

As noted in the character appraisal carried out by Wellingborough Council in 2015 "Mears Ashby is unique in the borough, if not the entire county, in having such extensive tracts of unspoilt open land contained within its urban form" and is set in a classic rural landscape. It has a relatively high proportion of listed buildings and most of it is a conservation area. Its character will be irreversibly changed by the proposed development.

Many of the local roads are narrow and unsuited to heavy vehicles. That is why there is an existing HGV prohibition. Some are in poor condition and the HGV traffic relating to the solar farm can only increase that damage leading to potential damage to resident's vehicles. Most of the village roads are not wide enough for large lorries to pass each other. Even if the lorry routes are not planned through the village, past experience has shown that slavish reliance on satnavs will result in vehicles travelling on village roads that they are not supposed to. There will clearly be increased noise and air pollution. I am also concerned about the location of the proposed battery storage facility which I understand is to be constructed in the vicinity of the stream that runs through the heart of the village. Any incident during construction or leakage in the future may well contaminate the stream and the ponds it feeds in the village (including the pond where the last witch dunking occurred in 1785 and the medieval fishponds at Mears Ashby Hall), damaging the ecology and wildlife.

During this summer I have watched lorry loads of grain being harvested from productive fields around the village. Surely there must be alternative sites that do not require the loss of productive land.

Finally, it is well established that there was significant activity in this area in the Roman period and I am concerned that archaeological remains may be disturbed in the process of construction and laying the vast amounts of cabling required.