

My name is Dr John Oglesby I am speaking on behalf of myself and my wife Jane. For some 20 years we have lived just south of Sherston in an area surrounded on three sides by Limedown Area A. Like almost all people living locally, we are strongly against the scheme.

Once the natural environment is destroyed, it is gone forever. This is not just about people living, working, running businesses and visiting today. We are the custodians of this special environment for generations to come, be that as visitors or residents.

This proposal will quite evidently destroy countryside, heritage landscapes, and eco system across miles and miles of precious natural environment. Having lived here for decades, we know there is a wealth of indigenous local wildlife that massively enrich our lives. The hares, deer, insects and diverse birdlife, including skylarks, linnets, crossbills and lapwings. Also the raptors, such as Barn Owls, Buzzards and Kites, which add a majestic presence soaring over the fields next to our house. The argument that biodiversity can be increased with solar doesn't stack up here. We already have rich, specialist farmland habitats supporting species that are recognised as being in national rapid decline – these habitats must be protected. Limedown would be the end of the spectacular murmurations we see over the large stubble fields of Area A each winter.

Our footpaths, bridle ways and cycle ways would all be massively degraded. The whole ambiance of the environment will be impacted. We make use of the local footpaths on a daily basis when walking the dog, taking photographs of the beautiful landscape wildlife and fauna, and visiting local pubs. Who wants to walk pathways fenced in on both sides by security fencing, maybe even with security cameras? Jane enjoys cycling on our local roads, that offer majestic views across heritage countryside. Limedown would turn those into, at best, tunnels of screening hedges, but more likely a brownfield industrial landscape of plastic and metal, from 4.5m solar panels to the 7m tall transformers of the electricity substation located within a few hundred metres of our home.

This proposal would permanently deface land of considerable natural beauty and historical significance. It would destroy attractiveness for tourism and impact struggling local businesses such as pubs, hotels and B&Bs and not just during the most disruptive years of the construction phase, but permanently. For example, I expect the two local pubs we frequent would not survive. Limedown is likely to destroy the heart of our local communities.

As for many in the area our lives have been placed on hold since the Limedown nightmare surfaced. Having planned to spend our retirement living in this currently peaceful environment, now all our future plans are thrown into disarray. This has been a living nightmare for months, which would continue for years if the project is approved.

The existing infrastructure supports the light traffic of our rural communities. We feel relatively safe using the local roads, as cyclists and back when our children were riding horses. Limedown would mean hundreds of large HGVs a day over the years of construction. This would damage the roads and make them unsafe.

The additional heavy lorry traffic will create congestion, more pot holes and damaged verges. Many local roads are already prone to flooding, which will be exacerbated with runoff from fields. Both will make our commute down towards the M4 significantly more dangerous, and also risking damage to our vehicles.

North Wilts is a very special place of historic English countryside and deserves protecting. It is only the prospect of financial gain that has perversely led to miles and miles of countryside, rich in wildlife and unspoilt over literally hundreds of years, being inappropriately targeted for massive scale industrial development.