

## Health, Welfare and Mental health

I am not a medical expert, just a village resident and tax payer, but I am kept awake at night at the thought of the devastation about to be wrought upon our small rural community. I believe that this relatively isolated area of north Notts is about to face a mental health crisis of unprecedented proportions. This RES project has hung over our heads for several years and I have spent a great deal of time and effort reading and researching the effect that huge solar installations and associated infrastructure can have on communities and their environment. I doubt if more than 50 residents have read and *understood* the enormity of the industrial tsunami that is about to be unleashed upon us. It is undeniable that the mental health of the local population will deteriorate as a result.

During the Covid crisis, walking in the countryside was essential to preserve the mental health, quality of life and well-being of the nation's population. Being a remote and quiet rural village, there is little infrastructure and few social activities for local residents to enjoy. However, our most popular activity is that of walking along our numerous footpaths, bye-ways and lanes. If the walkers are lucky, they will catch a glimpse of our elusive deer population, be they Muntjac or Roe deer. They can enjoy sightings of rabbits and our local foxes who, unfortunately, are still subjected to illegal activity by the local hunt. In Spring they are able to watch groups of hares chasing each other across our wide-open fields. They will see the latest additions to our resident bird species that now include Buzzard, Red Kite and Egret. In the dark winter months they can observe foxes trotting across the snow-covered fields.

Throughout the Covid lockdown, we used these facilities to safeguard our mental health, reduce our anxiety, enjoy the fresh air, watch the abundant local wildlife and enjoy the passage of the seasons during that time of restricted social activity. During this proposed 2-year build period, it will be almost impossible for residents to enjoy our usual footpaths, bye-ways and roads as these will become clogged with dozens, if not hundreds, of contractor's vehicles, foreign workmen and associated heavy equipment. Resident's feelings of isolation will be exacerbated by the fact that once built, these solar farms will be remotely monitored with no human activity visible. Who will want to walk alongside miles of endless fenced off panel arrays with the

constant buss of inverters ringing in their ears; no view, no horizons, no other human activity and no Wi-Fi signal to speak of?

Our village population includes a fair number of elderly residents, many who have spent their entire lives living here, and who are increasingly concerned about the impact of this application on their daily lives. They are fearful of the effect of the constant construction noise, trespass, dust in dry summer months, mud, floods, and traffic gridlock. They will have to cope with the hundreds of construction workers, most of them foreign nationals, destroying our environment and who will have no respect for our residents or their values. They are right to be anxious about their quality of life being trampled under the mantra of a Net Zero future. They will undergo the experience of watching their precious Trent Valley and its historic and open agricultural land disappearing under hundreds of thousands of solar panels and the fenced off open fields and footpaths.

They are afraid that the reduction in property values will prevent them from being able to afford to move out of the area as their own property devalues. After all, who will want to live in a remote village surrounded by an industrial park? Many will remember the constant traffic and construction noise from 6 am – 11 pm, when the Gas Fired Units at West Burton were constructed. A fourth Gas Fired Generating Unit has been approved so what lies ahead for each of them?

Virtually every local road, lane and bye-way gridlocked with convoys of construction machinery, HGVs, LGVs, with the non-stop banging of pile drivers from dawn to dusk. These horrors are bound to increase their feeling of isolation, of being abandoned by the authorities, of being unable to leave the village to go shopping or visit the doctor, trapped in a living nightmare brought upon by the greed of an absentee landlord, the financial markets and politicians seeking a net-zero future.

They have yet to learn about the BESS units that will surround them and their homes or the very significant dangers to health and welfare if one or more of these units catch fire. They are almost impossible to extinguish and fire brigades who attend such fires have to stand upwind of the smoke and fumes and watch and wait until the fire burns out. These fires produce toxic pollutants that contaminate the area downwind of a fire and yet there are no

government regulations or safety standards regarding these installations. They will be even more concerned to learn that all of these systems are remotely monitored as are all solar array installations. How long will it take the firefighters to reach their remote village once the alarm has been raised?

Who will they be able to turn to and seek redress? Not the politicians in County Hall or our local MPs who have failed to reply to their constituents' emails regarding the absence of our local authority at the recent ExA enquiry. They were astonished to learn this week that the same local authority wants to designate our village a conservation area; it's a bit late for that! Their anxiety will only increase in the knowledge that Notts Police will once again fail in their duty to patrol and protect the locality.

What does this application or our local authorities offer in the way of alleviating our anxiety, our fears, our stress, our mental health, our quality of life, of improving our human rights? There is nothing in the RES proposal that will prevent the deterioration of any of these conditions.

Absolutely nothing.