

Oral Submission to the Examining Authority – EN010163 Steeple Renewables

Good afternoon. I'm Julie Barlow.

I live in Sturton le Steeple.

I am a local school governor, a volunteer at North Leverton Windmill, a farmer's wife, and I have worked in the energy sector.

But today I am speaking on behalf of myself and my husband.

by village, I mean Sturton le Steeple;

and by community, I refer to Littleborough, Fenton, North Leverton and Wheatley.

a close-knit community, with shared morals and values a coherent group.

This is V2, V1 was over 20 minutes and I apologise in advance for overlap from this morning.

1. The Intrinsic Value of Our Countryside

We ask the Examining Authority to recognise the intrinsic value of our countryside: its diverse landscape, heritage, wildlife, and its socio-economic fabric.

This community has already given – and continues to give – to the national need for energy and food security.

Enough is enough.

We are not NIMBYs, we are not anti-solar, but this project is too big, all-encompassing.

If granted, 118 fields will become an industrial estate, the area is a melting pot of projects including mineral extraction, power generation, and grid infrastructure – on tenanted land, not owned by the farmers who work it.

2. Documentation, Engagement & Compulsory Purchase

We have tried to engage, but as non-experts we have been drowned in thousands of pages, vague maps, and intimidating CPO letters.

Words like “indicative”, “typical”, “outline” dominate the documents. **More definition is needed to assess real impacts.**

Maps are deliberately misleading – they omit overlapping projects on the same land.

CPO letters lack clarity on red-line boundaries; yet earlier, detailed maps were provided when surveys were required.

No negotiation or explanation

The applicant claims to have “listened”. Changes were forced, not chosen: a HGV access road in North Leverton, and solar panels on elevated slopes simply would not have been permitted.

Design is driven by project collision, not consultation.

3. Cumulative Impact – A Village Besieged

The EIA repeatedly calls impacts minor or insignificant bit in isolation.

There is no single map, no joined-up traffic plan, no honest cumulative assessment.

The list of projects grows weekly:

- West Burton Power Station demolition
- Wood Land Solar
- Sturton quarry
- West Burton Solar cabling
- National Grid maintenance & upgrade
- STEP fusion
- and this scheme.

Sturton le Steeple will be encircled.

And more to come, recently announced

- Cottom to be a nuclear powered data centre
- High Marnham to be a prototype hydrogen power station

No other village faces being subject to project saturation

And no other community has so many NSIP projects.

One consent at a time, our community spirit erodes.

4. Biology & Ecology – Mitigation Hierarchy Ignored

Mitigation skips avoidance, jumping to offsetting and new habitats.

Wildlife is wild – it does not obey corridors.

Baseline data is out-of-date (pre-quarry, pre-demolition).

Deer, badgers, barn owls already displaced.

Confidential badger reports were published in error – a breach of trust already.

Cumulative displacement will sever habitat connectivity.

Once gone, it's gone.

5. Heritage

Our landscape includes designated and non-designated assets: ancient field patterns, Roman cropmarks, medieval ruins, buried artifacts, numerous listed buildings and pivotal historical individuals.

Trial trenching risks irreversible harm before full evaluation and consultation.

We urge further interrogation of heritage impacts.

6. Flood Risk

We are not flood experts, but we live with the reality:

- * North Leverton: 68 homes flooded in 2007 and millions of £ of damage.
- * Sturton : surface-water chaos and road closures on a regular basis
- * North Wheatley : the primary school closed four times since 2007.

Boreholes show groundwater at just over 1m below ground.

The quarry pumped continuously during construction, and as a result piling took much longer than planned.

SUDS and attenuation ponds are proposed – but can we be assured they will work on clay and sand.

The Flood Risk Assessment ignores cumulative schemes.

Wheel-washing runoff and field drain damage are unaddressed and will compound the problem.

References

North Leverton – Reports on Floods of June 2007, Published November 2007 by North Leverton with Habbleshthorpe Parish Council

Sturton le Steeples – Living reality on <https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/risk#>

North Wheatley -Minutes from Parish Council Meetings and Press releases

This information tells you the flood risk of the land around a building, not the building itself.

The highest risk of flooding at this location is from **surface water**.

► [How we assess an area's flood risk](#)

► [Flood risk and climate change](#)

Surface water [More about your surface water flood risk](#)

Yearly chance of flooding

Very low	Low	Medium	High
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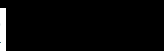
Yearly chance of flooding between 2040 and 2060

Very low	Low	Medium	High
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What surface water is

Surface water flooding is sometimes known as flash flooding. It happens when rainwater cannot drain away through normal drainage systems.

► [Why surface water flooding is a problem](#)



7. Landscape, Visual & Residential Amenity

118 fields taken up by this project.

Panels will industrialise a landscape returning to former glory after the cooling towers are demolished.

Cottam towers recently demolished, and boy that has made a huge difference already.

Every Public Right of Way, bridleway, and road from the village is affected.

Hedgerow “mitigation” will feel like walking in a maze with no way out and no views to open countryside .

Views from North Leverton Windmill will be lost.

Soil compaction may permanently damage agricultural potential.

Panel failure (e.g., Porth Wen) risks contamination – Environmental Permitting Regulations does not cover solar/BESS.

Decommissioning recycling routes are unknown; brownfield re-classification looms and who will pick up the costs the future is not clear.

8. Population & Socio-Economics

Current community demographics show we are heading towards being an ageing population.

The Sturton Ward Plan seeks young families and first time buyers.

This project will deter them – especially during the 24-month construction maybe longer given what else is happening or planned.

No local training pipeline exists, contractors and labour will be imported.

Hotels in Retford may benefit, but tenant farmers lose livelihoods and homes with multiple generations affected.

Tourism – including North Leverton Windmill – will suffer.

Community benefit funds cannot offset mental health harm or loss of amenity.

9. Transport & Safety

1,970 HGV trips in the peak month excluding cars and vans – 6 days a week for this project alone.

Gainsborough Road (national speed limit, no footpaths) is the only 'main road' into the village not an A road, not even classified as a C road.

Wheatley Road is narrow, crumbling.

Public Right Of Way closures will force walkers/riders onto roads, some footpaths without lights.

The Gainsborough/Station Road junction – beside the school bus stop – already sees near-misses.

In the event of an accident or road closure No alternative routes exist.

Emergency access could be cut off.

The Cumulative traffic of the Power Station, National Grid, West Burton Solar, and the quarry creates unmanaged risk in the village and wider community.

Conclusion

The application is poorly defined, lacking detail, and disregards cumulative reality.

Mitigation is cursory, avoidance ignored, and community voice sidelined.

We note ISH is scheduled for tomorrow and will look at Cumulative Impact, landscape, Heritage, Flood and land use.

We trust further Issue-Specific Hearings will scrutinise Transport, biodiversity and ecologythey too need further consideration

Thank you for listening.

(20 minutes in full) Used to summarise above.

Personal Open Floor Hearing

I'm Julie Barlow of Sturton le Steeple, local school governor, a North Leverton Windmill volunteer and farmer's wife, with some experience of working in the energy sector. I am speaking on behalf of myself and my husband.

We ask that you give due consideration to recognising the intrinsic value and character of our countryside, the diversity of our landscape, heritage, wildlife, and the socio-economic impacts of this project given what this community has and continues to contribute towards national need for energy and natural resources.

When I refer to the village, I am speaking of Sturton le Steeple, when I talk about the community, I am including Littleborough, Fenton and North Leverton and Wheatley because we are a close knit and coherent community.

This project will undoubtedly have an adverse impact, and detrimental effect on our community well-being and the amenity we all currently enjoy.

We chose to live in Sturton le Steeple and we love to live in Sturton le Steeple.

We are not a Nimby's, we are not anti-solar but honestly believe that enough is enough for this community and that **this project is just too big and all encompassing,**

This community is inherently rich in heritage, having a great community spirit and a predominantly agricultural landscape.

If this DCO is given, it will become a large scale industrial estate comprising mineral extraction, power generation, and electricity distribution.

The land here is not owned by the local farmers, the farmers affected are tenants of an absent landlord.

National need should not come at the expense of fundamental individual rights, well-being, or lives.

The electricity will go into the grid not to supply 180,000 Nottinghamshire homes.

A community destroyed to power approximately 0.16% of the UK's power needs.

Documentation, Engagement and Compulsory Purchase.

We have tried hard to engage, but as non-experts have found it difficult, struggled with the application's 1,000s of pages of documentation, vague maps and technical reports, and compulsory purchase letters that are intimidating.

It has been very difficult to interpret and work with this documentation and the many pages it contains even on a large 27" screen.

The document library contains many words like indicative, typical or outline, surely more definition is needed.

There simply is not enough detail in the current DCO, especially around design and equipment to allow realistic conclusions to be made on impacts.

The applicant claims to have listened to consultations and feedback, the reality is that changes have been made, but they would have had to have been made simply by their nature

e.g. an access road in the middle of a village. Land set aside for mitigation when it would have been excluded as it is set on high sloped ground and would clearly have had an adverse visual impact.

The overlap of all the projects and the desire to accommodate as many projects as possible has been a major influence on design and layout changes rather than the consultation process.

The maps used throughout are deliberately misleading and do not include all the other project works that are being undertaken on the same land (simultaneously or in tandem).

There is a collision of projects, with numerous projects competing/requiring access to the same land, potentially at the same time resulting in simultaneous operations and arguments on who has priority.

Trying to phase these to minimise disruption and ensuring the health and safety of people and the environment will be at best challenging at worst, an accident waiting to happen.

We are also concerned that we will have further compulsory orders placed on our land with no way of protecting our livelihood due to the sheer number of projects in the area.

We have already received Compulsory Purchase Letters for this project, they have been very legalistic, intimidating and lack clarity.

It was impossible to see from the map enclosed what is and what is not within the red-line, nor did the letter detail what land was affected and subject to the CPO.

However, earlier in the process, the applicant sent us much more detailed maps and information when they were requesting access to our land for non-intrusive surveys.

No discussions, no attempt to negotiate a wayleave without the need for a CPO.

Cumulative Impact

The EIA uses the terms insignificant and minor on a regular basis.

These words are relative and emotive by nature, especially so where reference is made to the project in isolation and not the Cumulative Impact.

No single map, no joined up traffic plan, no honest health and safety assessment, no regard for heritage, landscape or wildlife.

The list of projects grows each week, some in progress, some passed but not yet in construction, some operational, some in the maintenance phase, some in demolition..... it is difficult to see how cumulatively they are insignificant. You have seen the map and the list (which continue to grow).

We appreciate similar arguments have been put forward against other applications, however the situation in Sturton le Steeple is different and unique.

If granted, this project will render the village surrounded by major projects. The EIA should include all projects.

Our community and its spirit is being eroded – one consent at a time and we worry about a decline in the social fabric of the area in the future.

Biology / Ecology

The applicant has failed to follow the hierarchy of mitigation.

The applicant has simply tried to reduce or compensate impact to the biodiversity and ecology of the area rather than to avoid it.

They are relying heavily on offsetting and creating new habitats as a primary solution.

Wildlife by definition is wild and free to roam.

Creating new areas and corridors will not guarantee that plant and animal life will use mitigation areas

when its gone its gone, too late. No amount of monitoring will bring it back.

We believe that baseline data used is out of date or incomplete or taken at a point in time where the impact of other projects has been ignored.

Notts Wildlife Trust have indicated that data supplied to the applicant is from a period prior to quarry and demolition operations commencing.

Animals (primarily deer and badgers) have been displaced already due to the demolition works at the Power Stations and the construction of the quarry. Next is West Burton Solar cabling, National Grid Power Line Maintenance then National Grid upgrade and Solar Panels and STEP.

The reality is that wildlife has already moved from where it once lived to the land under this proposed development.

It will be further displaced by the cumulative impact of this and other projects and those still to come.

Certain protected species have already been put at risk during this process (barn owls and badgers).

Confidential and sensitive reports were made available to the public when the document library was published.

This was pointed out and the offending documents were eventually removed.

I know our Community Objection Group has done much work in the area and will no doubt contribute more at further Issue Specific Hearings on this.

But again, collectively the Impact of all the projects in this community will have a significant effect on wildlife populations, connectivity of existing habitats and migratory corridors.

Heritage

The area has many heritage assets (designated and non-designated) that include remnants of past land use, ancient ruins, field patterns, and our cultural and religious past.

These must be protected due to their historical significance so that future generations can understand and enjoy our cultural heritage.

Others here have or will speak in more detail about this subject but this is certainly an area we suggested should be interrogated further by the Examining Authority.

Flood

We are not flood experts, but we know what has happened and continues to happen.

North Leverton - flooding is linked to intense rainfall overwhelming local drainage and surface water systems.

Many homes have been damaged and roads closed as a result of flooding in recent years (2007, 2019, 2022, 2023). The most serious floods in June 2007 affected 68 homes, closed the school, village shop, pub and methodist Chapel.

Sturton le Steeple - recent flood events have primarily involved surface water issues as the village is located in an area of clay land and impermeable soils.

The village is known to have land drainage and sewer networks that cannot cope with high volumes of rainfall in short periods.

Bassetlaw Strategic Flood Risk Assessment specifically identifies Sturton as a village with these problems.

The village experiences flooding every year and roads are regularly closed.

North Wheatley - has also been subject to many serious floods from Wheatley Beck and surface run off.

The school has been closed four times since 2007 due to floods and associated damage.

This and other projects all include flood risk management and various management schemes (SUDs and Attenuation Ponds) to hold water back,

but how can we be assured that they will be effective and there are now so many of them (the Power Station, the Quarry, this Solar).

It is known that infiltration in clay land can be poor and so there is no guarantee these strategies will work.

The applicant states A borehole to the south of Littleborough Road, in the eastern part of the site, recorded groundwater at just 1.05 metres below ground level.

The quarry has already experienced issues with a high-water table and having to continually pump water during its construction phase.

The Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), includes wheel washing of the 1000s of traffic movements across fields resulting in more surface water runoff.

I can find no detail on how the field drains will be protected to ensure that the project will not contribute further to flood risks (and that it can be returned to agricultural use at the end of the project).

More importantly, does the Flood Risk Assessment include all relevant projects to give a true worse case scenario.

Landscape and Visual and Residential Amenity

A project of this scale will significantly alter the character of the local countryside and the visual amenity for residents and visitors.

The Application Documentation details 118 fields being used for the development.

As a developing tourist area, the potential of this project to detract from the beauty of the surrounding area now that the coal fired

power stations are being demolished and the wider landscape returned to its former glory is significant.

There is no doubt, landscape changes are converging because of the temporal and special effect of what are described as temporary phases of multiple projects.

It is essential that the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment clearly distinguish between significant and non-significant effects, and a proper assessment should go beyond simply acknowledging change.

Mitigation measures, such as screening and buffering, may not be sufficient to address the scale of the visual intrusion in the long term, and their effectiveness is questionable in the short to medium term.

This project should be assessed in conjunction with other existing or proposed developments in the area to understand the potential cumulative impacts on the landscape and local amenity.

The introduction of solar panels and associated infrastructure will restrict or negatively impact access to the countryside for recreational activities, including walking, cycling, horse-riding and enjoyment of the natural environment.

Speaking with friends and neighbours, access to the countryside around this community is a key reason for living here.

We also have concerns around the land being returned at the end of the project.

The construction process can lead to significant deep soil compaction. This structural damage can take many years to remediate and may permanently alter the soil's agricultural potential.

Soil compaction and the installation of infrastructure can change the natural drainage patterns of the land, potentially exacerbating surface water issues which are already a concern.

Numerous tracks and security fences are being installed will it be mandatory that they are removed and reinstated or a planning condition that can be varied in time.

Soil contamination is difficult to monitor or remediate fully and potential from large-scale panel damage from extreme weather (Porth Wen) is still uncharted territory and EPR Environmental Permitting does not appear to cover Solar and BESS which is a worry given its close proximity to the West Burton COMAH site.

Any contamination could result in the land being re-classified as brownfield so it cannot be returned to agriculture.

There is no clear route for the recycling of components (as they are still to be determined) and although financial checks have been undertaken on the applicant, the project may well change hands several times during its operational phase, costs escalate over time, and there are still unknowns from this emerging industry.

History has told us these matters should not go unchecked (St Ninians and more recently Lindsey Oil Refinery).

Population

The Sturton ward plan acknowledges the need to attract younger families to maintain economic vibrancy.

This development and some others are likely to discourage people moving into the area, especially during the construction phase(s) and potentially beyond given the scale and extend of the development surrounding the village entirely.

What evidence is there that the applicant is engaging with local schools and colleges so that training is already underway and there are qualified individuals ready for construction ?

Given their timeline it is highly unlikely that there is time to implement such schemes.

STEPS are already holding talks with colleges and universities, going into schools, and **they will provide long term jobs.**

Reality is that constructions jobs will not be filled locally, but by contractors with experience in this field (the documentation already implies this by saying hotels and restaurants will benefit short term from the project).

This project by its own admission will not bring long term economic benefit to the immediate area as no long term on-site skilled positions are expected to be created.

However, it will decimate arable and beef farming in the area and result in a number of tenant farmers (and the families they support) losing their livelihoods and potentially their homes – there is still much uncertainty.

The applicant has indicated their intention to create a community benefit scheme, but the general opinion of residents is that this will not outweigh the detrimental cost to health and mental well-being and loss of amenity for residents.

Business rates will be levied if the development is granted, however very little of this will be ring fenced for the community directly affected.

This area is a developing tourist area bringing much needed jobs and income.

North Leverton Windmill is also an important tourist attraction bringing much needed visitor numbers to North Nottinghamshire and Bassetlaw, indirectly benefitting local businesses.

This project will significantly impact the windmill.

The scale and extent of the scheme are incompatible with the amenity we currently enjoy, with inappropriate screening and mitigation.

Every single road, Public Right of Way and bridleway accessible from the village will be affected by this project.

Evidence from the global pandemic clearly shows that loss of access to open space is not beneficial to mental health and well-being.

The Applicants only mitigation appears to be hedgerow planting which will not allay concerns raised.

It will be akin to walking through a maze or within a prison compound.

The visual impact will be particularly noticeable from elevated positions around the villages of North Leverton, Wheatley and Sturton across the valley towards North Leverton Windmill, Littleborough and the historic skyline of Lincoln.

Transport

The construction phase will involve heavy vehicle movements, prompting concerns about the suitability of local roads and potential impacts on safety and local transport infrastructure.

These roads are not suited for sustained HGV access over extended periods.

During the construction phase and beyond, it is highly likely that walkers and riders will be translocated to the roadways because of impingement on PROW and bridleways by this and other projects.

The volume and frequency of construction traffic on narrow rural roads poses safety risks and threatens to degrade the local road infrastructure and many of the roads have no footpaths.

Sturton Le Steeple is defined as a liner village with one single through road (Class c or 3) with several small, narrow trunk roads/lanes (unclassified or Byways).

6.3.13 Appendix 13.1 Transport Assessment :

“4.9. If issues arise due to increased traffic volumes or community concerns, the LPA and LHA may request the applicant to review and implement alternative permitted routes” **there are no alternative routes.**

6.2 Peak Movements - Construction is expected to last 24 months with operations 6 days a week, and 10 hours a day, noting Saturday is a half day.

The peak being in month 7 – 1,970 vehicle trips and 2,363 construction trips, and this does not include the other projects in the area which will happened at either the same time or sequentially, either way **there is a significant cumulative impact.**

Documents 2.3 Access and Rights of Way Plan and 2.6 Site Layout are unhelpful.

It is difficult to see which roads will be used (either by HGV's or other vehicles) and what for.

It needs to be clear which roads will be used.

What vehicles are planned to use Wheatley Road, which you will have seen from your recent site visit is narrow, has limited footpaths and is already in a state of disrepair.

The delivery compound is located before the railway bridge; how will panels be delivered to the areas beyond the railway line towards Wheatley without using this narrow road.

Gainsborough Road, the main road into the village will be used by all HGVs, the majority of this road is national speed limit, and from the Power Station to the roundabout has no footpaths and many other projects do and will continue to use this same road at the same time.

This and other projects all plan to use Gainsborough Road and Wheatley Road for their main HGV movements.

Any incident or temporary close of these roads or more particularly on the junction of Gainsborough Road and Station Road will render the village 'closed' and result in long detours putting undue pressure on the village of North Leverton and further increasing response times for emergency services.

The Gainsborough Road / Station Road Junction is already an area where there have been several near miss incidents.

The Village and school bus stop is on the junction and visibility towards Wheatly is limited and vehicles often fail to give-way to traffic coming from Wheatley.

This and other projects intend to create new crossings over the unclassified (adopted roads) and create trackways to transport equipment and lay cables in the area.

Whilst this is commendable for removing traffic movements within the village, it will result in every arterial road/lane being affected by the creation (specifically to RSE Project) of new crossings and field access tracks around the entire circumference of the village.

National Grid have already said they too intend to create specific trackways to facilitate the Great Grid Upgrade and we also have the West Burton Solar Cable Route to accommodate.

There is no certainty on the timing of the various projects, over-runs, delays, amendments etc. This has been recognised in the RES Steeples traffic documentation P22-1122-TR-TA, but there is no detail on the worst-case scenario and no mitigation suggested for such an occurrence.

The combined impact of the various projects in the community will significantly increase risks to residents, pedestrians, school users, cyclists, and horse-riders using the rural road network and pathways.

Each project has made, and no doubt will continue to make assurances to the local community that their activities will not adversely impact our daily live.

The reality is that it is the community that is expected to police these activities not the planning or permitting authorities.

It will be the general public who will report misdemeanours, and the emphasis is on the public 'alleging' breaches and having to prove them rather than the developer complying with requirements.

We have already experienced this.

To Conclude

The application documentation is not well defined and lacks detail and so does not give a true reflection of what the actual and cumulative impacts will be.

While the applicant has followed the required procedures, the assessment's conclusions and the proposed mitigation measures are cursory and show a flagrant disregard for the community, heritage assets and the landscape.

We trust that further Issue Specific Meetings will be included as indicated in the draft timetable as we are very passionate about aspects of this development and the fact that they need much more scrutiny.

Thankyou for listening

24F 760 Mr & Mrs J Barlow

Open Floor Hearing 1

I would like to request the opportunity to **speak** at the OFH1 if needed.

Issue Specific Hearing 1

Can the agenda/subject matter be published so we can decide whether to attend/request to speak

Site Visits

We would encourage the ExA to walk the lanes/footpaths with a resident to see what is already happening as well as what is planned (cumulative impact), and to understand the traffic and flood issues we have. We would also suggest to visit key heritage assets we have in close proximity to the proposed site (Littleborough, North Leverton Windmill and Sturton le Steeple Church).

Representation by Mr and Mrs Barlow

Date submitted

12 August 2025

Submitted by

Members of the public/businesses

The cumulative Impact of this and other projects in the area has not been given due consideration (Spatial, Temporal, Synergistic, Environmental, Social and Economic), we are aware of 21 projects within a 6km radius(NSIPS, NCC and BDC) which directly impact our village and daily life. We are struggling to actually engage and respond to all these projects given the sheer volume and technical nature of them eg the RES documentation suite exceed 8,000 pages.

Over and above the cumulative impact and consultation fatigue we are experiencing we also have specific concerns on this project standalone. It completely surrounds the village of Sturton le Steeple, affecting every foot path, road and landscape.

The developer has not given due consideration to the impact on our diverse and protected wildlife, habitats, landscape and heritage assets, using outdated information, incorrect baseline data, desk top studies rather than reality and so the outcomes of the EIA assessment is not robust and should not be relied upon.

Flooding in this and the surrounding area is a regular and known occurrence and a concern to all authorities with all three villages affected by the project being subject to serious flooding many times recently, let alone the wider Trent Valley between Gainsborough and Newark.

We urge the Planning Inspectorate to give due consideration to rejecting this project. More detailed information gave be submitted at the next stage of the process. Thankyou.

Issue Specific Hearings

HERITAGE

The area has many heritage assets (designated and non-designated). While RES has followed the required procedures, the assessment's conclusions and the proposed mitigation measures are cursory and show a flagrant disregard for the area's numerous of important heritage assets.

Historical sites serve as outdoor classrooms, providing immersive learning experiences that bring text book concepts to life.

The area around Sturton le Steeple is considered an important heritage landscape due to its deep and continuous history, featuring Roman and Anglo-Saxon settlements, medieval open fields, and especially its pivotal role in the origins of the Pilgrim Fathers and Baptist movements. The landscape is rich in historical changes, from its early use as a strategic river crossing to its later religious importance.

ROMAN TOWN OF *SEGELOCUM*

The Roman road connecting Lindum (Lincoln) and Danum (Doncaster) crossed the Trent at this location.

This crossing was likely paved with large stone slabs and marked with timber posts, serving as a vital link for military and civilian traffic.

Archaeological evidence, such as Roman milestones found in Lincoln, confirms the town's importance within the Roman road network.

Excavations have uncovered pottery, coins, and other artifacts, pointing to a bustling and continuously occupied settlement throughout the Roman era.

The foundations of a Roman fort dating to the 1st century AD have also been identified on the opposite bank of the Trent at Marton.

As one of only four Roman locations mentioned in Nottinghamshire and potentially the only one with continuous occupation, its strategic value is nationally recognized.

The site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, legally protected to preserve its buried archaeological deposits.

The proposed development is located near to this Scheduled Ancient Monument at Littleborough.

The project's PEIR acknowledges potential impacts on this historically significant area (national and local).

RES have included exclusion zones for areas that have been identified as being of high archaeological potential but have not recognised areas closer to the village of Sturton le Steeple where recent dig/studies have indicated further evidence of ancient remains (Manor House in Poor Close – exact route of Roman Road).

The proposed project area includes land with archaeological potential, and heavy construction could disturb or destroy these remains.

ST. NICHOLAS' CHURCH, LITTLEBOROUGH

Located in Littleborough, which is part of the larger parish of Sturton le Steeple. It's ownership is vested in the Churches Conservation Trust, a charity that protects historic churches in England.

It dates back to the 12th century and is a Grade I listed Norman church which sits on the site of the Roman Town of Segelocum.

The fabric of the building is mainly Roman and contains many original features such as the doorway, chancel arch and font. It is also renowned for its ancient bells, both being historically significant.

The Northen Bell is inscribed with "SCA MARIA" (Sancta Maria) and is believed to have been cast between 1180 and 1200. It holds the distinction of being the **oldest bell in Nottinghamshire**.

The Southern bell is inscribed with "AVE MARIA" and is dated to around 1350. It is thought to have come from a medieval foundry in Nottingham.

The church is no longer used on a regular basis, but it is maintained and protected, kept open for visitors to appreciate its architecture, history and tranquil setting and services and ceremonies are still held there as well (wedding vow renewal April 2025 most recent service).

The church is also reputed to be on the site of the first ever Christian baptism in the River Trent in the 7th century with (unconfirmed) mentions of King Edwin being baptised here by **Paulinus**.

The 8th-century historian Bede records that St. Paulinus performed a mass baptism in the River Trent near a place called Tiovulfingacaestir in the 7th century.

This location is widely believed to be Littleborough, associating the site with the early evangelization of the area. For centuries, the site was a location of religious significance, a tradition that continued after the departure of the Romans and the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons.

LOST VILLAGE OF HABBLESTHORPE

Habblesthorpe (Apesthorpe/Applesthorpe) is of Danish origins being a settlement established just outside the Anglo-Saxon village of North Leverton.

In 1320, the Dean and Chapter of York Minster ordained a vicarage for the parish but retained the powers of patronage and appropriation. By 1428 there is no mention of the church in the subsidy of Henry VI.

The Act Books of Nottinghamshire Archdeacons (published in Transactions of the Thoroton Society, XXIX (1925)) for 1613-23 reveal that many clandestine marriages were solemnized in St Peters, Habblesthorpe.

The incumbent, John Lincolne, vicar since 1602, was imprisoned on 22 November, 1632 “for making divers clandestine marriages”.

Churchwardens' presentments from other local churches confirm that the church served well as a venue for illicit marriages.

In the 1620s a William Helwyn, cousin to Thomas Helwyn of Bilborough (a Baptist Pilgrim Father), settled in Habblesthorpe allegedly close to a house owned by John Robinson a pastor to the Pilgrim Fathers and, at that time, vicar of Sturton-le-Steeple a mile or two away. This gives strong evidence of the presence of dissent in the area at that time.

The Parliamentary Commissioners, in their 1650 survey, recommended that Habblesthorpe should be united with North Leverton. Although it became

increasingly the practice for parishioners from St Peter's to attend St Martin's in North Leverton, it was not formally sanctioned.

In 1740, Penelope Bryan's will demonstrates the use of St Martin's in North Leverton as the church for both parishes. In leaving the returns from land in North Leverton to be distributed by the vicar of North Leverton she stipulated that "40 shillings" was to be distributed to the poor of 'Apethorpe' who were required to come to North Leverton church on the Feast of St Michael to receive alms.

By 1743, Archbishop Herring's visitation confirmed the church at Habbleshthorpe to be completely in ruins and it was reported that 'ye people have time out of mind resorted to ye church at North Leverton'.

In November 1866 Habbleshthorpe was united to North Leverton and in 1884 it ceased to function at all as a separate parish being annexed to North Leverton under the Divided Parishes Act.

North Leverton with Habbleshthorpe has the distinction of having the longest village name in England and the second longest in Europe

NORTH LEVERTON

NORTH LEVERTON WINDMILL

This Grade II* listed and operational windmill, a major local and national landmark, is located immediately next to the project site. As its visual setting is part of its heritage value, the impact of the solar farm on views to and from the windmill are greatly affected. The windmill is reliant on volunteers and donations, its popularity with local and national and international visitors is evidenced by the fact it is the only windmill in England (if not the UK) that has never fallen into dis-repair and has been open every year and operational, grinding corn since it was built in 1813.

In 1884, the tower was raised so that the cloth sails could be replaced with new patent sails to increase operational efficiency and to allow a warehouse to be constructed next to it.

– even providing much needed flour to the local community during the lockdown periods of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also an important tourist

attraction bringing much needed visitor numbers to North Nottinghamshire and indirectly benefitting local businesses. It was voted North Notts Top Tourist Attraction as voted for by the public and one of its key features are the views from the Windmill Tower .

STURTON LE STEEPLE

The village name has varied in spelling and changed over time.

The name was recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 as Estretone.

This metamorphosized into *Stretuna*, *Stretton*, *Stretton in le Clay*, *Sturton in le Cley*. This refers to the village's location near the major Roman military road that ran from Doncaster to Lincoln. The "le Clay" referring to the North Clay division of Bassetlaw.

The change to le Steeple refers to the prominent church tower and its twelve pinnacles.

There is much evidence of medieval settlement and the open-field agricultural system can still be found in the landscape, particularly near Low Farm in the village. This shows the long-standing agricultural use of the land, which was primarily open fields until enclosures in 1828.

PILGRIM FATHERS

Sturton-le-Steeple is the birthplace of **John Robinson**, the spiritual leader of the Separatist congregation in Leiden.

Robinson's early education may have taken place in the vestry of the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul.

John Carver, the first governor of Plymouth Colony in America, Carver was born into an old family from Sturton.

He was one of the signers of the Mayflower Compact. Mayflower passenger **Katherine (White) Leggett-Carver**, sister of John Robinson's wife, Bridget White, was also born in this village.

She was married to Mayflower Pilgrim, John Carver, who was elected the first Governor of Plymouth Colony.

John Smythe, a radical theologian and minister, Smythe was a contemporary of Robinson and another key figure in the early Separatist movement. He also fled to Holland to escape persecution and died there.

ST PETER AND ST PAUL'S CHURCH, STURTON-LE-STEEPLE

The earliest portion is found in the north wall of the chancel, c1180, though probably rebuilt in 1870. The church features a 14th-century tower that serves as a local landmark. The upper stage of the tower, with twelve pinnacles, was added in the 15th century.

Although most of the building was rebuilt after a fire in 1901, it incorporates much of the original stonework and still retains its imposing tower.

Stone monuments in the church are for Lady Oliva de Montbegon (*d* c1236) and Dame Frances Earle (*d* 1687), a life-size standing figure, and Colonel Francis Thornhaugh (killed in 1648).

As a Grade II* listed building and a notable landmark, the church's setting will be affected. This is particularly relevant given its ties to the Pilgrim Fathers and its prominent steeple, which is referenced in the project name.

The developer has proposed buffer zones to reduce the impact on the Church but have failed to **consider the impact of the development on visitors to the Church and it being an integral part of the Pilgrims Trail and the Mayflower Trail and the many walks that include the church on their routes.**

A feature of these walks being that they follow grassy tracks and lanes and include viewpoints from elevated areas around the development site (Retford Road, Sturton High House.

All roads and footpaths in the village will be impacted by this project. Every footpath and view will be impacted by this project and so it should not be permitted to proceed (and certainly not to this scale and detrimental effect).

OTHER NOTABLE RESIDENTS : **Colonel Francis Thornagh** a Parliamentarian commander and Member of Parliament for Retford was killed leading his forces at the Battle of Preston. He is buried in Sturton. **Sir**

Geoffrey Fenton, a prominent poet, diplomat, and politician, Fenton was born in Sturton le Steeple. He was appointed as a privy counsellor and served as Secretary of State for Ireland. **Edward Fenton**, the brother of Geoffrey Fenton, Edward was a renowned navigator and sea captain. He accompanied Martin Frobisher on a voyage to find the Northwest Passage and later commanded a ship against the Spanish Armada. **John Lassells**, a Protestant martyr, was burned at the stake in Smithfield, London in 1546. He was born in the village of Sturton le Steeple and had 'awarded' the manor of Sturton le Steeple following the execution of **Thomas Lord Darcy**. According to parish records, **William Grey** lived to be 119 years old, making him a remarkable centenarian and potentially the oldest man ever in the UK (unverified records from 17th & 18th century)

Landscape

The area is bordered by the River Trent, and its agricultural field patterns, mature hedgerows, and scattered farms reflect centuries of farming and river-side activity.

Footpaths

Many walks in the area take in these heritage assets and take advantage of the tranquil Nottinghamshire countryside, following medieval tracks, footpaths and the **Trent Valley Way**. These walks are noted for expansive views (impacted) and with all footpaths and roads / bridleways being impacted it will render the development site closed during construction (and don't forget the other projects in the same land curtilage) and render them an industrial maze during the operational phase – who would want to visit and walk here.

BURTON ROUND & ABANDONED VILLAGE OF WEST BURTON

<https://www.pilgrimsandprophets.co.uk/>

<https://new.millsarchive.org/>

<https://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/media/6585/sturton-ward-np-review-final.pdf>

<https://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/> exerts from

Erosion of rural character

- **Loss of separation between villages:** Parish councils have highlighted that the project would "erode the essential separation between villages". This loss of open, historic countryside between settlements harms the visual context and distinct character of places like Sturton-le-Steeple and North Leverton.
- **Change to local culture:** Residents have raised concerns about the loss of local farms and the livelihoods of farmers, who are an integral part of the village lifestyle and culture. The removal of agricultural land from traditional farming practices threatens this part of the local heritage.

• Cumulative Impact

The projects we are aware of in the 10km vicinity of Sturton le Steeple currently number **21** and range from those planned and available in the public domain, those already determined by Bassetlaw District Council (BDC), Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) and more recently those deemed of Nationally Significant

Infrastructure Projects (NIPS). The nature of the projects varies in scale and sector and includes quarry operations, Solar Arrays, BESS of varying size, Power Station Decommissioning, Solar Power Cable routes, The Great Grid Upgrade and Carbon Capture & Storage.

Immediate Area

West Burton C Gas PS	DCO EN010088	Operational
West Burton A Demolition	VDC 23/00485/DEM	Operational
National Grid Upgrade	DCO EN020034	Proposed
West Burton Solar & BESS	DCO EN010132	Approved
West Burton C BESS	BDC 22/01713/FUL	Approved
West Burton STEP Phase 1	BDC 23/01260/FUL	Operational*
West Burton STEP PS	DCO	Proposed *
West Burton B CCS project	DCO	Approved ^
West Burton Ash Recovery	NCC F/3581	Operational
Sturton Quarry	NCC V/4386	Construction
Bumble Bee Solar	BDC 22/00358/FUL	Construction
Wood Lane Solar	BDC 20/00117/FUL	Construction
National Grid	Ongoing Maintenance	Operational

Within 6km

Oakes Lane Solar & BESS	BDC 22/01477/SCR	Proposed *
Cottam Power Station Demolition	BDC 21/01661/DEM	Operational*
Cottam Gas PS	DCO Unknown	Operational *
Cottam Solar & BESS	DCO EN010133	Approved
Gate Burton Energy Park	DCO EN010131	Approved
Tillbridge Solar & BESS	DCO EN010142	Approved
Trent BESS Torksey Ferry Road	BDC 24/01470/FUL	Proposed *
Stow Farm Park Solar & BESS	WL/2024/00395	Approved *
Star Energy Oil & Gas Sites	Various	Operational*

• **Ecology, Biodiversity and Wildlife**

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