

East Claydon Parish Council response re Rosefield Solar development

- 1) East Claydon Parish Council represents the residents of Botolph and East Claydon. A very high proportion of our residents oppose the Rosefield proposal and many of these will have sent in individual objections to the scheme. However a lot of our residents are tenants in properties owned by the Claydon Estate. As such they have told the parish council that they feel unable to voice their opposition to the Rosefield proposal for fear of losing their tenancies.
- 2) East Claydon Parish Council fully endorses the submission by Claydon Solar Action Group regarding the proposed Rosefield solar farm. The following is a summary of the areas of our concern.
- 3) While we support clean energy, we believe that in England solar panels should be sited on rooftops, especially those of factories and warehouses not on productive fields. The Rosefield proposal would disrupt local food production for humans and animals and also damage local businesses including those dependent on horses, sheep and wildlife (e.g. Preston Farm, TCS Biosciences and Hogshaw Farm and Wildlife Park) that provide significant local employment and tourist attractions. TCS Biosciences is also part of our critical national infrastructure for the NHS. Even the footfall at Claydon House (National Trust) and its associated businesses could be adversely affected by the Rosefield development especially during the period of construction.
- 4) East and Botolph Claydon have suffered the adverse effects of infrastructure development over the last few years (the waste incinerator, HS2, EW rail) so have already experienced the noise of construction and damage caused to roads, public rights of way and the adjacent countryside. The construction traffic and commuting contractors' speeding cars have caused significant concerns regarding safety of school children, dog walkers and horse riders in our villages. Our annual litter pick events have to focus on large quantities of fast food wrappers and drinks bottles, cans and cartons in the ditches of our surrounding roads due to commuting construction workers. So we are not a naïve location when considering the impact of large infrastructure projects. Some of our senior residents are depressed and distraught at the prospect of continuing major local infrastructure construction potentially outliving them.

- 5) We expect further disruption with the planned replacement of the National Grid electricity substation in East Claydon, the approved Tuckey Solar Farm, the approved Statera BESS and the prison expansion in Grendon Underwood. The cumulative impact is already massive, without adding further to this by the construction of Rosefield solar farm. The timing (and delay) for the new National Grid sub-station mean that even if Rosefield solar farm was to go ahead, it cannot connect to the grid before the mid-2030s.
- 6) Many residents chose to live in Botolph and East Claydon because of its unspoilt rural setting, its cultural heritage (including more than 20 listed buildings) and its quiet and dark evenings. Indeed in the recent Buckinghamshire Local Plan potential sites for housebuilding in Botolph and East Claydon were rejected by Buckinghamshire Council because this would damage our cultural heritage.
- 7) The proposed siting of the solar panels, BESS and another substation would mean that many residents would overlook these from their homes and gardens, and anyone driving into and through our villages or visiting Hogshaw Farm and Wildlife Park would also be confronted by these large industrial developments rather than the peaceful landscape with grazing horses and sheep that we have at present.
- 8) Residents are very concerned about the fire safety hazard associated with BESSs and any associated toxic gas production and its impact on humans as well as the horses and sheep. Its unclear why there is a need for another BESS as well as the already-approved one that Statera are building.
- 9) The walks immediately south of Botolph Claydon via Splash Lane and Jubilee Way and around Runts Wood are extremely popular with dog walkers and runners including many local residents as well as visitors from further afield. Dogs can safely be walked off lead, and skylarks and other birds can be heard. Walkers appreciate the changing seasons' effects on crops, hedgerows and woodland. All of this will be disrupted during construction and potentially changed permanently with the introduction of solar panel arrays surrounded by chainlink fences.
- 10) In conclusion we echo the comments of Claydons' Solar Action Group that the Rosefield proposal shows a significant under-representation of its impacts on the local community, businesses and the economy, with no assessment of the cumulative impacts either.