned about.

MITIGATION – Meaning:-

A factor that lessens the severity of an act.

To minimise degree of loss or harm.

Reducing the risk of loss from the occurrence of any undesirable event.

It is the process or result of making something less severe, dangerous, painful, harsh or damaging.

Over what period of time is mitigation considered satisfactory ?

Is waiting 20 years for a hedge or tree to grow a failure to mitigate an eyesore of 4.5 metre high solar panels, sub stations and BESS that that people will be unable to block from their vision ?

Is 20 years considered fair ?

What is considered a fitting time for people to suffer ?

MITIGATE – the most extensively used and fall-back on word by the Applicant/Applicant's representatives/consultants either spoken at Hearings or contained within their documentation which denotes the Applicant's attempts/struggle to defend Tillbridge Solar. This project is an injustice.

We have committed no crime but 20 years minimum, and up to 60 years, is a prison sentence for our residents yet it is the solar NSIPs Applicants that are inflicting unimaginable wounds, both visible and invisible, on the residents. There is no MITIGATION the Applicant can hypothesise that will reduce the severity of the 20 – 60 year sentence we are faced with.

The open Countryside is an essential characteristic to the well-being of the residents and visitors alike. A National Farmers Union survey confirmed 88% of people visiting glorious green spaces had improved physical and/or mental health. Visual impact of the environment is therapeutic. GP's are prescribing visits to the country for patients as part of a more holistic approach to patient wellbeing and patients are being advised to connect with nature to help the healing process. **THIS CANNOT BE DISPUTED.** Connecting people with rural areas can leave a long-term positive legacy of a greater appreciation of the countryside but what of the people living in the Lincolnshire countryside covered by industrial scale solar projects. What of the people, the communities living with the cumulative effects of Gate Burton Solar, Cottam Solar, West Burton Solar already consented within a 6 mile radius and other solar schemes waiting their turn, emerging in the agricultural heartland of the County of Lincolnshire. They will imperil us all. **Taking this tranquil and uplifting setting away is forcing us to live a life we don't recognise and will bring a lower level of life satisfaction to us all – we will be unable to facilitate disengagement from solar panels, from security fencing, from BESS, from sub-stations – they will be a constant distraction - where will our communities go for their prescription ?**

I can never get back the time I have had to spend these past 3 years reading documents, making submissions, attending hearings not just for one but the four NSIPS referred to above running almost concurrently – a colossal amount of precious time I have lost that should have been spent with my family. An incredibly stressful, frequently upsetting and unsettling period so Tillbridge Solar and your 'experts' don't say it isn't affecting the health of the community – you are so very wrong.

P Mitchell – 27 January 2025