

Personal Representation – Green Hill Solar Farm (EN010170)

Submitted by: Nicola Nimmo, Grendon Resident

I am writing as a long-standing resident of Grendon to raise my objections to the proposed Green Hill Solar Farm and associated Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). While I support the shift to renewable energy, this proposal poses serious risks to local safety, amenity and the wellbeing of residents.

Flooding and Water Runoff

Grendon has repeatedly experienced significant flooding, with events in 2012, 2016, 2020, 2023 and most recently September 2024 causing major disruption and damage to homes. The proposed site sits directly upstream of our village on land that naturally helps absorb surface water. Turning this into a solar installation — with compacted ground, access tracks and heavy plant machinery — will increase runoff and worsen flooding for homes along Main Road and Manor Road. This is not a hypothetical risk; residents here live with the reality of flooding almost every winter. Any further strain on our already fragile drainage system will make life in the village increasingly unsafe.

Fire and BESS Safety Concerns

The proposal includes multiple large-scale lithium battery installations on floodplain land. This combination of flood risk and fire hazard is deeply concerning. Inundation can cause battery failure or explosion, releasing toxic gases such as hydrogen fluoride and carbon monoxide. The applicant's proposed safety plan offers little reassurance to those of us living nearby — advising residents to “remain indoors” in the event of a fire is not a credible emergency plan. With three battery sites now clustered around Grendon, the potential for a serious incident has multiplied, yet there is no clear evidence of a coordinated fire response or community evacuation plan.

Footpaths and Local Access

I use the public rights of way around Grendon several times a week for walking and running, including the path to Castle Ashby — the only local shop within walking distance. These routes are vital to residents' wellbeing and part of the reason many of us live here. The proposed closures and diversions during construction (and possible fencing afterwards) will cut off these lifelines. For two years, residents will be forced to drive instead of walk, adding unnecessary traffic to already narrow and congested roads. These footpaths are also part of the internationally recognised Waendel Walk route, which brings thousands of visitors to the area and supports local businesses. Disrupting them will damage both community life and local tourism.

Conclusion

The Green Hill proposal fails to demonstrate how it will safely coexist with a community already living under the strain of regular flooding and limited infrastructure. The combination of floodplain siting, BESS fire risk, and the loss of valued public footpaths represents an unacceptable impact on residents' safety and quality of life. I urge the Examining Authority to withhold consent until these risks are fully addressed with robust, evidence-based mitigation.