

My name is Jonathan Ford. While I speak as a member of the public, my career has been spent designing landscapes - including large scale infrastructure projects - that meet the needs of people, are sound and are beautiful. My purpose this morning is...however inadequately...is to align my words with the God who loves us all. This project has the potential to benefit people and nature both now and in the future.

Examiners,

I shall focus on two issues...climate change and biodiversity loss. What can be more important? Nothing deserves more weight in the planning balance as you consider the merits of this Application.

Put starkly,... **lives are in your hands, Examiners.** Whether health, children, finances, even life and death...those things that are most dear to us all.

I find it deeply concerning that we are hearing so little about the benefits of the Application ...and in particular the benefits for nature and for people... our selves, our communities, our global neighbours.

CLIMATE CHANGE IS THE ISSUE OF OUR TIME. This application can mitigate climate change.

Since we started this Examination in Public, the Met Office has released provisional statistics confirming that the summer of 2025 is the warmest summer on record. All five warmest summers in the UK have occurred since the year 2000.

And what about our neighbours living in hotter and wetter countries? 100% humidity combined with temperatures above 35 degrees is life threatening. Tim Lenton OBE is Chair of Climate Change and Earth System Science at the University of Exeter. In his book – published since the beginning of this Examination – he suggests that at 1.5 degrees of global warming more than 400 million people will be exposed to 'unprecedented heat'. This increases by five times to almost 2 billion people at 2.7 degrees warming and includes more than

600 million people in India and 300 million in Nigeria. Has anyone given thought to the number of lives that could be saved by this Application? What weight do these lives carry in the planning balance? What about the associated suffering due to lost livelihoods and the need to migrate to cooler locations?

Yes of course, this Application should be the best it can be and it can be better: in terms of beauty, biodiversity and community benefits...an exemplary project that will inspire other landowners and world leaders to do the same. The Application is a temporary project that will leave the soil in better condition. It does **not** contradict Capability Browns intentions. Well designed it could make the area more beautiful than it is now. It moves us towards a world where climate and biodiversity are managed well...where we can look with hope to the future. This Application is a **temporary** project that provides us with breathing space while we get better technology up and running...clean electricity for Artificial Intelligence and green hydrogen to power cars, freight and aeroplanes. Perhaps saving thousands of lives and disruption associated with extreme weather. In a time of constrained national finances, utility scale solar costs the national purse **nothing**. We are looking a gift horse in the mouth.

In conclusion, Examiners, as you prepare your recommendation to the Secretary of State, give climate change mitigation and biodiversity gain the planning weight that the emergency deserves.