

Landscape and Visual Impact - Walgrave Village

Nine individual narratives:

The route where the pictures were taken is one of our regular walks which we have enjoyed for many years. We particularly enjoy the views included in the photos I sent as we feel they are a typical Northamptonshire mix of arable and grass fields bordered by hedges and trees . There are very few buildings apart from an occasional barn .

If the proposed solar development goes ahead, this will be permanently lost. We greatly value the rural nature of the surrounding landscape around Walgrave which we feel improves our quality of life. The nature of the local landscape and views which we value so much will be permanently changed- bringing an industrial character to this walk. We feel that this would greatly diminish any benefit or sense of well being we currently enjoy on this route.



Photo from PRow looking NE toward Site A2. OS Grid reference 809718



Photo from PRow looking NE towards Site A2. OS Grid reference 812723

[REDACTED]

Walgrave

We have been living in this rural area for fifty years and together with our family have enjoyed dog walking, horse riding and just walking in and around the fields and especially the "Quiet Lane" that is Newlands Road.

If this development goes ahead, this will never be the same again as it will be extremely noisy and disruptive on wildlife when it is installed and beyond as the panels make a noise themselves. All of this will have a detrimental impact to bird nesting in particular, which in turn has to affect our enjoyment of the countryside with their wonderful song being lessened considerably.

Foxes, badgers and muntjacs reside around here and will be confused, frightened and leave the area, in order to find new habitat, which will change the environment.

Villagers won't want to walk there and a lot of social cohesion will be lost.

It is where you can walk easily and safely just enjoying the sights and sounds of the countryside.

The views to and from Walgrave will be changed for the worst for three generations. The A43 looking down into the village, across to the western horizon will be blighted by the sight of nothing but industrial shining panels, instead of green fields. How can this not spoil anyone's pleasure in living in such an advantaged area.

Farmland has it's own ecosystem and again, this will have a huge direct effect on pleasure in the countryside, which sadly won't be noticed until it has gone.

[REDACTED]

Walgrave

I regularly walk my dog down Newland Road and along the Bridle Way just beyond Seeds of Change. Given that Newland Road is a Quiet Lane (and long may it remain designated as such) with limited traffic and you only see the occasional other dog walker and even less often, horserider, this walk is a perfect antidote to the hustle and bustle of 21st century living! I love watching the seasons change and checking on the wild flowers and birds in the area. I feel very strongly that such a rare and beautiful area should be protected.

I am a supporter of green energy developments but not on this scale and taking productive farmland out of use. I have watched videos of other solar farms and everything I have seen, suggests that all forms of wildlife would be very severely impacted. Additionally, the Green Hill proposals would be far more intrusive, both visually and their impact generally.

We should instead be using the vast amounts of warehousing and new housing to be found in this county. This might, at face value, be more expensive but won't be if the negative costs of welfare loss and farmland loss are also taken into account.

[REDACTED]

Walgrave

I have been using Newlands Road in Walgrave regularly for the past 28 years. Living in a village we only have one decent length footpath for walking on beyond the village boundaries. Consequently, as a single track lane, Newlands Road has been the only safe route to enjoy the countryside surrounding the village. I use the lane at least 4 times a week.

As a dog walker, runner and cyclist I always meet other local people enjoying the quiet lane. Today I met, 3 horse riders, 2 dog walkers, 2 walkers and 1 cyclist, in the space of 40 minutes! The views across the fields on both sides of the lane are amazing. Location 1 has views either side of the lane. It's the perfect spot for bird watching. This morning I enjoyed watching the barn swallows swooping and over the fields catching flies.

Green Lane, (the permissive footpath)off Newlands Road, also has stunning views (this was open for many years but has been gated and labelled permissive in the last few years). Again, I have used this lane regularly for 28 years. Location 2 is my favourite view over the fields to the South West. Today the hedgerows here were a full of blackberries and sloes ready to be picked. This location is also a great spot for watching the red kites circling the farmland.

If this development goes ahead it will be disastrous for the landscape and the abundant amount of wildlife and birds it supports. The barn swallows and red kites won't be interested in flying over solar panels. It will take away their habitat. It will also completely ruin the only safe road route villagers have available to enjoy the countryside views surrounding our village. It was designed a quiet lane for exactly this reason.



Photo from Newland Road looking W over Site A field 11 (Construction entrance and track for whole site to W of Newland Road). OS Grid reference 801732.



Photo from the Green Lane looking SW over Site A field 14 (foreground) and fields AF2, AF3 in distance. OS Grid reference 804734

[REDACTED]
Walgrave

If the Solar Farm was to go ahead our house and land would be surrounded by Solar Panels, on A2 this would greatly disrupt our current lovely views that we have over miles of fields. It is a source of great calm and joy to see the changing landscape as the seasons change. The colours of the grass and crops and hedgerows.

We would also greatly miss the wildlife that the solar panels would disrupt.

We see numerous deer in our garden and surrounding areas as they use the well-worn routes that they have established, it would be quite distressing and dangerous if these routes are closed and the deer end up on the busy A43.

We see partridge and their babies walking around the land as well as numerous other birds, including pheasant and woodpeckers, which will all be disrupted by the solar panels either by their breeding or by flying into the panels, injuring or killing them. We see lots of bats flying their well-used route along the hedgerows.

The peace and tranquillity of living in a natural environment cannot be over exaggerated and if the solar farm goes ahead this will be disrupted for many villagers for many years to come.

[REDACTED], Rectory Farm, Walgrave

Living where we do at [REDACTED] is indeed a privilege and we have always regarded ourselves as custodians of the landscape while we are here. The appearance of massive solar panels as we walk our fields observing birds (including yellowhammers Red Kites song thrushes) deer, foxes to name but a few will be permanently changed as we look towards Walgrave a field away from our boundary. Our well being will be forever affected by their presence but imagine the effect on the wildlife traversing the fields that have been their domain for generations. Surely there is some common sense left in decision making that is not entirely money driven.



Private view. Photo taken from Red Lodge Farm looking S towards Site A fields 17,18,19 &20. OS Grid reference 810748

[REDACTED]

I have lived in the parishes of Walgrave and Hannington for fifty two years and come from a nearby parish where my father, chairman of the county NFU, always said "live as if you might die tomorrow but farm as if you will live forever", meaning look after the fields, the land, landscape and wildlife because it is intrinsic to our life and well being. We have walked, cycled and ridden the lanes, footpaths and bridle ways in these parishes for decades always with a deep understanding of the farming, landscape and changing seasons.

Walking the bridleway CT3 from the Walgrave Hannington road towards the A43 we can see for miles towards the north of this plateau and the large area of A1 will be clearly visible. Further along, the A2 area just beside the track, over bearing high glass panels will dominate the landscape.



Photo taken from PRow, Bridleway looking NNW over Site A2 field A2F4 toward Site A. OS Grid reference 819722.

The Newland Lane north of Walgrave (area A1) will have glass panels to both east and west of this designated Quiet Lane.

These areas will lose the rich source of the changing seasons, textures, colours, sounds and atmosphere of the farming year. New green spring growth, June bringing the scent of grass mown for hay, high summer of waving cereal crops, turning to the sounds of harvest fields and then the earthy cultivating of autumn drilling at the start of the new farming year.



Photo taken from Newland Road looking S, with field AF29 to left and construction traffic route crossing from west to access east side. OS Grid reference 801732.

The living food producing landscape will change to sterile glass, totally alien and completely inappropriate to the countryside when the huge areas of new residential housing and giant warehouses in the county do not have solar panels fitted during construction.

Will our great grandchildren be horrified by this 3000 acres of glass in Northamptonshire fields, for sixty years, when we need food security both now and in the future.



Walking (and cycling) around Walgrave and seeing the views, wildlife, and being part of nature has been a very important part of my life and wellbeing, physical and mental health, particularly over the past 22 years that I have lived in Walgrave.

Driving home and seeing the village and the greenspace around starts to calm my mind. For the first 10+ years living here I walked with my husband every evening after work along the quiet lane (Newlands Lane) to the farm at the top, (inc many trips along the Green Lane when time allowed), the hedgerows and trees along the lane ever changing with seasons and alive with birds and wildlife, and the views across the fields helping to destress from the pressures of work. I still walk regularly up the Quiet Lane and see young parents pushing prams, people walking and particularly older people enjoying exercise along the designated quiet lane (few other paths/routes are accessible Whilst we are blessed with footpaths around Walgrave, few of them are accessible for people with mobility issues or for pushchairs.)and give closeness to nature as does the Quiet Lane).

On a recent trip along the Green Lane, I saw a weasel run across the gateway, the red kites were soaring above and the housemartins diving and swooping for insects in the fields which are designated to be covered in Solar Panels. A hare ran at speed across the field in the distance. Land that crops have been grown on for centuries, and part of our countryside heritage, but that will potentially be fenced in and covered with 4.5m high solar panels, and battery storage facility, this makes me feel very sad.

For the past 7 years since moving to the south side of Walgrave (and gaining a dog) I walk every day, morning and evening across the fields and paths around Walgrave. Most mornings mainly along the paths to Hannington, on my return crossing the Mere, and the fields here a high point, across a where you are up above the village and even if you I feel a little down at the start of my walk, it never fails to inspire me and make me feel better. I often stop to look across and see the vista of fields behind the church to the left towards Old and to the right towards Kettering Road and A43. This view covers many fields that are designated as being for solar panels. The landscape will change irrevocably if the Solar Plant goes ahead . Many people walk these routes daily, many dog walkers, horse riders in the top fields, all enjoying the views across the village and natural landscape.

Most winters now the fields where my normal footpath access is, (Atterbury's Field) becomes flooded, I walk more often up the Quiet Lane and Green Lane, and value the benefits that I currently am able to enjoy.



Photo from PRow looking N towards Site A. OS Grid reference 805716

I also walk regularly around the footpaths of Mears Ashby, (as I grew up there and have friends and family in the village, and enjoy the round walk from Mears Ashby to the reservoir,) watching the birds and nature in the fields, and I am horrified to see the extent to which the fields being proposed to be covered with solar panels there, and the impact for the village and villagers.

I fear for the wildlife, the impact of noise and wellbeing to all residents, the damage and impact of the construction phase and the removal of access to some of the most simple of life's pleasures, walking into nature, not just for myself but for all people in the village especially younger people growing up now and the generations to come.

[REDACTED]

I came to live in Walgrave 32 years ago: before that I had always lived in cities and towns where there were parks, but no countryside. I have really valued living in close contact with nature, being much more aware of the changing seasons and the agricultural cycle. I have noticed the variation in birdlife, the redwings and fieldfares in the hedgerows and fields in the winter; the skylarks soaring above the fields from early spring with their evocative song. In the last 15 years, kestrels have become less obvious, whereas red kites and buzzards are seen every day.

I worked in Kettering until retirement this year, travelling by car using the Kettering Road and then the A43. At the end of a long and tiring day, as I turned right off the A43, I would see the countryside opening out in front of me each side to the horizon, with Walgrave village and the church spire nestling in a dip in the distance. This signalled the moment of transition from work and commuting, to home and nature and relaxation.

All those years ago, I quickly discovered the only single track road from the village, Newland Road, a relatively flat route, as ideal for going jogging. When my daughter was young, I would push her in her pushchair up Newland Road most days to help her have her morning sleep. When she learned to ride a bicycle, this was the obvious route to take.

For many years now I have walked regularly up Newland Road to the far end and back, or branched off on the Green Lane, for fresh air, exercise, far-reaching views and immersion in nature. In the summer months, I will see yellowhammers, swallows and martins, skylarks, wrens, woodpigeons, red kites and buzzard and many more. During the pandemic, walking the footpaths became a way of coping with the strange circumstances and isolation, as seeing nature continue as always was very calming.

Being a regular walker now in all directions from the village, I am used to the wide-ranging views and tranquillity, the village nestling lower in the landscape, and routes from the village radiating out to higher ridges via gently undulating slopes.

If this development goes ahead, covering a quarter of the land area within the parish boundary with PV panels on the higher areas in the topography, almost every view will be blighted by the industrial landscape, and the tranquil countryside setting ruined. Turning off the A43 towards the village will be like entering a dystopian landscape, with vast panels rearing up immediately to the right, and covering the skyline all along to the left. No longer a moment of relaxation, but a stressor to one's piece of mind. During the Covid pandemic, it became so apparent that being in nature was beneficial to mental health and well-being.

The following 3 pictures show the changing views as one walks along the Green Lane heading approximately north. This route has been used in long living memory as a right of way, and was only enclosed with a gate around 25 – 30 years ago after travellers moved in. The signs indicating a permissive path were only added in the last year or two, once this scheme was being developed. It is clearly shown on a 1951 OS map as a track, equivalent to others leading to farms e.g. to Rectory Farm in Old that are acknowledged rights of way.

As is the case with all the photos in this document, they have been taken in late summer, after harvest, and before the hedgerows have been trimmed in the autumn. The views in all areas are much greater in the winter months because of loss of leaves from hawthorn, blackthorn and other hedgerow shrubs. Photos taken from the Kettering Road from the A43 driving down toward the village are not able to demonstrate the continual changing views from one side to another and give a realistic impression of the potential impact if this development proceeds.



Photo taken from the Green Lane looking ENE over Site A field AF28. OS Grid ref. 802731



Photo taken from the Green Lane looking E over Site A field AF26 towards Site A2. OS Grid ref. 804734. This photo shows the view from the same point in the Green Lane as Photo 2 in Jacky Smith's narrative, and marks the start of the row of 11 mature oak trees along the Green Lane as in next photo.



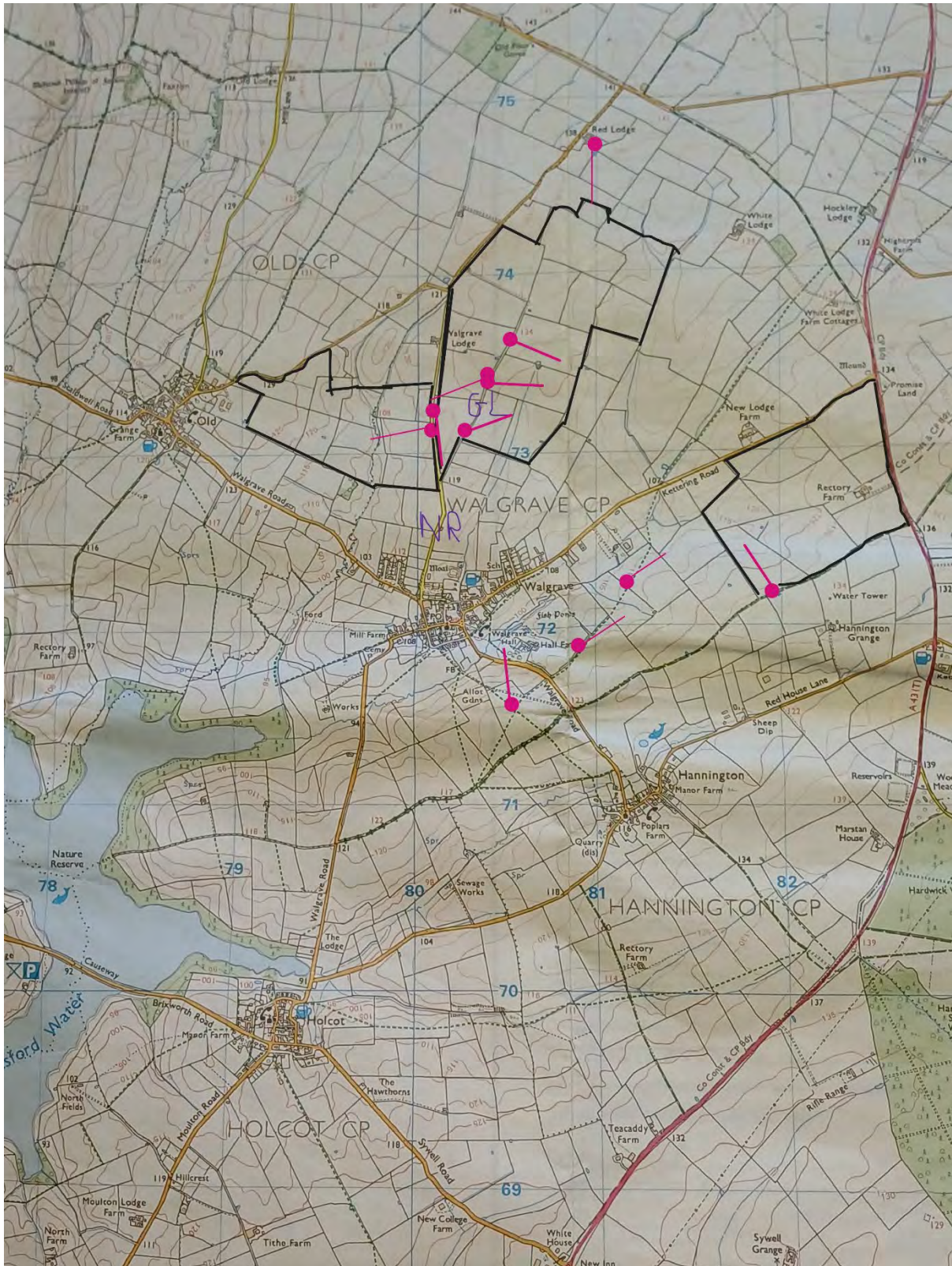


Photo taken from the Green Lane looking SE over field AF24 towards Site A2. OS Grid ref. 805736



LCT 29.09.2025

Please see map overleaf.



OS Map 1:25.000 showing Walgrave village, Sites A and A2 outlined in black, and photo points as in narratives in pink, with lines showing direction of view.

NR = Newland Road, GL = Green Lane