

Open Floor Hearing: 12 December 2025

Dr Linda Twohey

I have been a resident of Walgrave Village for more than 32 years, and I am a member of Stop Green Hill Solar.

The topic I wish to address in the next 10 minutes is the within-site layout of Site A, and how different choices by the applicant could potentially significantly reduce the harm and impact on the local community, particularly in regard to the leisure use of the Quiet Lane, and at the same time also reduce the harm on hedgerows, red-listed birds of conservation concern, protected bats and on best and most versatile agricultural land.

I will offer some proposals for inclusion in any DCO, should that eventually be granted.

I shall conclude with a brief point about the NSIP process from a layperson's point of view.

At the public consultation in Walgrave in December 2024, the Applicant's representatives seemed unaware of the Quiet Lane designation of Newland Road, which divides Site A into east and west sections. This designation was granted in 2013 by Northamptonshire County Council on the request of Walgrave Parish Council. For anyone who is unaware, the definition of a Quiet Lane is a minor rural road prioritised for use by walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and the mobility -impaired, for leisure and recreation. Quiet Lanes are about appreciating the beauty and tranquillity of country lanes, rather than just travelling from A to B. They also seemed unaware that the green lane branching off Newland Road and running approximately northwards through the eastern section of Site A, was a grassy track well-used by villagers in long living memory, for walking and dog-walking, although lacking formal PRow status. It extends for around 2/3

mile, a lovely walk along a high-point in the scenery with wide-ranging countryside views, as I am sure was appreciated by the Planning Inspectors when you visited yesterday.

At the consultation, and subsequently in my very detailed feedback form, I stated that if fields AF29 and AF14 were not used for the scheme, (**please see APP-191 for field numbering, or CR1 -026**) that could make a major reduction in the significant negative impact of the proposed development on people using Newland Road and the green lane, as these fields border more than half of the affected east side of Newland Road, and more than half of the west side of the green lane. The views and tranquillity and countryside setting would be much better retained. (Field AF29 is triangular with it's pointed end where the Inspectors embarked from the minibus on the ASI yesterday).

I questioned why construction traffic would be routed from the Broughton Road to the north, through the east side, and then across the Quiet Lane through field AF29 into field AF10. Obviously it cannot come down a single track road, but why not access the west part from the Broughton Road nearer towards Old village, as is planned for the operational period, seen for example in **APP-193**? This would then avoid any potential closure of the Quiet Lane during the construction period.

I also suggested that the then proposed position of the substation, in field AF28 near the beginning of the green lane, was inappropriate, and it should be placed in perhaps field AF17, near the Broughton Road access, so that it was easily reached for maintenance and where it would do least harm visually.

Subsequently, I have submitted a relevant representation **RR-0317**, in which I detailed my use of Newland Road, and include the results of a Village Survey that I conducted in August 2024. This showed that of 95 respondents, 85 stated that they regularly

used the Quiet Lane for recreational purposes. I have also submitted, as part of Stop Green Hill Solar's Written Representation, a document comprising 9 individual narratives from villagers **REP-201**, which describes these individual's use of the countryside locally and its importance and meaning to them, including beneficial effects on health and well-being, most specifically mentioning the Quiet Lane.

I have therefore been very disappointed that none of these submissions seem to have been considered, or any adjustment made to the Applicant's plan to take account of the Quiet Lane. I thought that the point of gathering the views of the local communities was to give them weight, and try to find more mutually acceptable solutions. And I could not find in the documents a rationale for the fields that have been selected for mitigation, or what 'ecology' was being mitigated for. It appears that the Applicant does not need to justify the reasons for the decisions taken.

With reference to fields AF29 and AF14, taking these 2 fields out from solar panel use, and re-routing the construction access, would also reduce the damage to important hedgerows **see APP-192**, as these fields' hedgerows comprise a high percentage of those in Site A.

As mentioned by Richard Humphreys KC, representing SGHS, at ISH2 on Tuesday, in AOB, field AF29 is also nearly all in agricultural land classification Grade 2, (**as seen in APP -172**) clearly BMV land whose use should be avoided.

With regard to the substation, where the cabling route exits Site A, the ground level tree assessment results for suitability for roosting bats, seen in **APP-089**, shows that most of the high suitability trees in Site A are clustered around the edge of field AF24, exactly where the substation has now been placed. Bats are all protected

species; so the noise and light pollution from a substation close to so many potential roosting areas is completely inappropriate and may be unlawful.

Skylarks have been found in the highest density in Site A, but nearly all the indicative territory cores as seen in **APP-091** p.101 will be lost. Taking fields AF29 and AF14 out as well would make a significant difference to the number retained. I also know from personal observation over decades, that yellowhammers, another red-listed bird of conservation concern, are almost invariably seen in the hedgerows of field AF29.

I suspect that the main fields chosen not to be designated for solar panels are for reasons such as impact on the current landowner and tenants' views, underlying important archaeology, and inappropriate gradient and slope direction, and important ecology around the significant stream in the west part of the site.

So in conclusion, it is my feeling and the general opinion of other villagers, that insufficient regard was paid to their views by the Applicant after the public consultation, as this did not seem to inform or alter their plans in any significant way to the layout of Site A.

So I would like to, respectfully, propose the following – if the Planning Inspectors are minded to recommend granting a DCO:

- That field AF29 and preferably AF14 are removed from the scheme (retained as arable land or used for ecological mitigation). This would considerably reduce the adverse landscape and visual, noise and glint and glare effects for users of the Quiet Lane, and help, at least partially, preserve the countryside setting and tranquillity.
- That both for construction as well as operational maintenance, access to the west side of Site A should be from the Broughton Road access called A-2 as in **REP-157**. This would remove the

need for construction vehicles to cross Newland Road from east to west.

- That the current permissive path along the Green Lane is made an official PRow, as any landowner can remove permissive access at any time.

And to finish with some views about the NSIP process; I wish to say that I consider myself to be an intelligent layperson, having worked as a hospital doctor for over 40 years, and yet I have found the whole process surrounding the proposed Green Hill Solar Farm fairly unfathomable. It has required an enormous amount of time and effort, helped by grouping together with other like-minded individuals, to try to understand what was going to happen, and how we as individuals in affected communities could have any influence. The initial documentation produced for the public consultation was thousands of pages long, with much repetition. Trying to get to grips with the contents was very challenging. Most people I know in my village could barely attempt it, and this was well-nigh impossible for those who are not used to accessing information digitally.

As for the documents now on the Planning Inspectorate website, these now number 1099, and some are more than a hundred pages long. There are probably more than 50,000 pages.

It is very difficult to see how this process is compatible with living in a democracy where local people should be involved in major planning decisions affecting their communities. Without the involvement and guidance of paid experts, paid for out of our own hard-earned income, we feel we would have had little chance of getting our voices heard in an effective manner.

Thank you for listening.

LCT 11.12.2025