

Dear Sir

Following the submissions received by deadline 1, South Cliftons Parish Council (SCPC) wish to add to their previous registration comments and written submissions.

We are a small parish council trying to represent the concerns and wishes of South Clifton villagers as well as those received from the surrounding villages, North Clifton, Spalford and Thorney. We have no experience of formal investigations such as this and we are obviously not qualified to answer technical issues, but we are keen to ensure that the many people who will be affected by this application have their concerns raised and heard.

We also have been working closely with the 'Say No to One Earth Solar' action group and David White. We wish it to be known that we agree with their submissions thus far and would like you to assume that we will be in agreement with any future submissions. Should this not be the case we will inform you.

Accompanied Site Inspections

SCPC are happy with the draft itinerary for the ASI.

Cumulative Impact

Further to our previous comments SCPC note that Lincolnshire County Council (LCC), Newark and Sherwood District Council (N&SDC), West Lindsey District Council (WLDC), Thorney Parish Council (TPC) and the National Farmers Union (NFU) all share our concerns regarding the general concentration of solar farm applications in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire and their effect on the general characteristics of the counties, including the prospect of landscape 'fatigue'; the potential overuse of the road systems (particularly during construction and decommissioning) and the ability of the infrastructure to deal with the waste products. We welcome LCCs' request for 'an inter-relationship report' from the applicant that is 'updated at each deadline during the examination'. Both WLDC, TPC, and NFU comment on the need for co-ordinated planning and collaboration between all local developers to minimise the impact should they all be accepted. It appears that the applicant has not engaged with or committed to collaborative working with other projects, therefore, any 'potential opportunities to minimise impacts' will not be identified or achieved. This should be a priority.

Drinking Water, Flood Risk and Drainage

SCPC consider this to be of absolute importance. The security and safety of the Drinking water Protected Area (DWPA), the Torksey Water Catchment area, the North Clifton Reservoir as well as North and South Clifton villages cannot be compromised by this development.

We will study with interest the mapping of flood zones, their relationship to the solar infrastructure and the compliance with the WFD that has been requested by the ExA. Also, the proportion and percentage of panels within Flood Zone 3 and the estimated power generation from these panels. (Q5.0.1) We note that in the ExA question 12.0.6 'The Secretary of State must refuse development consent where a project is likely to cause deterioration of a water body or its failure.'

We have referred you previously to David Whites' written submission regarding the danger of contamination from underground cables, during the life of the project and if they are left in the ground after decommissioning. Please see the separate submission from SCPC written in conjunction with David White in answer to Q12.0.6, on this topic and the WFD.

We note that N&SDC agree that "the proposed development activities may introduce new contaminants into the environment" and agree the applicant should provide an evaluation of potential contamination and robust strategies to prevent future contamination.

We see that the Environment Agency (EA) are in regular consultation with the applicant and we hope during this ongoing process that they consider the security and safety issues mentioned above and ensure that the applicants' responses are rigorously researched and thorough.

Loss of Agricultural BMV land

SCPC are still very concerned about the loss of 53% BMV land and agree with N&SDC that if some of the infrastructures were to remain in place after decommissioning, the loss of this BMV land would be permanent. Natural England (NE) say they "would welcome adjustments to avoid BMV land" and the NFU state "there is a need to strike a balance between food security and climate ambitions. It is important that large scale solar farm development is located on lower quality." We therefore welcome the ExA request to the applicant for a table giving the breakdown of the type of BMV land and an assessment of why that land is being used. (Q13.0.1 + 13.0.2).

Impact of Human Health including Mental Health

We welcome the ExA questions to the applicant on the impacts to Human Health and Mental Health of this proposed development and in particular how these were assessed. This application is still, and will be, an ongoing worry for our villagers. We feel that the applicant was dismissive of these concerns, especially as no feedback was received to the mental health study conducted by Dr Sarah Armstrong.

LCC, we note, considers that further assessment of the effects of EMF on pacemakers should be undertaken and until they are 'assured' will consider that EMF is a Significant Negative effect. Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) are in agreement and would like assurance on this issue.

SCPC are aware of several villagers that have medical conditions that could be affected by EMF and feel that more research is needed to be done by the applicant to ensure the safety of our residents.

We would point out that, even now, we are still unaware of where the inverters, BESS and substations are to be sited and this is affecting the mental health of many residents. The noise associated with these structures has been proved to be noticeable (at the least) and the applicants' unwillingness to inform us of the final detailed plan has not helped mitigate these considerable concerns. We ask that this is remedied as soon as possible.

Impact on Residents and Community Benefit

SCPC note that many of the agencies and councils felt that the negative impacts of this proposal outweigh the positive benefits. We would agree that the push for clean, green energy should not blindly brush aside the genuine concerns and wellbeing of the thousands of people affected by the imposition of these schemes in this area and nationally.

We are pleased that the ExA have requested detailed information about the Residential Receptors from the applicant (Q1.0.11), with a clear plan of the affected properties and evidence of each individual assessment in respect of landscape/amenity or health terms. SCPC in discussion with some of the affected residents on the east side of the river Trent, agree with them that the applicant was not thorough or understanding in its dealings with these villagers.

TPC stated that these developments "offer absolutely nothing to the local community to mitigate their concerns. They could actually take jobs away from locals who work in agriculture, turf, horses and sugar. This risks adding to the problem of rural poverty rather than offering increased employment opportunities." SCPC absolutely agree with this statement and have seen nothing from the applicant that would change that.

The documentation sent out by the applicant during the consultation process (Community update April 2024) promised a community fund every three months. To date there has been two community funds instead of six (April 2024 – July 2025), both limited to 10 applications with a maximum of £1000 each. This is far less than the funds set up by other local NSIP developers. We welcome the ExA question (1.0.20) asking for more detail about the community fund as the applicant has provided little explanation to us or other agencies.

Transportation, Traffic and Public Rights of Way

We are pleased to see that the ExA has asked for more information about the site access layout, a cumulative traffic assessment, including at peak times and the possible impact of this on the National Cycle Routes (Q18). SCPC would remind the ExA that there are many PRoW within the order limits as well as the Sustrans route between Lincoln and Fledborough, so the area is very popular with walkers, horse riders and cyclists. The residents at the two affected properties on the Sustrans route have been collating monthly data of its use which proves the area is a popular leisure destination, so the siting of fields of panels along this route would affect more than just the local users.

Biodiversity and Ecology

SCPC continue to be very concerned about the effect of this application on the wildlife in this area, which is varied and well established. We notice Bassetlaw District Council are concerned about the population of otters and water voles during construction and that BNG delivery habitats should take into account options for water vole improvement. We would hope this approach would be taken to all established wildlife. The ExA Q7.0.1 queries connectivity across the site and in particular how animals will move about. This is vital to the deer population [REDACTED] The applicant has given little or no detail about this, other to say that they would install ramps. We look forward to a more complete answer on all areas of ecology and biodiversity.

Funding

Finally, SCPC, following recent news articles, have serious concerns about Orsted's financial situation and its' ability to fund this project. The Time recently reported that its shares had dropped 80% since 2021 and Bloomberg are predicting 'more volatility to come'. We feel that should this application be approved, it will have a lasting, irreversible effect on this community. Even worse though, would be for it to be approved and then the funding cut during construction, leaving our beautiful landscape desolate. We ask that the ExA fully satisfy themselves that the funding for this project is secure and safe through its construction, its 60-year operational phase and until it is fully decommissioned.

As with previous submissions, South Clifton Parish Council would be happy to expand on any of these points, should the need arise.

Yours sincerely

Gill Cobham (on behalf of South Clifton Parish Council)