

Ashby de la Launde and Bloxholm with Temple Bruer and Temple High Grange Parish Council Response to Springwell Solar

The overwhelming sentiment within our community, as evidenced by the numerous registrations of Interested Parties, is a firm opposition to the proposed Springwell Solar development. Over the past 18 months, we have actively sought and listened to the views of our residents, and the consensus is clear: this solar project is ill-conceived and ill-placed.

Our community is facing a significant threat—this proposal represents an assault on our prime agricultural land, our rural way of life, and our environment. It is driven by speculative interests and an unfounded obsession with achieving net-zero targets at any cost.

Developers are pushing industrial-scale solar installations onto our doorstep, prioritising profit over the well-being of our community and the broader Lincolnshire area. They cloak their intentions in terms like “green energy,” “sustainability,” and “biodiversity net gain,” but the reality is that this is nothing more than the industrialisation of our countryside.

The claims made by energy companies about the number of homes these solar farms will power are misleading and irrelevant to our residents. They serve only to obscure the true nature of this development.

It is also evident that the current owners of Blankney Estates have abandoned their agricultural roots and their reputation as responsible landowners. Recently, the estate secured a DEFRA grant to enhance irrigation—an asset that many UK farms would envy. Are we prepared to allow EDF and the current farm management to dismantle over a century of successful farming practices?

Once this land is covered with glass and steel, it will be lost to agriculture forever. In an era where food security is paramount, we should be focusing on growing crops, not enriching corporations.

The developers' promise to return the land to agriculture after 40 years is unsubstantiated. There are no examples where this has occurred, and numerous sites worldwide remain contaminated and unusable post-industrialisation.

We demand clarity on the bonds or insurances in place to cover decommissioning and potential disasters during the 40-year lifecycle. What measures are being taken to manage hazardous waste from battery replacements and panel degradation?

While solar energy is often portrayed as a clean solution, the reality is more complex. Much of the equipment, including solar panels and batteries, is sourced from China and Africa, involving fossil fuels and questionable labor practices.

The UK contributes less than 1% of global carbon emissions; should we bear the brunt of the world's environmental issues?

EDF has declined to disclose the origins of their materials, despite working with manufacturers linked to forced labor camps.

In 2025, we should demand ethical sourcing and transparency in all our energy solutions.

This development would scar our landscape, destroy prime farmland, and negatively impact the well-being of our community.

Key Concerns:

Cumulative Impact: (We support initiatives that promote a greener future. However, our area does not contribute positively to the environment or our quality of life. The planning team must consider the cumulative effects of multiple developments, including biomass facilities, solar sites, battery energy storage systems (BESS), and National Grid substations. Together, these projects threaten to decimate 10,000 acres of prime farmland and transform our picturesque landscape into an industrial complex.

Battery Storage & Aquifer Risk: (The proposed BESS is situated above a primary aquifer. EDF's application lacks detailed safety measures, including spacing between containers and fire suppression capabilities. The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) recommends a minimum of 6 meters between containers; EDF proposes only 3 meters. Additionally, the risk of thermal runaway and the release of toxic gases poses significant threats to public safety and the environment.

Aquifer Contamination: (The BESS's location above a major aquifer raises concerns about the potential for hazardous materials like lithium, cobalt, and nickel. Such contamination could have long-lasting and costly effects on groundwater quality and local ecosystems.

Land, Soils, and Groundwater: (There is documented evidence that chemicals leached from solar panels proposed, this has the potential to create significant contamination. EDF must provide guarantees that there will be zero contamination of the land.

Flooding: (The installation of millions of glass panels and the alteration of drainage patterns threaten to flood the village. EDF has not provided adequate mitigation plans or taken responsibility for potential property damage due to flooding.

Landscape & Visual Impact: (The development would irreversibly alter the landscape, disrupting local heritage sites. The tranquil countryside that defines our community would be replaced with an industrial complex, negatively impacting residents' mental well-being.

Community Benefit: (If this and other applications are approved, our area will be negatively impacted for a decade, bringing noise, dust, and traffic disruptions. EDF has dismissed reasonable requests for community benefits, such as free electricity for residents. The proposed community benefit fund is insufficient and should be directly managed by our community, ensuring it is index-linked and payable from the start of construction.

This development is not a harmless renewable energy project; it is an industrialisation of our rural landscape that prioritises corporate profit over community well-being. We urge you to reject this application and protect our land, our heritage, and our future.