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To: Green Hill Solar

Subject: Fw: EN010170 Green Hill Solar Farm. Reg no. [REDACTED]

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Too Whom It May Concern

With reference to the question of whether the land occupied by this proposed solar farm can be returned to farming after 60 years I have 3 concerns.

Firstly, there could be considerable compaction of the soil in the setting up of the solar farm and from the foundations of the solar panels themselves. This compaction could be addressed at the end of the period but in the meantime, it would have squashed the life out of the soil for this long period and that will take a much longer time to remedy if at all.

Secondly some areas of the soil under the solar panels will receive no direct rainfall and remain dry for 60 years while other areas will suffer frequent inundation from run off from the solar panels. This will lead to mineral leaching and in some places, this could lead to prolonged water logging. Both these situations will seriously affect the soil life (the complex mixture of humus, fungi, bacteria, and insects etc that make the soil a living organism).

In addition, it will be difficult to remove the foundations of solar panels after so long without taking some quantities of topsoil as well. Their removal would also likely lead to a certain amount of mixing of topsoil and subsoil. Both these factors would affect the future productivity of the soil.

The soil management plan proposed by the developers will face 5 challenges. Firstly, the construction of the project will be limited to the dry months of the year and in the case of a wet period in the spring, summer or autumn months (such as the summer of 2024) it would face long delays. There will therefore be pressure to cut corners in moving soil on days where the moisture level is too high which would then cause damage to the soil conditions. In some of the fields there are banks where the slopes are sometimes of a convex or concave nature and also sloping in two directions. It will be difficult in these situations to remove the topsoil evenly using large machinery.

Thirdly most fields have at least 2 soil types in them and sometimes 3 or more, with a gradation between the types where they meet. These soil types need to be kept separate while stockpiled and put back almost exactly where they came from, otherwise the fields will end up as a complex patchwork of soil types that make subsequent farming difficult. Next the subsoil in many of the fields in areas C, and D is boulder clay, and in area E there are some fields with boulder clay subsoil and some areas with upper lias clay subsoil. These subsoils are even more likely to turn sticky and impassable in wet weather exacerbating the pressure to cut corners.

Lastly all the operations of soil movement followed by the construction of the solar farm with its deep foundations could lead to damage to field drainage systems, this may not become apparent until after the construction of the solar panels and it would be then difficult to remedy the situation until either the panels are replaced or at the end of the project. In the meantime, areas are more likely to suffer from waterlogging.

Even if these challenges are met and the soil management plan is carried out as intended it does not cover the second and third points raised above. Furthermore, the soil management plan treats the soil as an inert material rather than as living matter.

The huge upheavals of removing and returning the soil along with the stockpiling will seriously degrade the life of the soil. This whole process will be carried out at the replacement of solar panels and the decommissioning as well as at the beginning of the development leaving the soil in a poor state for farming at the end of the period.

In conclusion therefore the land will be suitable for farming after 60 if this development is given the go ahead.

Yours Faithful
Richard Callis