

## LVIA -Mears Ashby Village

Mears Ashby is a quintessential English Village that blends centuries of history with the bucolic charm of rural life. The roots of Mears Ashby reach deep into England's medieval past. Domesday book entries from 1086 record the settlement under various spellings, hinting at its longstanding presence on the English landscape.

Throughout the centuries Mears Ashby has evolved, yet retained much of its traditional layout. Ancient field patterns, visible from above, still echo the medieval open field system, with hedgerows and winding lanes, preserving the memory of communal farming and land stewardship

Mears Ashby boasts an abundance of heritage assets. 29 listed building, 2 of which are grade 2\*, 27 being grade 2. These listed properties and other period cottages are constructed from the local honey coloured limestone, characteristic of this part of Northamptonshire. Thatched roofs, timber frames and hand built stone walls help to create a patchwork of architectural styles.

80% of the village is within the Conservation Area.

At the heart of the village stands All Saints Church, parts of which date back to the Saxon Period. The churchyard itself is shaded by centuries old yews.

Another notable structure is Mears Ashby Hall, an impressive Jacobean Manor House. Built in the early 1600's, the hall is a testament to the wealth and influence of the English Gentry. Surrounded by formal gardens and ancient parkland, it has long been a focal point for the village hosting gatherings, celebrations, and, at times, serving as the seat of local governance.

Northamptonshire Historic Gateway, records 226 results for Mears Ashby and its surrounds. Many of these refer to the historic buildings in the landscape, the abundance of archeology and Mears Ashby's own 'Designated Heritage Asset' - the WW11 Aircraft Crash Site which covers a significant area to the south of the village.

Details - 31st March 1943, 2 American Flying Fortress B17 bombers collided in mid air and crashed to the east and south east of Mears Ashby a total of 15 crew were killed - known as 'Mission 48' (a copy of the memorial plaque and the HER record are attached. (The affected area is hatched on the map)

We know that all military sites are protected under 'The protection of Military Remains Act 1986' and it is an offence to tamper with, damage, move or unearth any items at such sites unless the MOD has issued a licence authorising such activity (which at this stage they haven't)

This memorial site is an important part of our villages heritage and we must protect it. We expect the developer to locate infrastructure a suitable distance from the memorial site. As I minimum we would expect to see panels removed from EF 13, EF14, EF10, EF22, EF24, and EF21.

The developer has not consulted the HER records or the Local Authority as defined in 12.3.11 and therefore has made no attempt to ensure protection of this important heritage asset.

To quote their own design specification, 'The design is not sensitive to above and below ground heritage assets'

The attached fig 12.1.3 shows the designated and non-designated heritage assets within Mears Ashby. This plan shows how the enormity of the solar farm (shaded red) which completely engulfs Mears Ashby. (1700 acres of solar panels)

Mears Ashby is a place of special character and historic interest. People moved to Mears Ashby for its unique setting within Northamptonshire, particularly the extensive tract of unspoilt open land contained within the central valley of the conservation area, which separates the two sides of the village, the East side and the West side. (See attached information map from a recent village event)

Church walk, joins the 2 sides of the village through this central valley and crosses the village stream, where views across the Manor House pond delight all that pass by, with mallard, coot, herons, kingfishers and the occasional egret, delighting passers by.


The climb up the church steps at the end of the path, brings one out into the churchyard, where views of the open valley, take on a different perspective.

My family moved to Mears Ashby in 1960 when I was 6 years old. My father was a keen birdwatcher and just loved the village and it's unique location, close to Sywell reservoir for weekend bird watching and extensive fields accessible from Duchess end. Back then it wasn't a Country Park and there were no parking facilities, but for my father, Mears Ashby was perfectly located, with a footpath to the reservoir, from the bottom of 'Pells Hill' (see photo). This was part of a footpath known as 'Northamptonshire Round'. The other end of the village was the track that was an extension of footpath TN1. (Now known as the 'Permissive path').

We spent hours at weekends as a family, walking these fields and watching and recording bird life. The hedgerows were full of yellow hammers, chaffinches, tits and sparrows, and the fields were a haven for lapwings, crows, the occasional buzzard or an early morning owl. Deer, squirrels, foxes and badgers were always around. It was and currently still is a special place.

Farming is and has been fundamental to this landscape, its wildlife, its trees, it's hedgerows, it's meandering tracks, it's streams, it's light, it's colour, it's rightful place surrounding a village built on a farming community.

To lose all this and be surrounded by obscene solar panels is beyond tragic and not a place will want to live in any longer.

  
Mears Ashby resident.



# MISSION 48



**O**n Wednesday, 31st March 1943, 20 B-29 Superfortresses of the 30th Bomb Group were sent to attack the Japanese base at Misaki, Japan. The mission was a success, with 10 aircraft returning safely to the base.

As mentioned in January 1942, with the intention of supporting an attack on the Japanese base at Misaki, Japan, the 30th Bomb Group was sent to attack the base. The mission was a success, with 10 aircraft returning safely to the base.

## ARTRESS B17 SPECIFICATION

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The B17 was a four-engine heavy bomber. It was capable of carrying a large payload of bombs and was equipped with a variety of defensive armaments. The aircraft was designed for long-range missions and was one of the most powerful bombers of its time.

**30th BOMB GROUP MEANS B17 TWO BEATS CODE NO 42-28573**  
The 30th Bomb Group was a composite group of B-29 Superfortresses. It was one of the most powerful bomber groups in the US Army Air Corps. The group was composed of several squadrons, each of which was equipped with B-29s.



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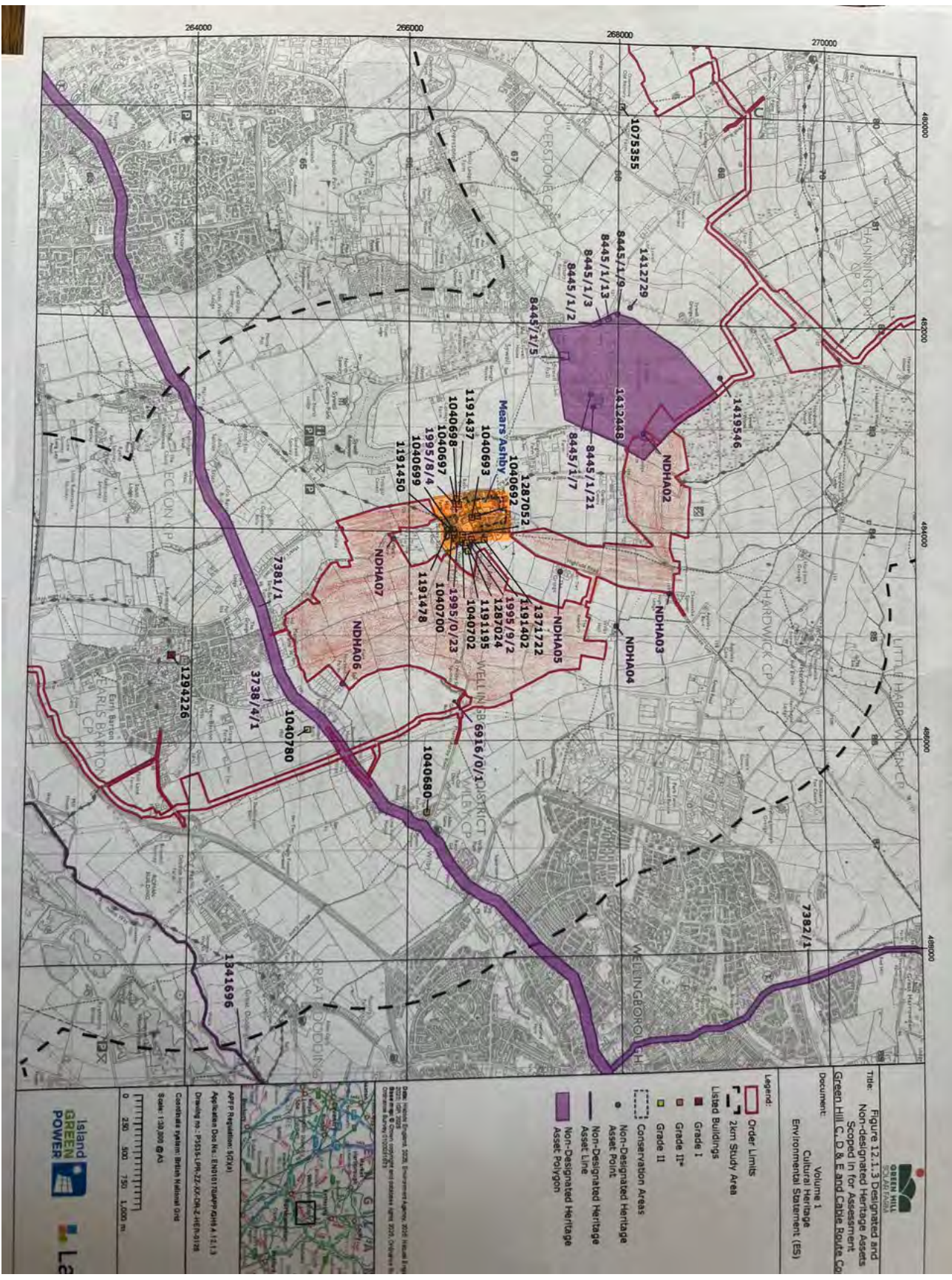


The first of 20 aircraft formed up with B17s from the 30th BG. The aircraft were sent to attack the Japanese base at Misaki, Japan. The mission was a success, with 10 aircraft returning safely to the base.

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As a resident of Mears Ashby, I wanted to share my thoughts on the proposed Green Hill Solar Farm development, specifically to the fields adjacent to Highfield Road. Green on Green initiatives are critical, but the size of this development will have a significant impact on the local residential and farming community. Solar panels will dramatically alter views of the countryside and the key features that punctuate it. This would include fences and CCTV which will be visible from all roads leading in and out of the village, with the character of heritage assets and our appreciation of them can be significantly harmed.

I am a keen runner and own a dog, so use the Highfield fields on a daily basis. As a result, I wanted to share some personal experiences, for that specific area of Mears Ashby. Today I walked my dog, [REDACTED], across the route to Hardwick, with beautiful countryside views, specifically a sunrise behind the water tower (please see image 1), which will be lost when the fields are covered with 4m high panels. Along the way I saw red kites, deer, sheep and horses, with other wildlife, such as owls and bats being seen on a regular basis. A few weeks ago on a run, the buzz of the summer harvest was in full swing, with combines taking in the summer crops (image 2). I can't imagine when the wheat fields surround the village and sounds of farming equipment will all be lost. If this development goes ahead, I will be surround by closed-off fences, CCTV cameras and I will loses walking routes and the views and sounds of changing weather and farming seasons.

The introduction of solar farm panels around the village will significantly alter the visual landscape, particularly attributed to the open rural nature of the site. And for what, a cash making opportunity for developers. Large fields of solar panels, will stand out against the natural backdrop of fields and farmlands. This change in the visual aesthetic will be unsettling to residents who are accustomed to the unspoiled rural views. The emotional cost is not just the change in scenery, but the change in the rhythm rural of life. The vibrant, unpredictable nature of the countryside, with its rolling hills and open skies, will be replaced by the mechanical ugly structures, fencing and intrusive CCTV. It's a change that stirs negative emotions knowing the landscape has been irrevocably altered. The visual impact will be particularly concerning during the winter months when trees and plants have shed their leaves, and the panels will become an even more prominent feature in the landscape.

I am not averse to solar as an energy system, but installing them in less prominent areas, such as near the existing industrial site of Park Farm would be a more suitable option. Instead of just applying for solar instalments, the developers should work with local residents to reduce their visual dominance and allow the natural beauty of the area to remain the focal point. Balancing the need for clean energy with the desire to preserve the village's visual appeal will likely require careful planning and community input, but a delay of a few months, seems to be balance the hundreds of years the village has stood, which will be destroyed within the next 2 year.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

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## Solar farm Site D views

I am a consultant engineer working on high-value, safety-critical systems for the nuclear, defence, offshore, power generation, energy and automotive industries. I work from home and my office looks over the fields of the proposed solar farm at 'Site D' along [REDACTED], and 'Site C' along [REDACTED]. In fact I have a panoramic view from [REDACTED] in the west to [REDACTED] in the east. When we made some modifications to the house in 2016 a key requirement was to add two further windows upstairs on the north side so that we could appreciate more of the view over the fields. It makes me smile every morning when I open the curtains to take in the tranquil view. There is an existing hedge along the west boundary of Site D, but I am very concerned that the height of the panels mean that we will be able to see them from the house.

On a planning map the fields that form the basis for Site D may be look like nothing special – just a couple of fields alongside a road. But in real life it is a lovely timeless space, just a few steps into the fields and you are away from everything, looking in all directions.

Used by walkers, including Duke of Edinburgh students and The Wendal Walk, the fields are especially important to the residents of Mears Ashby with many taking the footpath to Sywell Road or walk along Highfield Road for the stunning views across to the airfield or North towards Kettering. We see many dog walkers and runners pass our house to make use of the peaceful footpath in all weathers.

The wildlife is plentiful with rabbits, badgers, pheasants, foxes, deer as well as the arial displays from several families of kites, buzzards, hawks, and green woodpeckers. I am worried that the solar farm will affect these and the newts, hedgehogs and the many smaller birds that frequent my garden. The local wildlife is a joy to watch from our home.

There are many wildflowers that are a picture anytime of the year, with the hedgerows full of berries and elderflower that are popular with foragers, from both Mears Ashby and nearby Wellingborough.

Winter is a joy across the fields with families walking especially during the Christmas holidays. Whether it be walking off the turkey or dragging the kids along in a toboggan sled, many happy memories have been made along these fields.

I find the open fields and footpath are a necessary sanctuary, and other local residents feel the same. They are a place to unwind after a busy day, or like my son, when you are revising for exams, tests, and just to get away from it all.

I have lived at the property since 1977, because I love the countryside with the peace and tranquillity that it provides. All that will change if the proposed solar farm goes ahead.

I have issues with background noise and claustrophobia, and that is a key reason why I work from home where the quiet and views contribute to creative thinking, the solution to major engineering problems and my mental wellbeing.

The noise pollution from the proposed solar farm is also a major issue. It is bad enough that I can hear the air conditioning units at the Park Farm Industrial Estate,

but the noise from the proposed solar farm will be a lot worse, making it unbearable for me. I will not be able to think during the day or sleep at night.

I am also concerned about the resilience of the solar farm from an engineering and commercial point of view. It will be out of date before it is finished, superseded by the nuclear options, and investors will be disappointed, leaving us with a 60-year white elephant. The views will be lost forever with no real benefit to the country. The planners and politicians really need to think about the consequences, viability of the project, destruction of the countryside and effect on the locals, such as me. The country still needs qualified engineers to provide better solutions for the country. We quietly beaver away in the peace and tranquillity of our offices overlooking England's green and pleasant land, that can only continue if the countryside is not desecrated by solar panels, inverters, and battery storage units.



Second Field

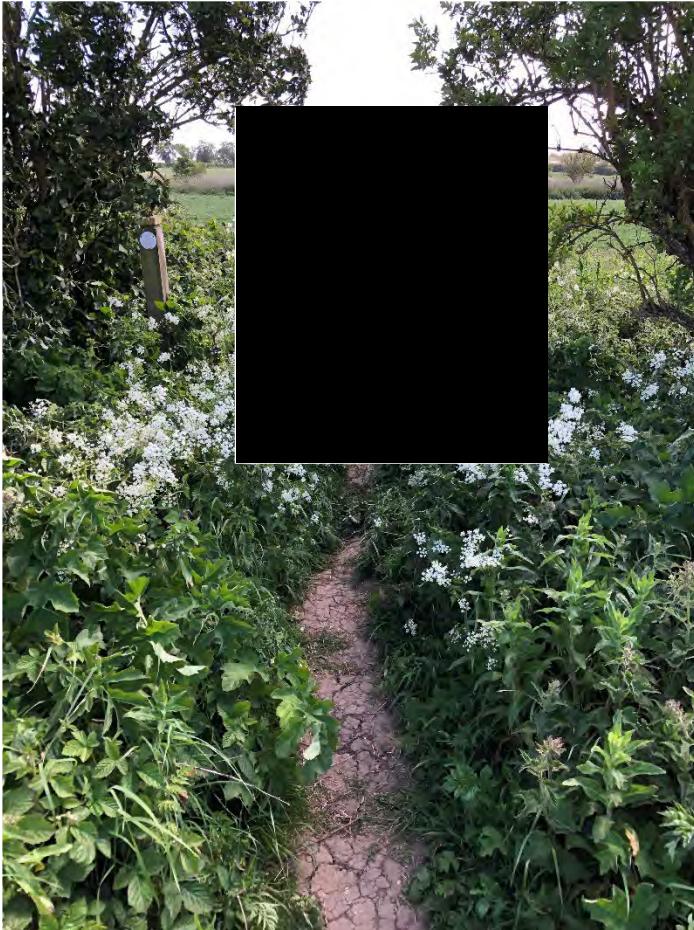




First Field



First Field



Access between second and third field





Third Field





View from upstairs living room – [REDACTED]

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LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT  
PROPOSED GREEN HILL SOLAR FARM  
MEARS ASHBY

My family farmed Village Farm, comprised of 300 acres, mainly to the south of the Wilby Road, for 237 years after the Enclosures until 2015. It was farmed in a sustainable way as a mixed farm with both arable and livestock and was very productive. Good quality farm land should not be taken out of production for industrial scale solar sites. It is rolling countryside with ridges and valleys, many broad leaved trees and stone barns. I have lived in the village all my life and farmed the land with my brother for 15 years. I have always walked down the farm for my relaxation.

It is a special place where you can walk down the farm track and be in your own world, often far from the road and the noise of the traffic, enjoying the colours of the different seasons, in the crops, the hedges and the trees. You can often see hares, free to roam where they wish, pheasants and partridge, buzzards and kites, owls and now, also muntjac deer.

If this project is allowed to go ahead, my family and I, and many dog walkers and other villagers, will be surrounded by ugly hard fences and tall solar panels obliterating the views of this far reaching countryside whenever we set off down the track through the farm. We will also be subjected to an unpleasant, obtrusive noise when it is windy. It will change from being a pleasure and an escape from the stresses of modern life to being the biggest stress of the lot! From the top of the hill, where the track passes into the next field, you will be almost surrounded by the panels, visible for miles around. From this point, where a searchlight was placed during the war to help guard Northampton from bombers, a special view of the village with some of the main buildings visible in the winter, will be completely obscured by these ugly structures. From the high land, as the track leaves EF27 and EF28, vast areas of industrial scale solar panels and fencing will spoil the views and the whole experience.

The accompanying photos show the present view as you head out of the village, which will have solar panels either side, (fields EF13 and EF22), also to the south as you leave these fields, which is all high ground. Also further on, to the left of the field barn (field EF27) which will also destroy the views across to between Wilby and Earls Barton.



*Figure 1. The start of the permissive path alongside field no. EF13*



*Figure 2. View from the highest point to the west across EF22*



*Figure 3 View from permissive path route across EF27 to the south-east*

This is all good quality farmland which we need in these very uncertain times!  
We should not trade this for an industrial scale solar farm which will destroy this land for the future.  
We are a county full of warehouses and housing that could all have solar panels on them!!  
We will also have battery storage and a substation in the parish , what have we done to deserve this?

██████████  
Mears Ashby resident  
September 2025

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LVIA Statement from Helen & David Downey, 7 Duchess End, Mears Ashby, NN6 0EB  
September 2025

The view from our home is marked A on the map. It is currently, and has been for my life time, in use for agriculture. The landscape would change dramatically, not only from a visual perspective, but also as it would no longer be contributing to food production. The landscape would cease to be part of a protected greenbelt which has historically been important to the Government who have expressed a concern for the environment. The Greenhill Solar development is a production unit on an industrial scale. Our opposition is not to solar panel energy generation in itself, rather the fact we are trading food security for energy production. We strongly believe that it is unnecessary to utilise productive agricultural land in an area of the country where warehousing and distribution activities provide ample space for solar panels on roof tops with clear, unhindered exposure to sunlight.









## LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROPOSED GREEN HILL SOLAR FARM – MEARS ASHBY

(This LVIA relates to the land to the south of the road from Mears Ashby to Wilby, reaching as far as the A4500, and follows the route of the permitted footpath which is part of the planning application.)

I have travelled along the farm track which the permissive footpath follows since I first moved to Mears Ashby as a young teenager [REDACTED] years ago.



*Figure 4 The start of the permissive path alongside field EF13*

I have walked it frequently since then, and ridden on the back of a trailer to help with potato picking, sheep feeding and moving, bale carting, shoot beating and so on. In more recent years it has become my go-to place for a sense of calm, openness, space, peace and quiet – the ideal place to clear a crowded head.

It is a rural place, an agricultural landscape, an arable landscape, a place for wildlife, birds, insects, rosehips, blackberries and hedges established over very many years. The landscape is an expansive mix of open fields stretching far into the distance in all directions.



*Figure 5 Field EF22 to the west of the permissive panels*



*Figure 6 A long-established hedge*

A place of fields of wheat, barley, oats, rapeseed, potatoes and other crops; of cattle and sheep. Farming practices have now changed, been simplified, but still the fields are fully used to produce food for people and for birds, and to provide a varied habitat for all manner of wildlife. Walks this summer have had sightings of red kites, buzzards, pheasants, sundry other birds, butterflies, hares, muntjac deer and owls. On our most recent walk flocks of rooks and starlings had descended on the recently harvested fields to glean the remaining corn seed – it was a sight to behold!

Above all this is a very open place, probably the highest point in the parish, and the only point to have an unobstructed 360-degree view. The view from the top of Dairy Field (EF13) stretches north



to Grange Farm, east to Wilby, south to Earls Barton, and west to the Mears Ashby to Earls Barton road where the land then dips down to the valley and to Sywell Reservoir. The view also includes parts of Mears Ashby village itself, clearly visible during winter months.



*Figure 7. . To the north, to Grange Farm, more panels*



*Figure 8 The field to the right of the track will be filled with panels twice the height of this crop*



*Figure 9 To the north-east, warehouses in Wellingborough, which could be used for solar production, can be seen in the distance. Panels will obliterate the landscape here too.*



*Figure 10 View of the village in summer, in winter this is much more open but will be hidden by panels.*

It is a wide expansive farming landscape, a unique place. It was the ideal location for the WW2 searchlight, sited here for optimum visibility in the protection of Northampton and surrounding areas.

Psychologically, the openness felt here is calming, relaxing – whether the sun is shining or it's blowing a gale, every season is different. The changing seasons forever add to the landscape's interest, its colours and its activity. To me personally losing all of this will be the biggest impact on my own wellbeing and that of many others too.

### **So how will this change?**

The construction of a solar farm will destroy all of the above. Four-metre high panels, surrounded by security fencing, will obliterate the openness, will banish the views, it will take away the feeling of space – not just for now but for future generations and our landscape will be lost forever. The developers may claim that this is a temporary structure, that it will be removed in due course, that the Good and Very Good soil and landscape will be returned – but it won't be, and who of us who know it now will be around to see what happens in 60 years' time when the contracts come to an end.....?

What frustrates me most of all is that this destruction is so unnecessary, it is trading agricultural food production for the industrial manufacture of electricity, changing farms into factories. A farm grows its produce, tending and nurturing it to feed the people, a solar factory manufactures electricity when the sun shines..... Our local area is one of the country's major warehousing locations – vast acres of roofing, car parking and new housing already eating up the land and with barely a solar panel to be seen. It's just plain WRONG!

I know that the plans show that fields in the middle of the farm will be spared panels but that is not sufficient to maintain these so important aspects of this landscape, its visual amenity and agricultural capability in this unique setting. Walking through banks of panels and security fencing, along with the constant ringing sound the site will generate will negate what is left. It will be a place to avoid.





*Figure 11. To the east of the Field Barn, another lost landscape*



*Figure 12. Solar panels twice a man's height will banish all views, hiding the landscape for ever.*



*Figure 13. The footpath beyond the Field Barn will be surrounded by ringing/buzzing panels, not an enjoyable walking experience at all.*



*Figure 14. This photo shows fields near the Field Barn, here we have regular sitings of hares, buzzards, barn owls and muntjac deer. Its quiet remoteness is ideal for wildlife – it will all disappear*

Very nearly half of the agricultural land in our entire parish will be within the solar farm/factory, the rural nature of our environment will be lost forever, with similar changes to those I have highlighted here happening throughout the parish. A very depressing thought indeed.....

[REDACTED]

Mears Ashby resident

September 202