

Springwell Planning Speech

I'm Stuart Jackson a resident of Scopwick village,

I'm from a farming family, I've worked in the agricultural industry for over 35 years

If this planning application is passed then we will have 6 square miles of industrial site instead of countryside supporting a rich diverse habitat and wildlife with a conservation village right in the heart of it. Where will all the wildlife go to find a new home?

Scientific research has been conducted by various researchers / organisations into the impact of solar PV on habitat and wildlife with nearly all of this on small scale projects.

English Nature in their review of 420 scientific documents published in 2017 raised concerns that solar PV developments have the potential to negatively impact a broad range of taxa including birds, bats, mammals, insects and plants.

Research has (Gasparatos et al 2017) identified various ways in which these developments can cause negative impacts on biodiversity and include:

- Direct mortality through collision – e.g. bats / insects mistaking the smooth surface for water
- Habitat loss / fragmentation
- Alteration of habitat quality
- Species assemblage changes
- Microclimate alterations
- Pollution
- Reduced connectivity between populations

The developers own Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan confirms that there is indeed extensive biodiversity in this area, they highlighted four specific areas

BATS

PLANTS

BIRDS

HEDGEROWS

I'll just read you the text from direct from their report

- There is a considerable bat population consisting of numerous species and that the assemblage of species could be considered of national importance.

- Plants - Four species of rare or notable arable plants listed as near threatened or vulnerable on the *Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland's Vascular Red List of Threatened Species* have been found on the site.
- Birds - 67 different species of birds have been found on the site – 40 of these species found are specially protected or notable and been classed of either county importance, district importance or local importance.
- Hedgerows - Some hedgerows currently on the site are deemed likely to be of importance under the wildlife and landscape criteria of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. yet the proposal is to remove some of them so that the site can be developed.

Surely it's NOT acceptable to destroy all this!!

Within the boundaries of the proposed development there is a significant hare and deer population which are seen regularly when walking.

What is going to happen to this population when the development starts and the fence goes up?

These animals are either fenced in and prisoners, or fenced out.

Whichever side of the fence they are on, there is clear fragmentation of habitat and population, plus for those fenced in an ever declining genetic pool which will lead to genetic mortalities and a life of suffering and pain.

Animal corridors will be needed.

The applicants propose occasional gaps at the base of the fence to allow access of small mammals. This will not be adequate

Indeed the industries own guidance states there should be a 20-30 cm gap between the base of the fence and the ground, yet the developer is proposing occasional gaps.

When you consider the richness and diversity of the area proposed for development, with what the applicant is proposing, then I have to question if the applicant really has care for the environment and habitat in their application.

The solar industry themselves in 2016 funded a review into the extent commissioned sites were implementing their biodiversity plan.

Of the 11 sites they surveyed (solar developments ranging from 6 – 30 ha's in size, total area of 178.75 ha's) that:

- At 6 sites the management plan was not adhered to
- A further 3 sites had no management plan in place at all
- Only 2 had a plan and followed it

Its clear that the solar industry despite its claims at the planning application phase does not implement them after approval is granted. Why would they no one is going to come along and police it.

Siting solar panels on agricultural land is completely inappropriate and an outrageous use of a natural finite resource especially one which is supporting a rich diverse habitat and wildlife. Today we have the equivalent of 0.1 ha/ person for our food. In the 1950 this was 0.5 ha's

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations concluded that Agricultural production is limited by the increasing scarcity and diminishing quality of land and water resources. Today we have the equivalent of 0.1 ha/ person for our food. In the 1950 this was 0.5 ha's

It is not environmentally friendly to cover UK agricultural land with solar panels and then ship food around the world pumping out more CO₂ in transportation when we can grow it here.

The proposal to further reduce our food production capacity by covering agricultural land with solar panels is absolutely ludicrous.

Once this land has gone, its gone forever, it wont come back into arable production.

The developers have clearly stated in their plans when decommissioning anything in the ground stays in the ground they are not removing it.

- Steelwork piled into the ground to support the panels
- Miles of cabling
- Concrete
- Hardcore
- Fencing

It will be impossible to cultivate this land and grow a crop

We need to take a step back and really scrutinise the propaganda we are fed by central government and the solar industry.

Their message of cover the countryside in solar panels and we will all benefit from cheaper electricity is nonsense.

Any electricity that is produced, and hopefully it wont! Will all be sold at the price the market will stand ie as much as they can get for it.

Lets not get fooled into thinking it will bring our bills down.

In conclusion:

Its clear the area within the boundary of this proposed development contains significant, rich biodiversity – aquatic life, insects, bats, birds, mammals and flora, which will be negatively impacted NOT enhanced as the developers claim.

I strongly urge you to stop the destruction of Lincolnshire.

Say NO to this planning application and ensure your children inherit a county and environment to be proud of!