

Scopwick & Kirkby Parish Council

Response to the Fosse Green Application

Reference: F213E4E19

Scopwick & Kirkby Green Parish Council objects to the Fosse Green application.

The Parish Council has worked closely with neighbouring parish councils, community groups and local residents who would be directly affected by this proposal. While minor design amendments have been made, the development remains of an extraordinary scale and would result in the permanent industrialisation of open rural countryside. The Parish Council is particularly concerned that community feedback has not been meaningfully reflected in the evolution of the scheme.

Loss of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

The proposed development would permanently remove extensive areas of high-grade, productive agricultural land from food production. The loss of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land for industrial-scale energy infrastructure is contrary to long-term objectives for food security, sustainable land management and rural livelihoods.

The Parish Council does not accept that the destruction of successful farming land is justified, particularly when viable alternatives exist. These include rooftop solar, brownfield and previously developed land, offshore wind, and Small Modular Reactors, all of which would avoid the irreversible loss of prime agricultural soils.

Site Selection and Policy Conflict

The Parish Council considers that the applicant has misapplied national policy, including National Policy Statements EN-1 and EN-3. These policies emphasise:

- Proximity to existing grid infrastructure
- Minimisation of new grid development
- Preference for brownfield, previously developed and industrial land

Given the national significance claimed for this project, the applicant should have been required to demonstrate a genuinely strategic, national site selection process, rather than defaulting to easily acquired farmland.

The Government's Clean Power 2030 initiative reinforces the importance of brownfield-led development and conflicts directly with the approach taken in this application. Furthermore, there is no confirmed grid connection. The Parish Council considers it inappropriate to grant consent for a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project that is dependent upon a separate and currently unconsented substation proposal.

Limited Public Benefit

The Parish Council is not convinced that the electricity generated would primarily benefit UK consumers. There are legitimate concerns that a significant proportion of the power could be exported via interconnectors, while local communities bear the environmental, landscape and amenity impacts.

There is no clear evidence that the scheme would reduce household energy costs or deliver meaningful local or regional benefit commensurate with the scale of harm proposed.

Cumulative Effects

The Parish Council is deeply concerned by the cumulative impact of multiple large-scale energy developments proposed across North Kesteven and wider Lincolnshire. Collectively, these schemes would result in the permanent loss of extensive areas of prime farmland and a fundamental transformation of the rural landscape.

Lincolnshire's economy relies heavily on agriculture and tourism. The scale and concentration of development risks long-term damage to employment, rural skills, training pathways and the distinctive character of the county.

Landscape, Visual and Amenity Impacts

The application site lies within an open, rural landscape that is widely valued for its tranquillity and recreational use, including walking, cycling and horse riding. The Parish Council considers that the scale and extent of development would result in severe and irreversible landscape and visual harm.

The submitted photomontages rely heavily on proposed hedgerow planting, without adequately acknowledging that such screening may take a decade or more to establish, if it succeeds at all. In addition, equivalent visualisations are not provided for Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) compounds, resulting in an incomplete and potentially misleading representation of the scheme's true visual impact.

Ecology and Biodiversity

The Parish Council is concerned about potential impacts on wildlife, particularly migratory birds and species dependent on open countryside habitats. The combined effects of panel coverage, fencing, lighting, noise and habitat fragmentation raise serious doubts about whether biodiversity can be adequately protected or enhanced over the lifetime of the development.

Long-Term Responsibility and Land Restoration

The application seeks consent for a period of up to 60 years. The Parish Council questions the justification for such a prolonged operational lifespan and has serious concerns regarding long-term accountability.

The applicant and associated companies are not agricultural operators and are unlikely to retain ownership for the duration of the consent period. If land is to be restored following decommissioning, this must be secured through the Development Consent Order, with binding obligations to return the site to fully functional Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, free from contamination, and supported by robust and enforceable financial guarantees.

Environmental Contamination and BESS Risk

The Parish Council is concerned about the potential for environmental contamination arising from solar panels, cabling and BESS infrastructure, including PFAS and heavy metals. Well-documented BESS incidents demonstrate that failure risks are real and can result in fire, toxic emissions and environmental pollution.

It is unacceptable that such risks are effectively transferred to local communities and emergency services without clear, long-term liability and responsibility arrangements.

Supply Chain and Ethics

The Parish Council is deeply concerned about the potential use of solar panels and batteries manufactured within supply chains linked to forced labour. Full transparency regarding equipment sourcing must be required. No consent should be granted for equipment associated with modern slavery, and wherever possible materials should be sourced from verifiable, ethical suppliers, including UK-produced components.

Conclusion

Scopwick & Kirkby Green Parish Council considers that the Fosse Green proposal represents an unjustified, poorly sited and harmful industrial development within open countryside. The cumulative, landscape, environmental and agricultural harms clearly outweigh any claimed public benefits, which remain uncertain and unproven.

For these reasons, the Parish Council urges the Planning Inspectorate to **refuse development consent for the Fosse Green application.**