

Submission ID: S1894321F

Attached file is the speech given by representative from Grittleton Parish Council at the Open Floor Hearing on 21st April 2026

Open Floor Hearing – 21st April 2026 - Grittleton Parish Council

My name is [REDACTED]. I am speaking on behalf of Grittleton Parish Council [GPC], a parish with a population of approximately 500 consisting of the villages of Grittleton and Littleton Drew and hamlets of Sevington, Leigh Delamere and the Gibb.

In October 2025, we surveyed our parishioners prior to our budget/precept setting meeting in November. Our aim was to better understand their needs and concerns to enable us to plan accordingly.

Analysing the responses, most respondents felt the beautiful surrounding countryside along with heritage and conservation were the most important part of living here. The network of public footpaths and bridleways, the gateways to access the stunning landscapes we enjoy and appreciate, was the next most popular response. These would be destroyed by acres of unsightly panels, fencing and equipment, all totally incongruous in a rural setting.

We then asked for any concerns residents had. Alongside road safety, the Lime Down project was the most cited and referred to. In the words of one parishioner “Lime Down Solar Park will be a disaster”.

Part of Grittleton lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape and these areas, defined as sensitive, are afforded the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and natural beauty. The construction of Lime Down would systematically destroy cherished views, walks, cycling and riding routes causing psychological distress and real harm to our residents, visitors and tourists. So the aspects of living in Grittleton Parish most valued by our parishioners and the issues that concern them are all linked to the proposal by Island Green Power to industrialise and desecrate the landscape of rural North Wiltshire.

The transport routes proposed would affect all the major roads in the parish along with some minor ones. 2/3rds of homes and businesses in the parish would be directly affected, including The Gibb and Alderton Road in Grittleton which leads onto the historic Fosse Way. Section 14 of the Wiltshire Cycleway runs through the village and is hugely popular and would see a massive and unacceptable increase in HGV traffic. Our rural roads are ill equipped for the size and weight of construction vehicles and the number of journeys proposed, and as such would pose serious safety problems for all users.

Heavy traffic will also be using The Street, within the Grittleton Conservation Area, to access the proposed construction compound sited close to Grittleton Village Hall and Recreation Ground, a well-used local community facility with a cricket pitch, MUGA and children’s playground. Historic England shows 3 Grade II* listings in Grittleton Parish and 47 Grade II listings with 28 of those in The Street itself. These include houses dating back to the 17thC, a K6 telephone box and an historic Baptist Chapel. The sheer volume of traffic using The Street to access the compound may well cause damage and compromise the structural integrity of the listed buildings. Added to that is the narrowness of The Street exacerbated by necessary on street parking.

We are a pragmatic council and understand that strict planning policies for conservation areas, listed buildings and national landscapes are in place to protect our heritage and rural way of life from irresponsible development. What the developers of Lime Down are proposing with their plans shows utter contempt for these necessary policies.

We support local businesses: several farms, pubs, B&B’s and Grittleton House, a II* listed family-owned events venue. These all offer local employment opportunities and attract many tourists, keen to discover the many and varied delights this area has to offer. Grittleton Parish boasts two successful pubs, and a number of accommodation providers. Weddings, filming, events, and domestic and international school activity holidays at Grittleton House add considerably to the local economy. The Lime Down plans would seriously impact these businesses and could cause them to become unviable and lead to their closure. This would be devastating, not only to the owners but to the local area in general.

We understand the need to be self-sufficient with regards to renewable energy, and Wiltshire is already home to a plethora of solar sites. Equally important, however, is self-sufficiency in food production. This requires land in the countryside so the location of this proposal and the fragmented nature of the solar arrays and ancillary equipment means that vast areas of our local productive farmland will need to be excavated to accommodate the cable connections. The disruption and loss of productive land this will cause is unjustifiable.

In summary, Grittleton Parish Council is of the opinion that the proposed plans will have a significant detrimental effect on the daily lives and well-being of our parishioners and as such must uphold our objection to this scheme. We urge the ExA to recommend its refusal.

Thank you for listening.