

OFH2 – Summary of oral representation

Sporle with Palgrave Parish Council represented by [REDACTED] - [REDACTED]

1. We are entering a 60-year experiment – We do not have sufficient knowledge as to the impact of such a project as the Drove on biodiversity and soils.
2. The arguments in the section on soils in ISH2 over proportions of BMV land in the project are largely immaterial when considering the threat of climate change and our ability as a nation to grow our own food, particularly when our current imported sources literally dry up or are not exported because they are needed locally.
3. We may have stable self sufficiency around 60% presently but that is no means certain that will remain the case. (We currently grow around 50% of our vegetables).
4. The comparison of ALC from the 1970's with predicted and actual surveyed ALC reveals the importance of irrigation across the site.
5. This enables what would have been grade 3b or grade 4 land to become grade 3a or 2 or even 1 in some parts.
6. It was only in the 70's and 80's were large areas of Norfolk farmland started being irrigated. This allowed land rearing sheep and growing malting barley and sugar beet to grow high grade vegetable crops as seen currently on the site.
7. Currently in the light of long-term poor farm profitability, it is understandable that the landowners are willing to see their land used for solar development.
8. In the light of the current geopolitical threats and the increasing problem of climate change where we are going to need winter stored water to enable crops to grow, taking land out of crop production where there is the opportunity to irrigate does not make sense. Therefore, this proposed solar development is in the wrong place as this land can be used to continue to provide the nation's food when we can find other ways and places to generate the energy we need.
9. In the item on soils in ISH2 the claim was made by the Applicant that the 54% of BMV land contained within the site was not excessive because it was less than the predicted 94% of land in Norfolk being BMV. To make this claim is plainly wrong when comparing this particular site of 2000 acres and the whole of Norfolk. This is shown on Plate 11-45 in the ES chapter 11 on soils which shows the particular predicted areas in different colours for differing predicted ALC. Broadland and the Fens cannot be compared on this basis with High Norfolk where the site is.
10. On a county wide basis there is a reason why the predicted ALC is 94% for Norfolk. This is because of the investment in their land and technology by Norfolk farmers over the past 50 years to produce the nation's food.