

Melissa Whitlock

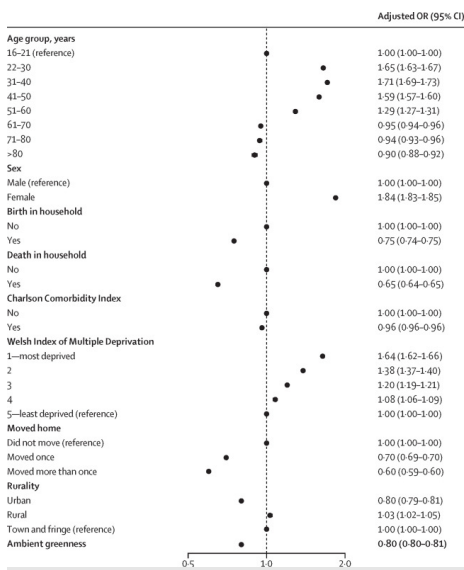
From: Rachel Hamblin [REDACTED]
Sent: 28 April 2026 15:42
To: Lime Down Solar
Subject: Action from open floor hearing Lime Down

Categories: Deadline submission

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Dear planning inspectorate,

As requested please find the reference list at the end of my written speech copied below and in particular, the research paper I mentioned of the large mental health study of 2-3 million people:



Ambient greenness, access to local green spaces, and subsequent mental health: a 10-year longitudinal dynamic panel study of 2.3 million adults in Wales
thelancet.com

This large-scale population study analysed data from over 2 million individuals in Wales across a 10-year period. It found that higher levels of residential greenness and better access to green and blue spaces were associated with significantly reduced risks of anxiety and depression. The findings suggest that both the quantity and proximity of natural environments play a protective role in mental health at a population level.

Open forum 3 minute 21st April 2026

My name is Dr Rachel Hamblin, I live in Hullavington and I'm a Clinical Psychologist.

I have many broad reaching concerns about the Lime Down Solar proposal as mentioned in my written objection. Today I would like to speak about the mental health and wellbeing impact of a scheme this size, scale and position. This is not just a planning issue, it is a public health issue.

There is now overwhelming scientific evidence that the environments we live in directly affect our mental wellbeing. A large-scale, 10-year study of over 2 million people in Wales found that people living in greener surroundings had significantly lower rates of anxiety and depression. In fact, those in the greenest environments had around 20% lower risk compared to those in the least green areas (NIHR Evidence, 2024, Lancet, 2023). Even small increases in access to green space reduced risk further.

This matters because the proposed development would replace large areas of accessible, natural countryside with an industrial landscape. This is not a neutral change, it is the removal of something that actively protects mental health.

Environmental psychology explains the mechanism of this impact. Attention Restoration Theory describes that natural environments allow our minds to recover from stress and mental fatigue. In simple terms, nature restores us. Replacing enormous areas with fencing, machinery and industrial infrastructure removes that restorative effect entirely.

We also need to consider noise and disruption. Research published in [Nature](#) in 2025 shows that chronic noise, from traffic or industry for instance, can increase stress hormones, disrupt sleep and raise the risk of anxiety, depression and even suicide. This finding is replicated many times and link long-term noise exposure to both mental health problems and physical conditions like cardiovascular disease.

The construction phase alone, lasting up to two years and involving over 20,000 heavy vehicles, will introduce exactly these kinds of stressors: noise, pollution, sleep disruption and fear for personal safety. These are not minor inconveniences; they are well-established risk factors for psychological harm.

The applicant has recently acknowledged that this scheme will cause a long-term decrease in quality of life for communities such as Hullavington. However, they claim this will not significantly affect mental health. This position is simply not supported by the evidence.

Research consistently shows that quality of life and mental health are deeply interconnected. Studies demonstrate a bidirectional relationship: when quality of life declines, through environmental degradation, reduced access to nature, noise, or loss of amenity, rates of anxiety, depression and psychological distress increase.

A decline in quality of life is not separate from mental health. It is one of its primary drivers.

I understand that UK planning policy allows public health, including mental health, to be considered a material consideration. This means decision-makers not only can, but should, refuse developments that risk harming community wellbeing. It's not that solar energy should not be utilised, it's that projects of this size and scale should not be situated in areas where significant harm will come of them.

In conclusion, this proposal would remove access to protective green space, introduce long-term industrial noise and disruption and reduce overall quality of life of thousands of village residents. Each of these factors is independently linked to poorer mental health. Combined, their impact is

likely to be significant and to suggest otherwise is to ignore a substantial and growing body of scientific evidence.

For these reasons, I urge you to give serious weight to the mental health consequences of this scheme and to reject the application.

References

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