

Open Floor Hearing: 10 March 2026

Dr. Linda Twohey

I am a resident of Walgrave and a member of STOP Green Hill Solar. Thank you for the opportunity to speak directly to you again. In my OFH address in December, (see REP3 -114), I concentrated on the within-site layout of Site A, and how better choices by the Applicant could significantly reduce the harm and impact of the development in a variety of ways, including that on wildlife and the local community. Subsequently I and other Walgrave residents are very grateful that the Examiners have determined not to accept solar array development within the triangular field AF 29, and so the Applicant has included this in Change Request 2 (see latest plan CR2-008 for field numbering, and revised detailed site layout).

Subsequent to this change, I plan to address why development should now also be removed from field AF9, and the interrelated issue of construction access to fields AF2,3 and 4.

Now that the designated Quiet Lane, Newland Road, will be less directly impacted by the proximity of 4.5 metre solar panels, I wish to question any necessity to place solar arrays in field AF9. By my calculations, the area of panels planned for this small field is only about 2% of the total within Site A. The use of this field is complicated by the fact that there is a utility, presumably a water main, running diagonally underneath it (CR2-008) which needs to remain accessible. It is also next to a watercourse which is otherwise being preserved from disturbance because of good suitability as a probable commuting and foraging route for otters from Pitsford reservoir, and good suitability for water voles, amongst other ecological reasons. (See APP-090, para 1.4.10, and it's Appendices maps 9.7.1 and 9.7.8). Reference again to CR2-008 shows that the other fields bordering this watercourse,

AF5, AF6, AF7 and AF12 have been designated either for enhanced existing vegetation or for damp grassland.

I wish to address the confusion that appears to me to surround the access route for construction of solar arrays within the fields AF2, 3 and 4 on the west side of Site A, as this is integral to my argument in favour of removing AF9 from solar array usage. In the Applicant's original documents submitted for examination, APP-444, Figure 13.13 shows access locations for Sites and Cable route corridors for Site A. This clearly shows Access A-2 which is just northeast of the village of Old, on the Broughton Road. However, in REP3-064, the Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan Revision B, in Table 4.1, this Access A-2 on the Broughton Road is only listed for use during the operational phase, not construction.

On the latest revision of the Site A map, (CR2-008) it is clear that a length of the Broughton Road by Old is within the scheme order limits, but confusingly, the access track marked within fields AF1, 2, 3 and 4 does not appear to connect to the road here. However, it also does not connect eastwards across the watercourse to Newland Road (the Quiet Lane), so my question is, how are construction vehicles expected to access fields AF2, 3 and 4 for the erection of solar arrays and the associated works planned? In my previous OFH submission (REP3-114), I questioned why construction access to the west side of Site A was not designated to be from the Broughton Road by Old, to minimise any need to cross Newland Road. Disappointingly, the Applicant's response to my submission (pages 33-39 of REP3-129) did not answer this point at all.

If the Applicant had intended that construction in fields AF2 – 4 would be accessed by crossing Newland Road at Crossing points A-1 (E) to A-1 (W) (REP1-157), then it would be necessary to construct an access route across the ecologically valuable

watercourse already mentioned. However, the Applicant states in APP-046, Ecology and Biodiversity, under Embedded Construction Mitigation Measures, para 9.8.4 that buffers from ecological features are applied according to a set of ecological importance criteria, that buffers shall be 15 metres minimum from all hedgerows, minor watercourses (small stream) etc., that buffers will not contain any array structures, hard standing or electrical hardware, and that protective construction-phase fencing will also observe these buffer distances. Para 9.8.6 states that ‘Internal access/maintenance tracks have also been routed so as to avoid designated ecological buffer zones wherever possible.’

I have looked through the plans for all the other Sites and can find no example of a construction access track crossing an ecologically important watercourse. (See APP 211 – 219 inclusive).

Therefore I believe it is essential for the Applicant to address this issue before the end of the Examination process, that is, they must state clearly in amended documentation and mapping what route they **do** intend to use to construct solar arrays in fields AF2 – 4.

It follows then, that if access for construction for fields AF2 – 4 **has** to be from Access point A-2, the Broughton Road by Old, (as I believe it has to be), then if the very small area of solar arrays in field AF9 were removed from development within the scheme, there would be no need for Crossing points A-1 east and west on the Newland Road at all. So then no permanent access track would be required through the northern end of field AF29 (which has already been removed from solar array use). This field would then benefit from being able to support arable farming in the entire field. Ecological benefits include no longer needing to remove 2 portions of important hedgerow, one between fields

AF29 and AF14, and the other between AF29 and Newland Road for Access A-1 (E) and skylark territories in that field would not have to be disturbed.

Other benefits would include continued food production in AF9 whose soil is all in Agricultural Land Classification 2 (See APP-172).

But most importantly to the local community, the only required disturbance then to Newland Road, the designated Quiet Lane so important for recreation for villagers (as demonstrated in my previous OFH submission and elsewhere), would be the need for the cable route from fields AF2 – 4 to cross to the east side of the Site. But otherwise, there would be no need for any closure or other regular disruption of the use of this road during the construction or maintenance phases. It would help to preserve some measure of tranquillity for users of this resource, and be of great benefit in limiting the very harmful disturbance during construction of the proposed scheme, both to humans and all other wildlife.

I should therefore, respectfully, request that the Examiners recognise the logic of this argument, with it's very small reduction in energy generation set against enormous benefit to local residents, and consider the removal of field AF9 from development in any eventual DCO, if they are minded to grant one.

Many thanks for listening.

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