



Planning Inspectorate
Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Hearing Transcript

Project:	East Pye Solar
Hearing:	Recording of Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH1) – Part 2
Date:	15 September 2026

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00:00:32:03 - 00:00:33:14

Hey. He's not speaking.

00:00:33:16 - 00:00:35:02

I don't think he's is he on the list?

00:00:37:18 - 00:00:41:18

Okay. Once again, thank you very much. Please take your seats. Thank you.

00:00:45:25 - 00:00:49:13

Thank you very much. I now call the next eight speakers.

00:00:51:06 - 00:01:04:19

Dan, David Fine, Loretta Dunmore, Kim Dyke, Emma Harold, Jane Andrews, Jane Shearer and John Clark, please come forward.

00:01:18:27 - 00:01:48:28

Thank you very much. I just wonder we have one, two, three, four, five, six. One to come. Understood? My apologies. Thank you. Thank you. Okay. So first to speak, have David Fine. Mr. Fine? Thank you, Mr.

00:01:49:00 - 00:01:51:10

Fine. You have three minutes starting now. Thank you.

00:02:00:08 - 00:02:33:11

Right. Good afternoon. My name is David Fine, and we live in Pullen Market. I have four questions to ask the planning inspectorate, and the first is about consultation. Although under the footprint of East Pie Solar, a cable route corridor runs through the parish, we only found in Pullen Market about this in May when Kay picked it up on local Facebook. It left her in tears and me fuming. I still am. I did some digging in the planning inspectorate library, in particular, consultation.

00:02:33:28 - 00:02:53:08

February twenty twenty three, South Norfolk District Council brought to their notice that Pullen Market had hardly been considered by East Pie Solar. Like Tivischel, that's still true today three and a half years later. The question is dead simple. How are the examining authority going to rectify this situation?

00:02:54:24 - 00:03:24:28

The next question is safety. The key safety area is lithium ion batteries. At the moment, this is placed under community health and well-being. However, lithium ion safety is universal, be it in an island green power proposal in Australia or EDF Norwich across the road. Clearly, these are two distinct areas with separate expertise, etcetera. They are best treated as to such ensure full and a proper attention to each.

00:03:25:05 - 00:03:56:14

Will the examining authority examine safety separately? Third question is scope. There are two other schemes nearby going through the planning mill, Tasway Energy Park abuts East Pie Solar, while Ecopower Suffolk is just down the road. As next door neighbors impacting the entire area, will the examining authority include them all in their thinking if they have not already done so. Fourth, archaeology.

00:03:57:03 - 00:04:27:26

Sad to say, I'm a professional archaeologist. I've made it clear to the inspectorate that East Pie Solar is bank center or the bank center of a classic and unique medieval landscape. The applicant's archaeological consultants failed to pick up on this. For example, the threat isn't just the cable route corridors, It's the medieval access road such as those in Saxon and Nethergate. To get to them, this isn't the place to go into detail.

00:04:28:08 - 00:04:38:26

Will the examining authority refer this part of the application to impartial specialists? I'm not one of them, but can point you in the right direction. That's it.

00:04:39:25 - 00:04:55:02

Fine. Thank you, indeed. I'm not in a position to answer the questions here and now. I wonder if you'd be willing if you can please submit those questions specifically by deadline one, would be appreciated. Willing to do that.

00:04:55:04 - 00:04:56:08

Yes, no problem.

00:04:56:10 - 00:05:07:24

But again, thank you for your submission. All noted. Next to speak is Loretta Dunmore. Miss Dunmore, thank you. You have three minutes starting now. Thank you.

00:05:13:00 - 00:05:49:09

Sorry. Sorry. Loretta Dunmore, Great Malton. Today, I want to explain what this development means for people in their everyday lives and the harm that is already being felt across our communities. Over many months, residents have faced repeated approaches from developers with interest in seeking land around our village, not only East Pie, but because of East Pie. The effect on people's well-being has become impossible to ignore. One resident who has lived in the same house since he was six months old received repeated letters.

00:05:49:11 - 00:06:22:24

Week after week, they continued to arrive. By the time he tried to explain the situation, he was in tears and shaken with distress. Another resident finds comfort in watching a recorded endangered swifts that nest near her home. With the best proposed close to her garden, she fears these nests may one day disappear. An elderly couple came to my door determined to stand up to their village. Days later, they returned exhausted, frightened, and in tears, overwhelmed by the scour and complexity of what they were facing.

00:06:23:13 - 00:06:59:12

These are not isolated examples. Residents face the National Grid substation as a neighbor, creating a profound sense of intrusion. Parents worry about the impact on children's health, and many fear fire risks living close to the electrical installation. Great Malton has no shop, post office doctor surgery, or school. People must travel for work, health care, education, and shopping. Road closures, diversions, and construction traffic would make these journeys harder, longer, and more expensive.

00:07:00:23 - 00:07:42:25

Great Malton has no park or formal green space. Our public rights of way are where we walk, we ride, share family time. Closures and diversions would remove safe and force people onto the narrow roads without pavements. Historic routes, including hundred lane and narrow gateway linking to what was the medieval village of Little Malton, now known as the sanctuary field, would be permanently lost. The impact could not end when construction sends what is currently a landscape of open fields, wildlife, and rural tranquility will become dominated by permanent major industrial infrastructure.

00:07:44:07 - 00:08:11:15

Finally, many residents have found the consultation and examination process confusing, stressful, and emotionally draining. Simply trying to have their voices heard has become a burden in itself. I asked the planning inspector to consider not only the technical evidence, but also the people who must live with the outcome because that impact is not just a future possibility. It's already being felt today.

00:08:12:15 - 00:08:34:16

Mr. Dunmore, very many thanks. Thank you for your submission. Just for you to note that this coming Thursday there will be an issue specific hearing where we will be addressing questions linked to transport and access. I note I you gave mention to the your view of the impacts on temporary road closures. We do hope to raise some questions on that matter at the issue specific hearing this coming Thursday.

00:08:34:18 - 00:08:35:05

Okay. Thank

00:08:35:07 - 00:08:43:18

you. Thank you. Next person to speak is Kim Miss Dyke, have three minutes. Thank you.

00:08:47:11 - 00:08:48:05

Good

00:08:50:22 - 00:09:24:17

afternoon. My name is Kim Dyke. I'm a retired nurse, a resident of and shop parish councilor and a member of Block East Pie Action Group. I'm speaking today specifically to address the human health and the well-being impact of the proposed East Pie solar industrial development around the community of shots and surrounding area. I want to direct the inspector's attention to procedural contradiction in the application documents. In the equality impact assessment, developer explicitly concedes that, quote, the stress and the anxiety caused by this may impact the mental health of individuals affected.

00:09:24:26 - 00:10:00:07

Despite formally admitting this localized public health liability, the applicant then systematically downplays its severity. In their policy compliance document, dismissed they the long term impact on human health as negligible. We've they refer to this community anxiety as a temporary secondary friction caused by the uncertainty of the planning process, and they further reduced this to it's a standard side effect of any large scale project. They ultimately brush this off by saying this will disappear when the construction is over.

00:10:00:19 - 00:10:36:03

The environmental scientist professor Glenn Oldrich, has coined the term, if I can pronounce it, solastagia, which is increasingly recognized, including in governmental health guidance, to describe the distress, the grief, and the anxiety caused by unwanted, radical environmental changes happening around one, thereby compounding a total sense of helplessness. This makes the concept of solar stagia itself, I feel, an objective planning compliancy consideration, one so far ignored by the applicant.

00:10:36:23 - 00:11:10:27

The health and mental well-being of neighbors, friends, and visitors to this historic and picturesque era were irrefutably and chronically be damaged by the erection of one of the largest solar industrial sites in the country on our very doorsteps. The applicant's assertion that their remedy for our solar stagia is simply the use of hedges to screen us is completely disingenuous. These will take fifteen years minimum to grow and will never obscure multi acre installations of this type. Furthermore, this project undermines national public health strategy.

00:11:11:06 - 00:11:45:29

Official NHS England policy recognizes that high quality green infrastructure as a core preventative health care asset. So access to tranquil, biodiverse spaces saves the NHS an estimated, quotable, two point one billion annually by mitigating clinical depression and anxiety. By encircling Shotsun's public rights of ways with three and a half meter high security fencing and utility infrastructure, the applicant threatens key local clinical pathways, specifically the NHS green social prescribing.

00:11:46:16 - 00:12:17:16

This health and well-being issue is compounded by a stark double standard. In the commitments register, the applicant outlines multiple binding health and safety protocols to protect the transient construction workforce from the environmental stress laws. Yet they deny these same rigorous protections to the permanent residential community who face many threats to their health from, for example, continuous low frequency noise pollution, and continuous unquantified safety risks from best particular fires.

00:12:17:18 - 00:12:28:11

Miss Tighe, thank you very much indeed. Perhaps two points to ask if I could. You quoted an environmental scientist. I wonder whether you could submit details of the publication.

00:12:28:13 - 00:12:28:28

I can.

00:12:29:00 - 00:12:39:08

And that quotation is included by deadline one please. Yes. You also mentioned official NHS policy. And again, I wonder whether you could submit details of the policy by deadline one, please.

00:12:39:10 - 00:12:39:25

I can.

00:12:39:27 - 00:12:52:02

Thank you very much indeed. Thank you. Thank you. Ms. Tagg, thank you. Next to speak is Emma Harald. Ms. Harald, if you could put on your microphone please. And you have three minutes starting now. Thank you.

00:12:52:24 - 00:13:23:27

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good afternoon. I am Doctor. Emma Harrells. I live in Stoke Hurley Cross, an adjacent village to the proposed East Pie scheme. With a long standing family connection to this land of generations and to the community. I strongly object to east to the east pie scheme and ask you to kindly consider the accumulative impact and the irreversible harm this would cause. We should pay attention to how the world has moved on since the original application.

00:13:24:18 - 00:13:59:25

I understand the need for renewable energy, but we consider this would be expanded to rooftops without upheaval and sacrificing productive farmland. The village communities of South Norfolk live here, and our lives are intertwined with the landscape. I have issued that there's an impact on people with the distress, those who may lose their homes, those who may have to move and don't want to. I have issued that the proposed scheme would industrialize a landscape that is attractive, agriculturally productive, and historically significant.

00:14:00:24 - 00:14:15:01

Particularly, the historic route the pi of road, the a one forty, whose significance few know and whose legacy of a thousand years back to the Romans, the proposal overlooks. This is a living history lesson of Roman times.

00:14:16:20 - 00:14:47:09

But the proposed scheme bisects the historic route of the Pye Road, the a one forty, and is named after it, is in my view inappropriate and disregards the area's legacy. It commercializes or misrepresents our heritage. I I have issued that the impact to the of the impact to the rich ecosystems of this area, its delicate natural habitats of streams, hedgerows, woods, and narrow lanes, It is valued for its tranquility and heritage.

00:14:47:24 - 00:15:28:08

The proposed scheme is unsuitable and would harm this attractive rural area. Environmental concerns are paramount. The loss and disruption of natural habitats by proposed scheme would negatively impact on local wildlife. Chalk streams are globally rare, established ecosystems born ten thousand years ago in the ice age. Sixty two of Norfolk's councilors demanded urgent action to protect shawke streams in twenty twenty five. Any alteration to surrounding land use risks degrading water quality, flow patterns, and the habitats that the wildlife depend on.

00:15:29:00 - 00:15:55:14

Third issue is that there is no credible evidence for the decommissioning of solar that can be achieved effectively, which risks our food security. I respectfully urge the planning inspectorate to realize the cumulative impact of this proposal to reject it in favor of better alternatives that protect South Norfolk's heritage, its human population and the countryside. Thank you for your attention.

00:15:56:01 - 00:16:00:27

Ms. Harald, perhaps Doctor. Harald, thank you very much indeed. Doctor. Harald,

00:16:02:15 - 00:16:13:17

you gave mention to my historic roots. I wonder whether you could provide some more details that you were alluding to in your submission by deadline one, Thank you very much indeed. Thank you.

00:16:16:23 - 00:16:23:14

Forgive me if I got the name incorrect. I have a name of Jane Shearer. My apologies, sir. Can I have your name, please?

00:16:23:21 - 00:16:24:20

Stuart Shearer.

00:16:24:22 - 00:16:31:17

Stuart, Mr. Shearer, thank you very much indeed. Mr. Shearer, you have three minutes. You. Yes, I'd just

00:16:31:19 - 00:16:43:20

like to say, overall, we've got written submissions that object to the scheme overall. We'd like to highlight Adult Hamlet, is Horse Greene, Shots from St. Mary. The law

00:16:45:26 - 00:17:19:22

requires you to give considerable importance and weight to any harm to the settings of these listed buildings. The National Planning Policy Framework requires clear and convincing a justification for any such harm. That justification has not been provided by East Pie Solar. Their site eight sits one point two miles to our east. It's four point five meter high panels will be highly visible from these historic footpaths around our homes and churches within literally minutes of our doorsteps or less than minutes. They've also made two serious errors, which sounds like they have on many other aspects here today.

00:17:19:24 - 00:17:53:17

Two serious errors. First in Appendix seven point four, the visual receptor on our ridge at Halls Green is listed as a commercial Holly Lodge called Highfield Lodge. It doesn't exist. The property actually is one of our neighbors residences, Highfield House sitting within the heritage cluster. East Pies own master plan maps then place this lodge in Brook over a mile away. The result is that the most sensitive residential heritage receptor they say near site A has been erased from the visual assessment entirely.

00:17:53:26 - 00:18:24:16

The second error, the developer claims visual impact on Hall's Green is insignificant. Yet elsewhere in its own documents admits that glimpses and glimmers of the panels will be visible from the footpaths of our grade two star listed church. That's a direct contradiction. And admission of a glimpse is admission of an unmitigated line of sight. Table seven point four lists twenty one assessed viewpoints on-site seven and eight. Hall's green does not even appear in a single one. The screening doesn't work.

00:18:24:26 - 00:18:55:01

The proposed screening that they say is going to happen is at the valley bottom, only three meters high. We're at about Hawes Green is about thirty meters and Site A is at forty two meters well above, so you will be able to see it. Read request please. One, the applicant corrects high field errors. Two, verified topic graphical survey is conducted from St. Mary's Church to give site eight to prove the screening mathematics, which we don't think works.

00:18:55:11 - 00:19:20:11

And three, an accompanied site visit by the inspectorate from Hawes Green. To summarize what East Pie has actually done or not done, they misidentified a home as a holiday home on our road. They then placed the same property in the wrong location. They acknowledged glimpses of a grade two star church and called it insignificant. They proposed hedges which don't provide adequate mitigation.

00:19:21:20 - 00:19:37:04

Thank you. Sure. Thank you, indeed. Thank you for the submission. I'm just looking through a representation, I believe, on your behalf. You've raised quite a number of points in the documents you were reading from. Would you be willing to submit that document please by deadline one? Yes. That's very helpful. Thank you.

00:19:46:07 - 00:19:51:08

Next to speak is John Clark. Mr. Clark, microphone on. Thank you.

00:19:51:10 - 00:20:24:01

Thank you. Yes. I'm John Clark. I'd like to address concerns as to the suitability of proposed construction routes with possible damage to listed buildings and threats to wildlife and the residents' welfare. We've enjoyed living here for forty nine years. The lanes and public paths are popular with walkers, cyclists, horse riders, and a part of the Boudreka sorry, Boudreka Way National Trail, the Workhouse Circular Route, and the Rebellion Cycle Route.

00:20:24:24 - 00:21:12:19

The inspector should seek evidence that these activities have been taken into account. I would like to request that Lodge Road is visited in person. Historic grade two listed building with significant historic burial grounds, which are situated very close to the narrow lane Lodge Road. In recent years, the inspector rejected a planning appeal that was further away than this proposed solar site and said, looking to the north is a listed historic former Quaker meeting house with large burial grounds, a place of permanent peace and quiet for both the living and the dead for over three hundred and fifty years.

00:21:13:06 - 00:21:54:22

Like other residents of listed buildings, we have not seen any provisions have been made to inspect our house or put legal protections in place before a decision is made. I would like that address, please. Lastly, the inspector should seek evidence that considers the very likely loss of value of our properties, more details and proof that security lights will not be triggered at night by wildlife. Protection of our dark skies are so important to the nocturnal insects and animals and to ours and everybody else's personal enjoyment.

00:21:55:04 - 00:22:25:17

And three, how residents and wildlife will be impacted by the ambient noise, construction noise that will be emitted, and the use of security cameras that will likely result in major wildlife loss of wildlife and raise significant mental health concerns. Be very pleased to invite the inspectors to visit our home in Lodge Road and the surrounding area, which was not done on their recent observation drive.

00:22:25:19 - 00:22:27:09

Thank you for listening to me.

00:22:27:11 - 00:22:44:07

Mister Clark, thank you indeed. In respect of your request for a visit, I understand you're requesting the examining authority to visit Lodge Road. Am I correct? Yes. Mr. Clarke, can you please put that request, if you will, by deadline one? Just make that request in writing, please, so it's on record. It's entered into the examination?

00:22:44:09 - 00:22:45:08

Certainly. Thank you.

00:22:45:15 - 00:23:11:15

And just briefly on that, could the applicant just take note of that and add it into the as they're doing the itinerary for deadline one, if they can take note of that and add it into the draft itinerary, please? Mister Scott, there's one more question for me. You mentioned the planning appeal decision. If you have a copy of that, you can also send to us or at least for you. Yes. A reference for it with the details of it, but preferably the actual copy of it, then, obviously, we could have a look at that.

00:23:11:19 - 00:23:12:25

Okay. I'll do that.

00:23:12:27 - 00:23:23:15

Thank you. Mr. Clarke, many thanks. Thank you, Mr. Clarke. The next person to speak is Jane Andrews. Is Andrew's microphone on? Thank you.

00:23:23:17 - 00:23:24:07

Please hold.

00:23:24:09 - 00:23:26:23

You'll have three minutes starting now. Thank you.

00:23:26:25 - 00:23:57:19

Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Jane Andrews. I was born and raised in Charlton and have now lived in Topcroft for over thirty years. I have lived in the area affected by these proposals for all my life, so I know its landscape well. Of course, the area has changed during my lifetime. New homes and buildings have appeared, but its essential rural character has survived. East Pai would change that on an unprecedented scale.

00:23:58:19 - 00:24:31:06

This is a distinctive landscape of open rolling hills and deep valleys, unusual in Norfolk and still remarkably unspoiled. The development would be visible from every approach to my village and would line the routes I use every day. It would affect walking, cycling, horse riding, and fundamentally alter the experience of living here. Hedging cannot screen an industrial scale development across undulating countryside.

00:24:31:13 - 00:25:10:10

It takes years to establish. It's less effective in winter and cannot protect the long views that define this landscape. I'm also deeply concerned about wildlife. The area supports valuable habitats and many species, including a herd of between thirty and fifty red deer whose movement through Topcroft I have followed with great joy. How will fencing and development on this scale affect their established roots and those of all the other wildlife? Mature oak trees cannot simply be replaced by saplings.

00:25:11:04 - 00:25:45:07

Some are centuries old, supporting complex ecosystems, helping to manage water, solar erosion, and wind. Any proposed removal must be properly justified, not just disguised by promises of replacement planting, which will take generations to provide comparable benefits. There are also serious questions about agricultural land and food security. Norfolk's productive farmland has supplied crops for centuries.

00:25:45:19 - 00:26:23:08

Removing a large area from food production for decades should require compelling justification, particularly when far greater use could be made of rooftops, car parks, and new housing to name a few. I remain concerned about flooding and erosion, construction traffic. I'll say no more on that

because everyone else has spoken very well on that. Planning policy speaks of sustainable development, which meets environmental and social needs and provides a good quality of life for existing and future generations.

00:26:24:00 - 00:26:54:05

It also seeks to protect landscape character, biodiversity, and local amenity. I have yet to see convincing evidence that the harm East Pye would cause can genuinely be mitigated. I, therefore, ask the examining authority, planning, and East Pye to listen seriously to those who know and live within this landscape and to please reconsider this development. Thank you.

00:26:54:18 - 00:27:08:06

Ms. Andrews, thank you. I have no questions, I know you've slightly overrun, so I hope you understand. Looking to my colleagues, we have no questions. Ms. Andrews, thank you indeed. To the seven speakers, thank you very much for your contributions. Thank you. You may return to your seats. Thank you.

00:27:27:11 - 00:27:48:25

Ladies and gentlemen, we'll just make one slight amendment to the running order, and I hope you will understand why. We've had a request from one of the virtual speakers to speak earlier than scheduled for reasons of time zones, which the speaker may wish to explain briefly. But I ask Anne Marie Minhan, are you hearing me? Can you hear me?

00:27:49:00 - 00:27:51:02

Yes, indeed. Mr. Machibou, I'm here.

00:27:51:23 - 00:28:02:20

Ms. Minhan, thank you very much. We've granted your request to speak a little earlier. I hope that's appropriate. Ms. Minhan, Amiri Minhan, you'll have three minutes starting now. Thank you.

00:28:03:19 - 00:28:37:13

Yeah. Thank you for accommodating me. I'm in Hong Kong, everybody, so it's a bit late here. So I'd like to speak both professionally and personally. I'm Anne Marie Menahan. I'm professor of nutrition and genetics at UEA with an interest in local and national food security. We import fifty percent of our food in the UK, including eighty five percent of our fruit, which is an extremely precarious position to be in given the current global geopolitical landscape and the rapidly declining climatic conditions, which are less conducive to food production.

00:28:38:11 - 00:29:23:00

The UK's Joint Intelligence Committee report published in January twenty twenty six entitled global biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse, and national security stated that food supply is identified as the UK's single greatest vulnerability. Norfolk is in the top three counties in the UK for food production. The twenty thousand acres or so of prime land, which have either already been developed or proposed to be developed for solar farms around Norfolk would produce about three terawatts per year of electricity, which equates to about one percent of our national electricity needs in the UK.

00:29:23:18 - 00:29:59:07

That same land would produce about two point five billion portions of fruits and vegetables, which equates to a not insignificant three percent of our annual consumption. In twenty twenty four, the then environmental secretary, Steve Barclay, in a solar versus food securities analysis stated that the best agricultural land should be prioritized for food production and that solar farms should not normally displace the UK's highest quality food producing land when lower value land and nonagricultural sites are available.

00:29:59:19 - 00:30:32:09

Therefore, in my opinion, we shouldn't be decommissioning even one acre of good agricultural land for the production of electricity by solar. On a personal level, we're really we're residents of Saxony and Neva Gate, and we're really devastated and petrified by what's being proposed. We live in the opposite side of the war memorial to mister Hazel and and missus Pai who spoke earlier. We're right on the corner of Churchill. Our entire property is within one meter of the road.

00:30:34:20 - 00:30:54:24

The road through Saxony and Nethergate is not ARB road. It's a local access road. The AILs coming through the village late at night will be within about one meter of our bedroom. And if any of those are to veer off course, even slightly, we'll be taken out in the middle of the night while we lay lie awake.

00:30:56:22 - 00:31:29:29

Another issue which was brought up earlier was the issue of footpath. The center of the village is connected with all our village amenities, things like the church, the primary school, the scout hut, the playing fields, the allotments by a pavement which goes up the side of Churchill. The pavement will need to go if the road is gonna be made wide enough for the AILs. So that will mean we'll all need to basically go up the street or go up the road, which which in in my opinion is lethal, especially for kids trying to go to school in the morning.

00:31:30:13 - 00:31:58:01

So I guess I have to interrupt. Apologies. Crossed a few minutes. Perhaps some points of clarification. You gave mention to a twenty twenty six report. I wonder whether you could submit details of the reports by deadline one, And you also mentioned a range of percentages, fifty percent, eighty five percent and three percent. I wonder again if you could clarify the source of that information, by deadline one. That would be much appreciated.

00:31:58:15 - 00:32:00:00

Absolutely. Thank And

00:32:00:19 - 00:32:07:13

regarding the AIR movement, it's something we will be looking to explore at an issue specific hearing this Thursday.

00:32:08:10 - 00:32:09:13

Thank you very much.

00:32:09:16 - 00:32:11:04

Professor Minhan, thank you very much.

00:32:12:27 - 00:32:22:29

Thank you. Just to confirm, I wonder if three speakers I think are present, but I want to check if that is the case. Is Amanda Dunham present?

00:32:25:17 - 00:32:31:29

No hands raised. Is Richard Dunham present? Richard Dunham? Thank you.

00:32:33:17 - 00:33:01:13

And Martin Wilkinson? Okay. We're ready to call the next speakers. So can the following eight people please come forward to the speaking table: Richard Dunham Martin Wilkinson Morisette Wilkinson Councillor K. Mason Billig Mark English, Olive English, Sue Laws. Please come forward. Thank you.

00:33:25:22 - 00:33:31:03

Please forgive me. I've lost the ability to count. Can Alison Reid also please come forward?

00:33:40:24 - 00:33:54:26

Thank you very much indeed. The first person to speak will be Richard Dunham. Just a reminder to everyone, please pop on your microphones before you speak. Thank you very much. Mr Dunham, your three minutes starts now. Thank you.

00:33:55:03 - 00:34:29:22

Good afternoon. My name is Richard Dunham. What I have to say today is very personal to me and my family. However, I know it will resonate with every other homeowner and family affected by this scheme. We chose it very deliberately as the place to bring up our family because of where it is, because it sits in open countryside, because it feels rural and unspoiled. That setting is not just a nice view, it is a huge part of the reason we bought the house in the first place, and East Pai Solar would change all that.

00:34:30:21 - 00:34:40:27

We would go from open countryside to living beside a huge industrial energy development, not just on one side, but on three sides of the property.

00:34:42:17 - 00:35:18:28

So I would simply ask you to imagine this was your home. Imagine someone drawing a line around the fields next to your house and telling you that an industrial scale energy infrastructure could be built there. How would that make you feel? What would it do to the way you enjoy your home? What would it do to your plans for the future? And what if you wanted to move? That last point is very real for us. For the last fourteen months, we have tried to sell, and the uncertainty around East Pie Solar has made that harder.

00:35:19:12 - 00:35:49:13

A future buyer is going to ask exactly the same questions we asked when we bought it. If that countryside is replaced by industrial infrastructure, why would the next buyer choose it for the same

reasons we did? And even if we can sell, what happens if the value of our home has been materially reduced because of a development we had no say in? Who carries that loss? Because at the moment, it feels like the answer is us, And that doesn't feel fair.

00:35:50:10 - 00:36:20:22

The claimed benefits, just to be clear, I don't think there are any benefits, but the claimed benefits of this scheme may be spread widely, but it's permanent. But the permanent harm is concentrated on a small number of people who happen to live in its path. That is why I've asked the examining authorities a visit, which are now separate properties that make up the original farm. My request is simple. Please come and see it for yourselves.

00:36:20:24 - 00:36:42:16

Look at the homes. Look at the countryside, and imagine what it feel like if this were your home and this development was going on in your back garden. Maps can show you where the development is, but they cannot show you what it feels like to have it imposed on your home, your family, and your future. You.

00:36:42:28 - 00:37:05:12

Mr. Denham, thank you for that very personal submission noted. Can I just confirm, have you put a request for that site visit into the Yes? Thank you very much indeed. Thank you kindly. Mr. Don, thank you for your submission. The next person to speak is Martin Wilkinson. Mr. Wilkinson, put your microphone on. Thank you. Afternoon. Your three minutes starts now. Thank you, sir.

00:37:05:14 - 00:37:29:09

I would like to concentrate on two matters concerning the adequacy of the assessment and mitigation. My first concern is the specific detail, which has been mentioned by many people today. Across the a project of this scale, there are hundreds of individual impacts and interactions. Yet repeatedly, if you go through the documents,

00:37:32:01 - 00:38:13:08

there are nothing but broadly generic responses and repeats, very little that is specific to the impact at a particular site and even less detail on what that site contains, particularly when you go away from the major panel installations or the best when you get to the lesser impacted areas. There is no information and just a generic response. My concern is that identifying a mitigation type, which they've done, is not the same as demonstrating that a particular impact has actually been understood and adequately mitigated.

00:38:13:24 - 00:38:55:00

There's even responses within the system that are similar to other projects that have gone on in the UK. An impact that appears acceptable when considered individually may become materially different when combined with several adjacent impacts, and there's no reference to this. So I would ask the examining authorities to test whether the environmental statement and associated management plans genuinely demonstrate impact mitigation and cumulative effects and ask where is the record of their visits and observations for the specific elements that have been impacted because they don't exist.

00:38:55:11 - 00:39:29:04

There should be a list of, I went to that site, I saw this, and as a result, we believe this, and that's not there. I think the second concern is that Britain now has a substantial and growing body of operational solar. We're no longer dealing with an entirely new technology. We we, therefore, have a real world experience of landscaping, tree and hedge planting, ecological measures, rights public of way, drainage, and so on. We've done it all before. Some measures succeed, others fail.

00:39:29:23 - 00:39:46:26

So I would ask the examining authority a very simple question. Where has the applicant demonstrated that mitigation proposed for East Pye has been informed by what has actually succeeded or failed in the past on other projects to avoid them making the same mistakes again.

00:39:48:12 - 00:40:09:03

My concern is not whether the application contains the required headings or management plans. It's whether those documents demonstrate the individual impacts of actually of interest to East Pie. I personally don't believe they have. I think they tick boxes, and they have no engagement with the local communities at all. They just do what they have to do to make you happy.

00:40:10:02 - 00:40:22:23

Mr Wilkinson, thank you very much indeed. For you to be aware, we will be discussing the management plans at the issue specific hearing this coming Thursday. Your comments noted and are helpful. Thank you indeed.

00:40:24:10 - 00:40:26:29

Next person to speak, Morisette Wilkinson.

00:40:28:14 - 00:41:00:21

Hello. Yeah. I'm Morisette Wilkinson, an interested party. I'm horrified to be here fighting for something that I thought all Britons held sacred. Our countryside is vital for our health and well-being, as many have said. It's our legacy, all that we leave behind for our children. What is being proposed will enclose some of Norfolk's most beautiful villages in a dystopian landscape. It will not only result in years of construction of people for residents, reduce the value of their properties, and for many, ruin the landscapes that they hold dear.

00:41:00:26 - 00:41:44:00

It will damage businesses during construction and longer term, reduce tourism. Who will want to walk Boudicca Way when it's surrounded by security fencing and cameras? Many of the affected areas have been funded by our money to create habitats for endangered species. How can we now consider ripping up those habitats without a thought for the investment that's been previously made by the public? Why is it acceptable to sacrifice the beauty and nature of this area to satisfy carbon accounting targets? There are no guarantees that these targets will benefit the environment as we're at the mercy of other countries taking heed, but we would certainly guarantee that our local environment will be irreparably harmed.

00:41:46:00 - 00:42:33:13

How is it right to transfer power and profit to multinational corporations when our rural community suffers the physical consequences? This technology is already outdated. Elsewhere, forward thinking

countries are banning solar from farmland and using modern techniques to accommodate solar in windows, fencing, tramlines, rooftops. This proposal includes our best and most versatile land, something that the solar road map said we should not do. Are we really going to risk food security without investigating what technology is already out there that makes it unnecessary to do so? As an equestrian, the future for me, if this goes ahead, sees my local bridleways closed due to massive compounds and small country lanes full of massive construction vehicles.

00:42:33:22 - 00:43:01:15

What about our safety? This makes no sense to anyone other than the foreign investors set to make a fortune on the back of our misery. I respectfully ask the examining authority to look beyond the scale of the proposal on paper and consider the permanent human, environmental and safety consequences for the communities expected to live with it and to please ensure that East Pye have met their obligation to consider all lower grade alternatives.

00:43:02:04 - 00:43:29:28

Miss Wilkerson, thank you indeed. Perhaps two points of clarification. You gave mention to a number of habitats. Didn't list them. I wonder could you provide details of those habitats by deadline one? Is that acceptable? Thank you. And that's it. A question, yes, Horse Rider. Could you indicate by in a description or a plan the routes, the bridal ways that you use regularly? If you use bridal ways or do you use

00:43:30:05 - 00:43:30:20

I have

00:43:30:27 - 00:43:31:12

new one on the

00:43:31:14 - 00:43:50:08

bridal way. Boudica Way. It's part of Boudica Way. And the proposal includes a compound at the bottom of our private driveway, which is part of that. It's a byway, actually. And the bridal way opposite will be, obviously, massively affected if the compound is placed there.

00:43:50:19 - 00:43:54:12

That's helpful. Thank you, indeed. Thank you for your submission. I'm grateful. Thank you.

00:44:00:16 - 00:44:07:23

Next person to speak is Councillor Kay Mason Billig. Councillor Mason Billig, your three minutes starts now. Thank you.

00:44:07:25 - 00:44:40:12

Thank you very much. I'm councillor Kay Mason Billig. I'm a county district and a parish councillor, and I represent many residents, particularly in the brook and ceiling areas who are affected by the scheme. I'm also the former leader of Norfolk County Council. I opposed this scheme when I was leader, and I still do. I also am not opposed to renewable energy, but I oppose Norfolk being expected to carry a disproportionate burden of national energy infrastructure with too little consideration for the people who actually live here. This is an enormous scheme, and it cannot be considered in isolation.

00:44:40:19 - 00:45:12:09

We know about Norwich to Tilbury pylons, other solar development, substations, battery storage, cabling, and associated infrastructure. Taken together, this is the industrialization of our countryside. There's no doubt about that. Our rural roads and lanes were never designed for years of construction traffic. Our villages will have noise, congestion, disruption, and will be left with damaged roads and infrastructure long after the construction is finished. And what does Norfolk actually receive in return for this? We provide the land. We lose productive agricultural fields.

00:45:12:11 - 00:45:55:23

We take the panels, substations, and batteries. Our communities enjoy the disruption, and our landscape has changed. Yet there's still no clear direct benefit to Norfolk homes and business businesses from any of the electricity that will be generated here. Traditionally, we have struggled to receive our fair share of infrastructure investment, and now we're expected to shoulder additional costs as well. Battery storage itself requires specialist emergency planning, training and response from Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service. Unless those additional costs are met in full by developers, it's Norfolk taxpayers who will ultimately pick up the bill, and why should they? And I question the claim that the development of this scale can simply be labeled as environmentally essential, and therefore, it should not

00:45:55:25 - 00:45:56:10

be

00:45:56:12 - 00:46:35:03

questioned. Alongside any benefits, we need to balance the downsides, the environmental footprint, manufacturing thousands of solar panels, where and how they're going to be manufactured, their transportation, their replacement, and ultimately, disposal. This development should operate for around sixty years, and we're told that afterwards, this land will simply return to agriculture. After six decades, how can anyone guarantee that? Who guarantees the condition of the soil? Who guarantees that sufficient money actually be will available to remove and responsibly devote dispose of all this infrastructure? Those fields and hedge hedgerows are habitats, not empty spaces waiting for development.

00:46:35:17 - 00:47:02:08

The bats, the Barbastell bats, actually stopped the Norwich Western Link in its tracks, and Natural England objected to it. So environmental protection cannot be applied selectively. If the presence of a and conservation of protected can fundamentally constrain one major infrastructure project in Norfolk, then the same rigorous standards must apply to any energy project. Please don't dismiss local people who raise these questions merely as NIMBYs.

00:47:04:18 - 00:47:22:25

Mr. Mason Billick, thank you for your submission to my colleagues. Do have any questions? Mr. Mason Billick, you've made reference to Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service. Do you have any perhaps documentation or minutes or correspondence that would assist the examination in respect of your conversations with them?

00:47:22:27 - 00:47:27:19

I'm absolutely sure I have and I have spoken to the Chief FARA Officer at length about this.

00:47:29:02 - 00:47:31:14

Can you submit by deadline one if those documents exist?

00:47:31:16 - 00:47:32:11

I can.

00:47:32:13 - 00:47:33:17

Thank you indeed. I'm very great.

00:47:36:03 - 00:47:43:18

Thank you. The next person to speak is Mark English. Mr. English, microphone on. And you have three minutes. Thank you, indeed.

00:47:43:20 - 00:47:44:10

Thank you.

00:47:44:27 - 00:48:19:10

I have many objections to this and similar schemes, but most have been highlighted by others today. So I wish to encourage the inquiry to look at something of which I've heard nothing, namely the balance between providing biodiversity and fire prevention at the sites. The fear of fire caused by the installations is very real, and that threat must be addressed. But I also wish the inquiry to look at the risk of fire originating off-site spreading into the installations and how East Pie intends to protect their investment in such events, whilst at the same time balancing this with their biodiversity promises.

00:48:20:08 - 00:48:54:15

East Pie's web page states, East Pie Solar will be designed in a way that boosts and enhances local wildlife by delivering a net gain in biodiversity. This sounds attractive and maybe even persuasive. The solar farm company suggests that such sites will replace the alleged monocultures that currently exist, although I can't see a greater example of a monoculture than sixty years of concrete, steel and glass. And if you look closely at much of the land threatened by particular its development, biodiversity in nature already exist, particularly if you observe it as a whole rather than field by field.

00:48:54:27 - 00:49:27:15

For example, a beautiful field of corn may sit close to a meadow, nearby maybe a wood, hedges, and just beyond, an area set aside for wildflowers. South Norfolk is not a sterile prairie farming area. Within the propaganda of the solar farm companies, we get scenes of sheep happily grazing in abundant meadows and pictures of wildflowers in which insects happily feed. Let's not forget the screening of woodland and shrubbery, which will bless us still further. As I've mentioned, we've had them already, but let's not turn down the opportunity for an increase in nature, any increase in that is welcome in my view.

00:49:27:20 - 00:49:59:28

But if you look at the barren images provided by East Pie's nontechnical summary, Items four-one and four-two, you're likely to get a much more realistic image. Now we've just experienced a summer of drought and wildfires, and the prediction by experts, there's more to come. And for me, here's the rub. Drought conditions lead to grass and wildfires turning dry and combustible. Trees and shrubs become tinder. Thus, a wildfire near a site could very easily attack it. This inquiry needs to establish what will be the consequences then.

00:50:00:27 - 00:50:30:10

Personally, I don't see East Pie or any other company with their eye on profits being prepared to let this happen to their investment. Thus, for this reason, I doubt whether biodiversity promise will ever materialize. Please inquire into this aspect. Firstly, so we can be reassured that incidents such as I've outlined can be controlled and will not threaten communities. Secondly, so we can understand that promise of biodiversity is genuine and not just empty propaganda as I, for one, suspect. Thank you.

00:50:31:02 - 00:50:39:16

Mr. English, thank you indeed. We will take those inquiries into consideration. Thank you very much indeed for your submission. The next person to speak is Olive English.

00:50:40:09 - 00:50:41:08

Let me

00:50:43:15 - 00:50:44:29

miss English for three minutes.

00:50:45:01 - 00:51:25:24

My name is Olive English, and I'm coming up for ninety five years years. And I've lived in the village of Saxon, Medigate for seventy years more. I've seen many changes, but nothing so massive and destructive with change as East Pye solar panels, which is being imposed on us and Shostam, both conservation villages, by the way, and also Hempnoll, Topcroft, Olbergh, and other villages all the way to Longstratten. I have written to the prime minister and the secretary for energy, I can't pronounce her name, including cuttings from the EDP, which voices our opinions against this plan.

00:51:26:04 - 00:52:07:14

It would cut right through the center of our village with huge machinery supporting the solar panels through our narrow tree lined street. It would also take part of our war memorial where we also hold our armistice service and sing cars there at Christmas. Further along, they would have to demolish the beautiful garden wall, which is listed as is the John Shomes rectory, which it belonged to, which it belonged. Our village is surrounded by beautiful countryside, hedges, and woods, and we attract many walkers, hikers, and sometimes horse riders who enjoy it.

00:52:07:29 - 00:52:34:07

In these days of worrying news, it's a relief to get away from it all and relax in nature. Around Norwich, they are building hundreds of new houses, and people need spaces to unwind. We hear so much talk about mental health nowadays that we want to hang on like mad to every bit of greenery we have. No walkers will come and gaze on miles of solar panels.

00:52:35:24 - 00:53:16:01

I'm against this project because it's too big and massively disruptive of our lovely village. Something so beautiful and timeless needs to be preserved in this country. There are many alternative ways of supplying electricity and putting solar panels on all new build houses for a start. And I believe the government on East Anglia to provide at least twenty thousand more. We already have a nuclear power station at Sizwell nearby, large wind turbines off the coast, and probably more being built.

00:53:16:17 - 00:53:35:23

And if only they would harness the power of the waves, we should be sitting pretty. So I say, leave Saxonyl and all the lovely villages alone. Don't destroy this peaceful little gem with its massive destruction and disruption.

00:53:36:09 - 00:53:38:19

Thank you. Miss English, thank you very much indeed.

00:53:46:09 - 00:53:54:02

Thank you. Next person to speak is Sue Miss Laws, you have three minutes starting now. Thank you.

00:53:54:07 - 00:54:32:16

Good afternoon. My name is Sue Laws, and I live in Great Bolton. Five years ago, we moved to Norfolk and invested our life savings on our property, and we're looking forward to retirement surrounded by the quiet, beautiful countryside. Instead, we now find ourselves potentially sitting amongst acres of solar panels, battery storage sites and right on the boundary of the proposed National Grid substation at site one. Today, I'd like to talk about a cost that cannot be measured on a spreadsheet, and that is the severe toll this project is having on our mental health and well-being.

00:54:33:13 - 00:55:13:20

For months, we've lived under a cloud of uncertainty. The retirement we save for and the home we love have been transformed into a source of constant anxiety. We're not just facing the loss of countryside and prime agricultural land. We are facing the loss of our peace of mind. Living with the threat of this massive industrial development right on our doorstep has caused widespread distress. Many of us are experiencing chronic stress, sleep loss, and a deeper sense of dread regarding years of disruptive construction traffic, noise, and dust.

00:55:14:21 - 00:55:53:23

Our countryside is not just empty space. It is our sanctuary. For me personally, horse riding through these quiet country lanes is exactly how I find peace and manage my well-being. But if this project goes ahead, horse riding here will become completely unsafe. Heavy construction vehicles, industrial noise, and high security fencing will turn our peaceful hacking routes into a high risk environment. Horses are flight to animals, forcing them onto roads shared with industrial traffic is an accident waiting to happen.

00:55:54:26 - 00:56:36:24

The applicants look at these maps and see a money making project. We look at these maps and see the destruction of our countryside. The mental health suffering in this community is real. It is happening right now, and it will only worsen if this scheme is approved. I urge the inspectorate to look beyond

the steel and solar panels and remember to consider and protect the safety, well-being, and minds of the people who actually live here. I would also request that the planning inspector visit our property to see the reality of the sighting of the substation rather than just looking at it as a jigsaw of maps.

00:56:37:12 - 00:56:38:06

Thank you.

00:56:38:08 - 00:57:04:17

Miss Laws, thank you indeed. I have three points to raise if I could. I note clearly the concerns regarding mental health that you have raised. For your information this coming Thursday at our issue specific hearing, we will be asking questions of the applicant related to mental health. So there will be a discussion regarding mental health. Point two, a query for me whether you ride horses on the carriageway or on the bridleways or a combination of both.

00:57:05:00 - 00:57:06:11

Combination of both.

00:57:06:14 - 00:57:13:22

Thank you. I just wonder whether you'd willing to submit a plan or some sketch of the routes that you take at the highway routes plus the bridleway routes?

00:57:13:24 - 00:57:14:09

I can do

00:57:14:11 - 00:57:20:12

that. Thank you. And the request for the site visit, have you put that request into the examination?

00:57:20:14 - 00:57:22:04

No, but I will do that.

00:57:22:06 - 00:57:23:13

By deadline one?

00:57:23:15 - 00:57:24:00

Yes.

00:57:24:02 - 00:57:25:25

Thank you very much indeed. Thank you.

00:57:27:27 - 00:57:33:18

Final speaker of this date is Ms. Alison Reid. Ms. Reid, you have three minutes. Thank you.

00:57:34:18 - 00:58:09:27

Alison Reed representing Mandy Ram. Currently, the rear of their house and garden, they look across open agricultural fields one hundred Way. The project proposes the best is cited on these fields. In

addition, the DCO has added a four hundred kV project substation between the best and their home. It would transform the environment they chose to live in from rural to industrial. They would experience the proposed sighting from their bedrooms, kitchen, and their well used garden, not just an occasional view. It is about losing part of the character, tranquility, and sense of place that makes their house a home.

00:58:10:09 - 00:58:42:23

There are no landscaping and screening are proposed, but even when mature, planting cannot recreate the existing landscape. The double industrial development would still exist behind the screening. They are concerned about the potential consequences of a serious battery incident involving fire. East Plymouth Solar may consider such an event unlikely. The potential consequences are something that this family, as nearby residents, have to live with day in, day out. The family are seriously concerned about the practical challenges of an emergency.

00:58:43:13 - 00:59:14:16

BS chapter eleven states that emergency vehicles would be able to access the BEST compound from the highway from two different locations and use an internal BEST road network out. It is not currently possible to determine the arrangements have been fully translated and incorporated into the submitted access plans and enforceable DCO requirements. They believe their concerns about the proximity of the best to their residential home should therefore be given proper consideration and protection.

00:59:14:18 - 00:59:53:06

The potential impact of the development on their residential properties has been recognized within East Pie's own assessment, so it's not merely a concern raised by residents. Their objection is therefore based on the real and personal impact that East Pike would have on their household. The loss of significant alteration of rural views from their rooms and garden, loss of tranquility and rural character, construction noise, traffic, dust and disruption affecting their home and garden, concerns about living close to the proposed best, including fire and emergency response risks the permanent industrialization of the surrounding landscape and living with these changes for decades.

00:59:53:15 - 01:00:15:16

These impacts would not be experienced once. They will be day after day, year after year from the place they call home. They ask the examining the authority to consider the proposal from the perspective of residents and to give substantial weight to the direct impact on their lives. For these reasons, they strongly object to the East Pipe proposals and respectfully ask that the development consent be refused.

01:00:17:14 - 01:00:27:18

Sweet. Thank you indeed for speaking on behalf of Mandy Ram. Those points are noted clearly. To the eight speakers, thank you indeed for your contributions. If you can return to your seats. Thank you.

01:01:00:02 - 01:01:26:00

Thank you, indeed. I'm going to call the next eight speakers forward, please. They are Patricia Leit, Margaret Stone, Dawn Crystal, Philip Bolas, Richard Snowden, Jillian Pike, Elizabeth Rose, and Jillian Marklew Allen. Thank you very much.

01:01:48:03 - 01:01:56:03

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven. One, two, three, four, five. I'm counting seven. Am I missing speaker?

01:01:59:15 - 01:02:04:12

Two, three, four, five, six, seven. Thank you.

01:02:06:12 - 01:02:07:22

Yes, I believe so.

01:02:10:14 - 01:02:29:22

Okay, that's regrettable. You for the information, sir. Thank you. Can I please ask Patricia Leet to speak? Ms. Leet, you have three minutes starting now. Thank you. Microphones on, please. Thank you. You.

01:02:29:29 - 01:03:03:13

My brief input to these proceedings will be concentrating on Churchill, Saxlingham and Navigate as I understand that abnormal indivisible load vehicles and construction lorries will be routed through Churchill. My focus is predominantly on safety. I believe that it would be extremely beneficial for the examining authority to visit Churchill early in proceedings. The four key issues that have led me to this urgency are Churchill is far too narrow for the width of these vehicles.

01:03:03:20 - 01:03:38:10

The road is only four point two meters wide its at narrowest point, therefore, not wide enough for AIL vehicles. In today's world, let alone what East Pie Solar Farm is planning, we already have major issues with two way traffic up and down Churchill on a very regular basis. These photos are just a couple of examples that show the severe problems that are experienced on a regular basis cause absolute chaos.

01:03:39:11 - 01:04:37:07

Churchill is on a bus route and traffic must come to a halt whenever a bus or a large vehicle is traveling up on or down Churchill because of the narrowness of the road. My second issue is that there's a footpath on one side of Churchill very close to the road. This is the only footpath we have and is needed to access a wide range of facilities. Safety when using this footpath is absolutely critical for the community. Protecting the large number of schoolchildren going to and from the school located in Churchill, protecting children toing and froing to the scout and guide group premises, protecting parishioners and visitors making their way to and from community social club, playing field, meadows, the church, and and the very popular walks rooted, through where access is rooted through Churchill.

01:04:37:26 - 01:05:07:28

There isn't any street lighting in our conservation village, which, for me, is absolutely wonderful. No light pollution. However, it reinforces the need for a safe footpath in Churchill. My third point relates to access into Churchill from Orchard View Barn Courtyard, which has three properties. Access for vehicles and residents is already very dangerous. The East Pie proposal exacerbates the situation.

01:05:08:24 - 01:05:48:17

Lastly, the AILs and the large number of HDVs that will be traveling along Churchill could cause vibrations and damage to structures. A number of the older properties don't have foundations. In addition, the heavy vehicles also damage the infrastructure beneath the road. We believe the sewer at the top of Church Hill, which has leaked in the past to be made of asbestos. To sum up, I believe that Churchill is not at all suitable for what East Pyre proposing, and I would like the examining authority to visit Saxlingham, Nethergate and undertake a thorough risk assessment.

01:05:48:29 - 01:06:03:15

The assessment should provide evidence that would lead them to the same conclusion as myself that the land around Churchill should be removed from the scheme and an alternative AIL HGV route planned.

01:06:03:20 - 01:06:37:22

Asli, thank you for your submission. Two queries, if I may. Number one, you've shown photographs. I believe you've held them up. But could a copy of those be submitted into the examination by deadline. Thank one, you. You've also requested a site visit to Churchill by the examination authority. Again, if you haven't already done so, could you please make the request by deadline one, please? Yep. And there's a third query, which you may not have information. You you spoke of a bus route. Can you indicate the frequency of bus services on that route per hour, per half hour, per two hours?

01:06:38:04 - 01:06:40:23

Oh, more like three. Yeah.

01:06:40:26 - 01:06:42:18

Okay. That's okay.

01:06:42:20 - 01:06:47:12

Yeah. But we do get a lot of large lorries that cause exactly the same problem.

01:06:47:14 - 01:06:48:18

Thank you. The

01:06:50:11 - 01:06:57:19

next person to speak is Margaret Stone. Margaret Stone, thank you. Miss Stone, you have three minutes starting now. Thank you.

01:06:57:21 - 01:07:29:14

Thank you very much. My name is Margaret Stone. I live in Hempnal, which is part of the scheme. I previously lived in Great Malton, so I feel very strongly about the whole scheme. It seems that a political decision to meet an artificial net zero target within a specific time land line is inadvertently

putting us on a trajectory of self destruction. Andy Burnham said a few days ago, national security can't come at the expense of social security.

01:07:30:03 - 01:08:21:16

We say arbitrary net zero timescales can't come at the expense of our centuries old villages and countryside. Two of the most well known pieces of music in England are Land of Hope and Glory, and I fear the hope is now leaving us very quickly, and certainly, the feeling of a glorious countryside is diminishing. The other one is Jerusalem. We all know the worst, but I'll quote just a few. And did those feet in ancient time walk upon England's mountains green, on England's pleasant pasture scene, and was Jerusalem builded here amongst these dark satanic mills? Dark satanic mills epitomized English towns during the industrial revolution, but we protected our countryside then.

01:08:22:00 - 01:08:59:03

This time, a solar revolution with industrial sized fields of gray solar panels surrounding our villages will do exactly the same. It feels terrifying, like an iron curtain or the Berlin Wall closing in on us and separating us from the natural countryside. They're not postwar Soviet bloc countries on whom these sorts of projects were imposed. The proposed locations surround several ancient villages, including Hempno, many of which have medieval medieval churches and houses.

01:08:59:18 - 01:09:31:17

Our original parish church was built in Saxon times. Many of our residents can trace their families back centuries. Just check out the names on the gravestones. The unconnected but aggregated industrial sized fields of solar increased the impact on the villages with a large artificial and invisibly intrusive boundary. It will no longer be a village, but a field based factory site and obliterate the existence and sense of community.

01:09:32:09 - 01:10:04:03

We are custodians of our countryside. Nature and nurture are two sides of the same coin. Do not exploit our natural environment and green and pleasant land. We don't want that kind of revolution. Do not allow industrial sized fields of solar solar panels surround our ancient villages as and factories heavy industry did in urban areas on our green and pleasant land. We are custodians of our countryside and our community.

01:10:04:12 - 01:10:17:06

Mister, thank you indeed for that personal message and submission. Thank you. The next person to speak is Dawn Crystal. Ms. Crystal, if you can place on your microphone. You have three minutes starting now. Thank you.

01:10:17:08 - 01:11:01:24

Thank you. I'm Dawn Crystal and I'm speaking on behalf of my dad. And the week we've put the house on the market, we also found out about the solar pile farm, which is going to be in the field behind dad's house. So instead of being, like, sad just because the house is gone and dad's gone, now we have this big cloud over us as how do we sell this house? And we've had a lot of people, over twenty people looking at the house, and we've got all these banners about the East Solar Farm, which I totally agree. Yeah? But how do you sell a house? You know, how long is it going to sit there and at

what state is the house gonna be when it actually gets to sell? And I think my question is, and I think I'm speaking for a lot of people in the village because they've said, my house is my home.

01:11:01:26 - 01:11:35:22

It's my castle. It's my fortune. That's what I want to leave to my children, which is what dad was doing. And now, we've got a house which could be worthless. Do we sit on it for years, hoping that someone will give us compensation? Who's gonna pay those bills in the meantime? How do we say to someone coming through the house, oh, it's a lovely place, but sorry, you'd wanna have a solar farm outside your back door. And it's literally you walk out the window, and there's a field about this wide from here, and then it's a solar farm. And I just wonder how the hell they put these things in place without considering the people.

01:11:36:25 - 01:12:08:20

You know, my thought is that there's no all these dual carriageways, and why not make a space beside these dual carriageways? They've already messed up the countryside. Why not put in, you know, lines of solar farms or something? I just wonder who's gonna compensate everybody for what they've gone through. For their homes, for their mental health, the mess that they've messed, all they're proposing. And we don't even know if it's gonna happen, do we? We assume it will. But it's like, will it go on for weeks, for months, for years?

01:12:10:10 - 01:12:40:10

Do we just sit and wait and hope? I would just like to think we've got choices and that, you know, speaking up can make a difference. Whether it does or not, I don't know. I just hope to God that someone is listening and that someone will make a difference. Because at the end of the line, ours is just a house and it's empty now because that's not there. But the people living next door to us, they put their life into building that home for their retirement, for their children. No.

01:12:40:12 - 01:12:48:10

They've got nothing. Well, they feel they've got nothing because they've just got this emptiness and this helplessness. And I don't know how to fill that point.

01:12:52:21 - 01:12:56:05

A personal matter noted. Thank you very much indeed.

01:12:57:25 - 01:13:03:11

The next person to speak is Richard Snowden. Mr. Snowden, you have three minutes. Thank you.

01:13:04:11 - 01:13:40:20

Thank you very much. My name is Richard Snowden. I've lived in Great Malton for over thirty years and in rural South Norfolk for over seventy years. It's my lifestyle choice. It's my home, and I'm deeply rooted to this beautiful area, harmoniously linking arable farming with the rich with the flora rich habitats on the Great Malton plateau and beyond. East Pie presents the Great Malton infrastructure as temporary, and the solar generating station may have a sixty year operating period. But key parts of the national grid infrastructure, the access arrangements, and the associated mitigation appear likely to remain well beyond sixty years.

01:13:40:22 - 01:14:13:17

And, of course, their definition of temporary, sixty years, represents a massive proportion of human life. Permanent or long term infrastructure should be assessed differently from temporary works. We need clear evidence on exactly what infrastructure would remain, how long it would stay, what access it would need, and why the permanent hundred lane r b nineteen crossing is necessary. And hundred lane matters. It's referenced as far back as the Domesday Book. It's a much loved and well used rural bridal way with a wide range of flora, fauna, and wildlife.

01:14:14:12 - 01:14:57:22

The National Grid substation site one b, option four b, and there's probably other references as well, appears to have been chosen primarily because it is close to the grid, available, and deliverable. These may be practical considerations, but they're not a substitute for a robust, transparent comparison of alternatives. The decision making process should show that less harmful options were properly identified, weighted, and tested. Site one b is not an unconstrained location. It sits in a sensitive rural rural setting with nearby homes, public rights of way, heritage assets, rural lanes, private water supplies, exposed landscape, and grade two best and most versatile agricultural land.

01:14:58:14 - 01:15:28:24

These are not minor issues. They go to the heart of whether this is the right location for infrastructure of this scale and duration. With regard to the proposed substation at one b, the applicant has not carried a proper alternatives assessment. The assessment should compare air insulated switchgear with potentially lower impact gas insulated switchgear. If a less visually intrusive or less land hungry design could reduce harm, that option needs to be properly considered before the site and design are treated and are settled.

01:15:29:02 - 01:16:06:25

Mitigation after site selection is not enough. Planting screening or management measures may reduce some effects over time, but they do not demonstrate compliance with Hallmark principles as there is a lack of evidence that avoidable harm has first been minimized through siting and design. Finally, consultation and visual information has been inadequate. The community and examining authority need a full and joined up picture of the sorry, cumulative impacts of this massive industrialization of Great Malton and the surrounding area. The grid hub, battery storage, substations, access works, overhead line changes, related infrastructure should be assessed together, not in fragments.

01:16:06:28 - 01:16:13:00

For these reasons, I ask the examining authority to require further evidence before considering the applicant's case further.

01:16:13:12 - 01:16:26:09

Mr. Snowden, thank you indeed. I I just have your relevant representation before me here. You've raised a number of additional queries in your submission just now. I wonder if you could be willing to submit that article that piece of I think

01:16:26:11 - 01:16:26:26

there was a

01:16:26:28 - 01:16:33:27

real confusion. My wife and I both tried to put submission in. I think hers got in but my name got in. We share an email address and I think that was an interesting

01:16:34:20 - 01:16:49:10

I have yours before me. I believe it's yours. It's your title, Mr. Snoop. Okay. Fine. But I note reading through it, you've raised a number of additional queries in this oral submission. Can I ask would you be willing to submit inquiries by deadline one please? Yes,

01:16:49:22 - 01:16:50:09

course. Thank you.

01:16:50:11 - 01:16:51:24

Thank you, sir. Next

01:16:54:13 - 01:16:57:00

person to speak is Jillian Pike.

01:16:59:17 - 01:17:00:09

Jillian?

01:17:02:26 - 01:17:04:23

Ms. Pike, thank you. Three minutes. Thank you.

01:17:04:25 - 01:17:05:17

Doctor. Pike.

01:17:05:19 - 01:17:06:28

Doctor. Pike. My apologies.

01:17:07:00 - 01:17:39:09

Doctor. I'm a farmer's daughter and almost lifelong resident of the Great Malton area. There's much talk of the national interest in relation to renewable energy and net zero. I'm worried about the loss of prime agricultural land at a time of international political and climate uncertainty, when the nation's food security, in the news only last week, should be of utmost importance. This iconic rural landscape and environmental system are also part of our national cultural heritage, and we indeed are part of the nation.

01:17:41:09 - 01:17:57:06

Changes to the environment and its ecosystems will affect biodiversity in a direct opposition to the government's blueprint for halting and reversing biodiversity loss. How can this be okay? Biodiversity in the UK is already very low. Can we afford to stress it further?

01:18:00:14 - 01:18:24:06

According to BBC Springwatch, a single mature oak tree can host up to a hundred species of birds, mammals, fungus, insects, other waterways and hedgerows, verges, and other locations can be

expected to be similarly species rich. We cannot afford to compromise them. How will the project affect crops fertilizing pollinators? Would there be reduced yield?

01:18:26:00 - 01:18:54:03

This summer, we've all noticed, was very, very hot. There were wildfires that may become the norm. There were fires close by RSPB, Minsmere, and Dunwich Heath, which were devastating and terrifying. Could the same thing happen here? Is the agricultural land now a threat to the solar installations? I have no faith in the proposal's meager water based firefighting positions. Is water the correct way to fight electrical fire? Can it realistically be tackled at all?

01:18:57:11 - 01:19:01:23

Sorry. I'm quickly rewriting based on what other people have said more eloquently than me.

01:19:01:25 - 01:19:02:24

That's quite okay.

01:19:02:26 - 01:19:44:00

This is the wrong development in the wrong place. It should be on roofs, but I noticed from conversations today that me, amongst other people, we a lot of us have solar panels. Our export is capped. Why? And what the heck? The rural landscape already has many important roles. It's not a blank canvas ripe fulfilling within electrical installations, AI storage, and endless new housing. I foresee a future not too far away in which it is industrialized beyond recognition, sacrificing food security, biodiversity, ecosystems, and local well-being to serve consumption elsewhere, this scares me.

01:19:44:21 - 01:20:01:07

As global warming and international politics begin to have a local impact, now is the time to take measures to cut energy consumption and protect agriculture and the environment. And furthermore, solar farms are not solar farms. They're solar factories. They're not warm and cuddly. It's industry.

01:20:02:06 - 01:20:18:13

Doctor Pike, thank you. Again, I have, before me, your relevant representation, you seem to have raised a few additional queries in the oral submission to us this afternoon. Again, I ask, please, if you're willing to submit those that document you have before you into examination? Yes, sure.

01:20:21:09 - 01:20:21:26

Yes. Thanks

01:20:21:28 - 01:20:34:26

for being It's deadline one sixth of October. Thank you indeed. Doctor Pike, thank you. The next person to speak is Elizabeth Rose. Ms. Rose, thank you. You have three minutes starting now. Thank you.

01:20:34:28 - 01:21:05:12

Thank you for this opportunity to speak. I'd like to build upon one point of serious concern with some hopefully useful detail. Further points are outlined in the email I sent earlier today, and I assume will

be read and uploaded to the portal. Having sought advice on the suitability of narrow country roads for construction and ongoing maintenance access, it's clear that Lodge Road is unsuitable for its intended use for three reasons. Firstly, I'd like to draw attention to the width and structure of our small country lane.

01:21:05:14 - 01:21:47:03

Lodge Road is being proposed as a two way likely suitable route and marked down as highway access. This road is single track with no pavements and narrow verges. The carriageway is a part barely two point seven meters wide, not the minimum of three meters that's advised for HGB use, let alone the three point five meters recommended as good practice. As far as we're aware, the depth and structure of Lodge Road also has not been proven to demonstrate suitability. If this road, which consists of roadside nature reserves, deep drainage systems, and thriving wildlife is to be altered, the applicant should provide detailed swept path diagrams of the lodge road access.

01:21:47:17 - 01:22:20:13

Any additional regular heavy vehicle use of this road in its current state will inevitably result in significant damage. Secondly, it's unclear why access through this road is even necessary. Access to nearby sites is already made possible via other routes. My main concern is that there is an indicative access point that doesn't connect to any infrastructure other than one part of a cable route corridor, but this part of the cable route corridor also doesn't connect to any other infrastructure. The existence of this access point doesn't make sense.

01:22:20:15 - 01:22:36:01

Please, can this be reviewed? Given the importance of the BESS and substations located nearby, I invite the planning inspectorate to look at the section map and provide evidence that they've actually walked Lodge Road, not just Station Road and the A140 as shown in your documentation.

01:22:37:22 - 01:23:18:00

Lastly, regular HGV use of Lodge Road even in the short term would compromise residents and farmers only route in and out. No contingencies been proposed to Lodge Road residents and farmers. In summary, please provide evidence that Lodge Road is suitable for the proposed construction, ongoing emergency maintenance and decommissioning access. Other parts of the scheme, for example, Fairstead Road, have been evaluated and deemed inappropriate. I would like for the inspectorate to give Lodge Road the same consideration and ask, is this road already at capacity with existing agricultural and residential use? Claire, David, John and everyone here, I sincerely thank you for your time.

01:23:19:03 - 01:23:44:00

Mr. Rose, thank you very much indeed. Perhaps two points, if I may. I believe you made a request for the examining authority to visit Lodge Road. I wonder if you've made that request already. Is that request Yes. It has. Thank you. Secondly, I have before me your relevant representation. Again, you raised a number of additional points at this oral submission. Would you be willing to submit those, please, a summary of those points into the examination by deadline one?

01:23:44:05 - 01:23:48:05

Yes, think you have a copy of the speech by email today, but I can I maybe

01:23:48:22 - 01:23:52:25

have not seen it today, but thank you indeed. You. Ms. Rose, thank you very much indeed.

01:23:57:21 - 01:24:05:14

Thank you. The next speaker is Gillian Allen. Ms. Marklew Allen, you have three minutes. Thank you very much.

01:24:05:16 - 01:24:39:00

Good afternoon. I'm Gillian Marklew Allen. I would like to speak in relation to plot three in Lundy Green, which would surround our home on two sides, on one side at very close quarters. I would like to speak on the subject of community health and well-being. On the thirteenth of December twenty twenty four, I attended a webinar hosted by the government's planning inspectors, Richard Schofield, Annie Coombs, and Mark Hayes, entitled web webinar two, achieving good design in NSIPs.

01:24:39:20 - 01:25:03:12

I left this webinar reassured that the needs of the local community would be heard and acted upon by responsible planning inspectors. Mike Hayes said, it's hard to beat Vitruvius' definition of good design from two thousand years ago, in which he says three things contribute to good design. Does it work? Will it last? Does it bring some joy?

01:25:05:04 - 01:25:47:18

These three notions underpin good design in relation to NSIPs that local communities can buy into and see some joy, some aesthetic value. I have to tell you now that from the first I heard about the East Pai solar project, it has not brought me or my community any joy. It has brought us alarm, horror, shock, outrage, dismay, and a daily sense of dread, will be with all of us for many years to come. It is perhaps hard for city dwellers, especially those who are making decisions about us in different parts of the country, to fully grasp what the countryside means to those of us who live here and walk its footpaths on a daily basis.

01:25:48:28 - 01:26:16:08

The Office for National Statistics, amongst many other well respected research bodies, link human well-being and nature together. Therefore, to take our well-being and effectively strangle us in an all encompassing metal and glass wire cage with the threat of background noise of fans and motors generated by tracker panels would result in misery for the thousand thousands of us.

01:26:17:25 - 01:26:19:03

Trying to be as quick.

01:26:19:08 - 01:26:53:26

My case also said the the most important decision in NSIP projects is site selection. Our community is not brownfield land as DESNAS guidelines recommend that developers such as East Pye Solar should have prioritized in the first place. This is our home and a highly cherished landscape, and never wanting to walk any of its footpaths again would make me feel like a prisoner in my own home. East Paisola made it clear to me at the first consultation in Hempsal that they had never sought brownfield land in the first place.

01:26:54:17 - 01:27:11:20

This in itself was an act of monumental and cavalier disrespect for our community. And on these grounds alone, I implore the planning inspectors to reject this project, and I would respectfully like to invite the planning inspectors to visit my home. Thank you.

01:27:11:22 - 01:27:32:02

Miss Markship, Alan, thank you for your very personal submission noted. Respect of the request to visit your property, can I ask you to put that please in writing by deadline one, if that's okay? Many thanks. Thank you. Can I thank you all for your submissions this afternoon? You may return to your seating. Many thanks.

01:27:45:29 - 01:27:55:15

Thank you. I'm going to call the next group of speakers please who are attending in person. Can I call please Victoria Chandler,

01:27:57:05 - 01:27:58:07

Margaret Thomas,

01:28:00:09 - 01:28:01:20

Annetta Berry,

01:28:03:06 - 01:28:05:10

and Beverly Wilding? Thank you.

01:28:37:23 - 01:28:51:06

K. I'll pass to a head count again. Thank you. I think I called four people forwards. I called Victoria Chandler. I called Margaret Thomas. Thank you. Annette Berry. Thank you. And Beverly Wilding.

01:28:53:05 - 01:29:08:08

I don't see Beverly Wilding coming forth. I apologize. I'll take that back. We have three in person remaining. The first person to speak will be Victoria Chandler. Miss Chandler, you have three minutes. Thank you very much.

01:29:08:10 - 01:29:33:21

Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Victoria Chandler, and thank you for allowing me to speak. I want to begin with participation. Despite registering by deadline and confirmed with the plan inspectorate where I wish to speak, I was admitted from the open floor hearing agenda twice. I'm grateful to speak here today, but this adds to my concern about how accessible this process really is for the residents as well as adding to the stress this process is causing.

01:29:35:08 - 01:30:09:12

Just eleven days before this meeting, East Pisela submitted a nine hundred and sixty eight page themed response to representations. I've only been able to review part of it, and what I have read has raised further questions. I will therefore be submitting written statements. I live immediately beside site five. My guard is approximately eleven meters from the order limits, and my driveway sits

between Pistro's construction accident points a twenty three and a twenty four the on b one five two seven, which is renowned for accidents.

01:30:10:04 - 01:30:41:08

Yet I still do not understand why I'm not being treated as a category three resident. If a family living this close with construction accesses on either side of their entrance is not considered directly affected, I struggle to understand what the threshold is being applied. For at least two years, we potentially face noise, dust, vibration, SUVs, and abnormal loads six days a week, not just at home, but experienced through school runs, trips out, and any other journey we take in any direction.

01:30:42:06 - 01:31:19:10

My home is also my workplace, and two years is a significant part of my children's childhood. And afterwards, we do not simply get our rural environment back. For up to sixty years, effectively two generations, our family be living within a de industrialized energy landscape dominated by a four hundred kilovolt substation opposite us. We chose our home for its peace, open space, and connection with nature. The prospect of losing it has already caused my family considerable stress. I'm also concerned our borehole less than sixty meters from site five was not included in assessment dataset.

01:31:19:20 - 01:31:54:14

Grand investigations is proposed after consent, but the decision is being made now. Within sixty minute meters of the order limit, we have a historic wall over two hundred years that formed a part of the old manor. Being freestanding, it is more vulnerable to vibrations from piling construction work, but yet again, it's not been factored into assessments conducted by East Pye Solar. I have also personally helped elderly neighbors who have no Internet access or digital skills navigate this process. A nationally significant examination must be generally accessible to everybody affected.

01:31:55:00 - 01:32:14:11

I support renewable energy. We have solar panels on our own roof, but that does not mean accepting development of any scale in any location regardless consequence. I ask you to consider what it actually means for families like mine who live in the middle of this development for decades and whether those most directly affected have generally been heard. Thank you.

01:32:14:18 - 01:32:43:02

Miss Chandler, thank you. Indeed, I'm very glad you got a chance to speak this afternoon. You mentioned you've been making a submission by deadline one. I think you raised comments in relation to category three, borehole assessment and historic wall vibration. I trust those points will be in the submission. Wonderful. Mr. Chandlee, thank you for your submission. Thank you. The next speaker is Margaret Thomas. Ms Thomas, you have three minutes starting now. Thank you.

01:32:46:16 - 01:33:01:27

My name is Margaret Thomas. I'm the county councilor for West Stepwade. I'm the deputy cabinet member for adult health and social care and public health. I'm a retired, registered senior mental health practitioner.

01:33:03:13 - 01:33:10:14

I wish to highlight the cumulative impact on health and well-being of the residents across South Norfolk

01:33:12:07 - 01:33:52:15

with some anecdotal evidence that I've gathered gathered, particularly from the residents of West Stepwade. People are demonstrating signs of distress, anxiety, and confusion. They report feeling shut out of this process and ignored. They feel powerless, overwhelmed, and helpless. These are well documented triggers for depression and anxiety. They describe feeling that the heart and soul of South Norfolk is being torn away and that this development will scar the past, present, and future of the landscape and community.

01:33:53:12 - 01:34:00:27

They feel they are being forced to carry a burden in service to national policy that they didn't choose and do not want.

01:34:02:22 - 01:34:42:17

I have witnessed on the doorsteps across my division grown men and women in tears describing what this will do to them. I have heard people say they feel so desperate that they have developed suicidal ideation. We do not yet know the full cumulative effect of this development because so little evidence exists. The absence of such evidence is not a reason to look away. It is exactly why this panel should require a proper, thorough assessment of the physical, mental physical and mental well-being before further harm accumulates unmeasured.

01:34:43:25 - 01:35:20:22

None of this has been brought together. The applicant has produced no comprehensive impact assessments, no risk assessments and no research into the cumulative and long term effects of stress and trauma that the solar battery storage and substation will inflict on real people. Each element is assessed in isolation, if at all. That harm has been made worse by the applicant's own conduct. Residents report feeling intimidated by the applicant's efforts to obtain information on land ownership.

01:35:21:06 - 01:35:51:20

That has deepened, not eased, the distressed already described. And when residents ask what they are offered in return, the answer is a modest reduction on the energy bill from National Grid or a small community grant. This does not compensate a family who cannot sell their home. A community grant does not compensate the individual carrying the burden and cost with their own mental health, physical health, and finances.

01:35:52:20 - 01:36:23:02

This is individualized harm, and it requires individual proper compensation, not a gesture to the parish. I'm asking this panel to require the applicant to undertake a genuine cumulative health and well-being impact assessment covering all elements together and a proper assessment of individual financial harm and to confirm that goodwill gestures are not a substitute for either. Thank you.

01:36:23:10 - 01:36:44:27

Ms. Thomas, thank you indeed for your informative and powerful submission. Just for you to know again, I've made this point before, but this Thursday at the Issues Pacific Hearing we will be raising questions and having a discussion around the topic of mental health. Ms Thomas, thank you. Next person to speak is Aneta sorry, Doctor. Aneta Berry.

01:36:45:26 - 01:37:19:25

Thank you. Good afternoon. My name's Aneta Berry. I'm speaking today in my personal capacity as a local resident. I object to East Bissolar in its entirety. Like Norfolk Wildlife Trust, I believe it seeks to reshape our existing nature dense landscape and poses a risk to the nationally important ecological network of South Norfolk. I'm particularly concerned about bats. I live near Springwood, adjoining site three. Springwood is an area of ancient replanted woodland and occupies part of the former Second World War airfield at RAF and USAF at Hardwick.

01:37:20:13 - 01:37:58:14

The northern edge of Springwood, which directly adjoins Site three, was the location of the former heavy bomb dump. A number of underground wartime bunkers survived within this area. Approximately thirty years ago, those bunkers were deliberately converted by Tony Tilson of the Norfolk Bat Group for use as bat hibernaculum. Mr. Tilson has given me his records relating to the site in an effort to protect this habitat. Springwood is bat habitat which has been deliberately protected and enhanced over decades for the benefit of rare bats within a wider landscape of ancient woodland, historic hedgerows, dark skies and feeding habitat.

01:37:58:17 - 01:38:34:04

It is also home to barbastelle's. The Springwood hibernaculum supports Dorset's and natural's bats, both members of the *Myotis* genus. Tinsley et al, publishing in the Journal of Applied Ecology twenty two, found statistically significantly lower activity of *Myotis* bats along field boundaries at solar PV sites than at matching control sites. A further study by Barry et al, published in the same journal in 'twenty four, found reduced feeding habitat quality and altered flight and feeding behavior at solar farms and specifically concluded that the mitigation hierarchy should begin by avoiding such sites.

01:38:34:13 - 01:39:10:02

A subsequent BSG Ecology review in January twenty four also advised that solar infrastructure should be located away from valuable bat foraging habitat and known roosts. The applicant's own surveys identify the wider East Pail landscape as of national importance for bats, with annexed to European protected species Barbastelles, the third most prevalent species found at every survey site. Surveys by the Norfolk Barbastelle study group reveal multiple maternity colonies of Barbastelles across the same landscape with core sustenance zones overlapping the entire scheme footprint.

01:39:10:25 - 01:39:43:09

It is unclear how favorable conservation status for bats can be maintained in the face of the landscape wide threat of this scheme. Norfolk Wildlife Trust has already recommended removal of Site three from the development, both at statutory consultation and in its relevant representation. The applicant has not accepted that recommendation. It continues to rely instead upon buffers and later detailed design. It contradicts itself in describing the current habitat as suboptimal, yet also admits it is of national importance for bats.

01:39:43:29 - 01:40:17:01

It is my submission that East Pye Solar in its entirety should be rejected. In particular, I respectfully submit that Site three should not be developed for solar generation. Solar panels and associated operational infrastructure should be removed from Site three. The land itself should be secured as a coherent area of permanent bat habitat protection, restoration and enhancement. I would also ask the examining authority to seek Natural England's access view on that approach. This is a location where habitat has already been protected deliberately for decades.

01:40:17:08 - 01:40:28:06

In my submission, the appropriate response is not to disturb that habitat and then attempt to compensate for the consequences. It is to avoid the harm in the first place. Thank you.

01:40:28:08 - 01:40:41:27

Doctor Barry, thank you indeed. Doctor Barry, thank you. Perhaps three points of clarification. You've mentioned records given to you. Is it possible they might be submitted into examination if that's permissible, if that's possible?

01:40:42:02 - 01:40:59:10

I will try and put together as many of them as possible. We also have more recent evidence that we've gathered from the Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service and the UK Biodiversity Information Atlas regarding bats at the site.

01:41:00:07 - 01:41:18:21

DeBerry, thank you. And that's two of the points. Just again for clarification, you gave mention to journals articles published in journals twenty twenty three and twenty twenty four. Could details of those publications be issued by deadline one please into examination? Barry, thank you very much indeed.

01:41:18:23 - 01:41:24:16

And just very briefly, not website links please because we can't accept website links to documents.

01:41:27:15 - 01:41:32:02

To the three speakers, thank you indeed for your submissions. We're very grateful. Thank you. You may return to your seats.

01:41:38:03 - 01:41:46:27

We're now moving to our virtual speakers. And the first speaker, I believe, Beverly Wilding. Ms. Wilding, can you hear me?

01:41:47:01 - 01:41:48:03

Good afternoon.

01:41:48:05 - 01:41:53:09

Good afternoon. Ms. Wilding, you have three minutes to make your submission starting now. Thank you.

01:41:54:21 - 01:42:08:05

My name is Beverly Wilding, and I am opposed to East Py Solar for many reasons that have already been discussed. But the main point I would just like to make today is about people and specifically children in our community.

01:42:09:23 - 01:42:45:04

I've lived in Hemp North for around sixteen years, and I feel very strongly that this proposed development will have a significant and lasting detrimental impact on the mental health and well-being of the people, young and old, who live here. This is not simply an empty piece of land on a map. It is a rural landscape that people live alongside, walk through, ride through, and enjoy. We have picnics here. We walk our dogs. We ride our horses. In other words, we have a relationship with this countryside. And I see firsthand the impact that the pressures of modern life are having on children.

01:42:45:21 - 01:43:00:20

We are living through a mental health crisis, and I'm deeply concerned that introducing infrastructure on this enormous scale across two thousand seven hundred acres of our countryside will have a profound and damaging impact on the mental health and well-being of our communities for generations to come.

01:43:03:15 - 01:43:36:11

We are particularly living through a profound crisis in children's mental health. The proportion of children and young people with a probable mental health condition has risen from around one in eight in two thousand and seventeen to one in five in twenty twenty three, and we are seeing unprecedented demand for children's mental health services. As a teacher, I'm also deeply aware of the increasing challenges children face with emotional regulation, attention, behavior, and simply being able to settle themselves sufficiently to learn. This is not just my personal observation.

01:43:36:13 - 01:43:41:05

Government research shows that these challenges are being experienced across our schools.

01:43:42:21 - 01:44:14:04

At the same time, the government's own evidence tells us that access to green space and engagement with nature are beneficial to children's mental health, emotional and behavioral well-being, and self regulated behavior. So at a time when we should be protecting children's opportunities to experience nature, tranquility, and open space, I find it deeply concerning that we are considering industrializing thousands of acres of the countryside around our communities. I cannot claim this development alone, of course, will cause mental health problems.

01:44:14:06 - 01:44:44:00

But surely, when we know that connection with nature supports children's well-being and self regulation, the precautionary question must be asked. What are the consequences of removing that environment and replacing it with vast areas of industrial infrastructure, high security fencing, battery storage, and substations? For children growing up here, this isn't just an abstract landscape. It is the environment in which they walk, in which they play, explore, decompress, and experience a sense of space and freedom.

01:44:45:17 - 01:44:55:09

At a time when children's mental health is already under enormous pressure, I believe we have a responsibility to protect those environments and not diminish them. Thank you.

01:44:56:01 - 01:45:13:04

Smiling, thank you. Just one point of clarification. You gave reference to data pointing to a one in eight and then to a one in five increase by twenty twenty three. I wonder if the source of that data, that information could be entered into the examination. Is that possible?

01:45:13:15 - 01:45:15:00

Absolutely. Thank you.

01:45:15:12 - 01:45:17:29

Miss Walden, thank you very much for your submission. Thank you.

01:45:18:01 - 01:45:18:18

Thank you.

01:45:19:27 - 01:45:26:28

The next person to speak is Samantha Pashenko Lawson online. Miss Pashenko Lawson, can you hear me?

01:45:27:26 - 01:45:30:03

Yes. I can hear you.

01:45:30:12 - 01:45:34:17

Thank you. Miss Pashenko Lawson, you have three minutes starting now. Thank you.

01:45:34:27 - 01:45:49:17

Thank you. My name is Samantha Pashenko Lawson. I'm a local resident and interested party living in Great Malton, and I have already submitted written representation. I don't want to repeat what's already been put in writing, but I would like to highlight three concerns.

01:45:58:02 - 01:46:32:01

Much has already been said today about traffic, farmland, landscape, and I don't want to repeat those either. My concern is what happens when all of these impacts and all these developments are considered together. East Pie Solar does not exist in isolation. Across South Norfolk, we are seeing a growing concentration of solar developments, battery storage facilities, substations and associated infrastructure. A single project may appear acceptable on a plan, but residents experience this total effect on their roads, their countryside, farmland and daily lives.

01:46:32:22 - 01:47:03:13

Individual issues are actually interconnected. Agricultural land is not simply empty space available for another use. It supports food production, farming, businesses, soil resources and the character of the countryside. In a period of changing climate conditions, increasing pressure on food security and

growing competition for natural resources, these functions become even more important. Traffic is not simply a calculation of vehicle movements.

01:47:03:23 - 01:47:46:13

It affects residents, pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and schoolchildren using rural roads. Battery storage is not simply an operational component. It raises long term questions about safety, emergency response, replacement, disposal and the availability of water resources in increasingly hot and dry conditions as was seen this year alone. It also raises questions about the protection of water resources in the event of significant thermal incidents, particularly at this time with the hotter, drier conditions becoming more common and pressure on local water supplies is increasing.

01:47:47:06 - 01:48:26:04

Given the local reliance on our retained firefighters and increasing pressure on water supplies, I believe these matters deserve particularly careful scrutiny. Nor should the development lasting around years be dismissed as merely temporary for local communities. This represents a generational change in land use and rural character. I recognize the national case for renewable energy, but the existence of that need must not remove the requirement to choose the right scheme, the right scale, and the right location.

01:48:27:03 - 01:48:59:16

The real question before this examination is whether this is the right development at the right scale in the right location. I want to know, has the applicant shown that there is no better alternative? I want to know, has the full cumulative impact on Sapnorphic properly been assessed? And do the benefits genuinely outweigh the long term consequences for the communities and families who will live with this development for decades.

01:49:00:15 - 01:49:12:27

Renewable energy may be needed, but that does not by itself prove that this particular development belongs in this particular place. Thank you.

01:49:14:00 - 01:49:25:22

Thank you for your submission. Thank you. The final speaker is Simon Taylor appearing virtually. Mr. Taylor, can you hear me?

01:49:33:24 - 01:49:35:12

Mr. Taylor, you may be on mute.

01:49:42:17 - 01:49:43:15

I am.

01:49:45:01 - 01:49:54:05

That's okay. Mr. Taylor, thank you for coming to speak to us today. Mr. Taylor, you have three minutes to make your submission starting now. Thank you.

01:49:54:10 - 01:50:28:22

Good afternoon. Thanks for your patience. The abiding view among many locals I speak to is that East Pie is already a done deal between developers and the energy department regardless of the countless objections and points already raised so well and discussed today. This view is not helped by the sheer opaqueness of proposed the espy scheme with an endless swathe of documentation, shoddy copy and paste from those with a vested interest in the developments from which they will profit at local residents' expense.

01:50:29:26 - 01:50:57:26

What is also concerning is that ore rates seem to lead back to Macquarie Asset Management as the main developer, and their track record of involvement in public ownership is not promising given their involvement with Thames Water, a saga of financial mismanagement that is still very much in the headlines, a dismal catalog of assets stripping at huge cost to those who whose mains water they were meant to supply.

01:51:00:14 - 01:51:29:09

Is this the best partner that the Department of Energy can work with? Do they really expect Macquarie to comply with planning ahead of profit? It's a fervent hope that the ambiguity and uncertainty will end with a definitive and clear plan of exactly what East Pie proposed rather than a sprawling submission, where we are meant to come away feeling lucky that some of the proposals have been stopped. Thank you.

01:51:30:20 - 01:51:33:12

Mr. Taylor, thank you for your submission. Thank you.

01:51:35:00 - 01:51:44:24

That concludes the speakers who are registered to speak and listed on my spreadsheet. Is there anybody else in the room who wishes to make a submission this afternoon?

01:51:47:15 - 01:51:48:29

Thank you. Can you come forward please?

01:51:55:17 - 01:52:00:27

Thank you. Can you can you state your name, please? And after that, you'll have three minutes to speak. Thank you.

01:52:05:10 - 01:52:07:00

But but is that better? Yeah.

01:52:07:08 - 01:52:19:22

Sorry. My name is Helen Smith. I live in Wakton, a small village on the borders of Great Moulton and Longstratten. Wakton is one of the villages which the applicant failed to specifically name as being affected by this project.

01:52:21:12 - 01:52:25:07

I wish to address a couple of questions regarding the cumulative effect.

01:52:27:02 - 01:53:14:02

NSIP applicants are required to include a description of likely significant effects of development on the environment resulting from the accumulation of effects with other existing and or approved projects. The phrase other and or approved developments is clarified as being taken to include existing developments, existing plans, and projects that are, quote, reasonably foreseeable. If this two thousand seven hundred acre project is approved, it will enable several other huge solar and solar related projects which are proposed in the immediate vicinity, specifically Tasway Solar, three thousand six hundred acres, the as yet unnamed solar farm proposed by Noventum Power, two thousand five hundred acres, and the field Longstratten Bess, seven hundred container style units.

01:53:14:28 - 01:53:48:21

These projects are all based around the Long Stratton area. The applicant dismisses any mention of Tasway by stating the Tasway Energy Park has been placed on indefinite hold. If East Prize approved, it will set a precedent for DCO approval, and as the applicant well knows, being given gate one status as is the case with Tasway means there is no date for connection, but it could well be approved in the future. Tasway has said it is actively reviewing next steps. Note, it has not withdrawn the project, merely delayed it.

01:53:49:07 - 01:54:20:19

The applicant does not mention the Noventum project at all and has failed to address the cumulative issue here, which will be unimaginable. What is often not considered regarding agricultural land that's going to be taken out of production, probably about nine thousand acres, is the impact this will have on the local economy. Removing nine thousand acres is not a matter of losing nine thousand acres of food production, enormously significant and important though that is.

01:54:21:01 - 01:54:54:17

Loss of agricultural land this magnitude of will have an impact on all the associated industries, the local mill, agriculture machinery sales, servicing, seed companies, fertilizer companies, agronomists, the list goes on. It's not only the agricultural sector that will suffer. South Norfolk is a tourist area. Who's gonna want to come and visit somewhere that's covered in solar panels? I see Norfolk is not planning to implement the new so called tourist tax. Hardly surprising, because if this project is approved, there won't be any tourists to tax.

01:54:54:29 - 01:55:25:19

Local attractions such as the Tank Museum and the Steam Museum in Fawton and other small local businesses predicated on tourism will be will be left of visitors. The travails of both food production and the hospitality industry have been at the forefront of the news lately. A project such as this will simply amplify the already desperate straits of these industries. Local jobs will be lost. The economy will suffer. How the applicant can claim that the project will bring moderate beneficial socioeconomic effects on jobs, employment, and supply chain is beyond comprehension.

01:55:26:08 - 01:56:02:06

Employment associated with the scheme is majority focused on the construction and decommission stages. In other words, temporary. However, the jobs that will be lost in the agricultural and tourist industries are long term permanent employment. In conclusion, I would ask the examining authority to consider the considerable cumulative impacts I've outlined that this project would have on the local

landscape, environment, employment, and quality of life of local residents who, after all, are faced with having to live with this for sixty years. I would also ask examining authority to include Tasway, the Noventum project, and field best long stratum when making their assessment.

01:56:02:17 - 01:56:03:06

Thank you.

01:56:03:08 - 01:56:11:11

Mr Smith, thank you for your submission. It's greatly received. Thank you. I ask if there's a representative from the applicant present.

01:56:15:11 - 01:56:15:26

Thank you.

01:56:28:23 - 01:56:38:04

Thank you. My question to the applicant at the end of those oral submissions, is there anything you wish to respond to in relation to the comments made this afternoon? Thank you.

01:56:40:13 - 01:56:46:23

Toby Yates, on behalf of the applicant, I'm an associate solicitor at Pins and Masons, her legal advisers for the applicant.

01:56:48:25 - 01:57:25:09

Firstly, just want to thank everyone for their time this afternoon and the representations that have been made. We've engaged with the relevant representations that have obviously been submitted in writing. I know that it takes an additional commitment and and effort and often a personal matter to come and make these oral submissions too, so we're grateful for that. There's obviously been a lot of issues and concerns raised from a large number of people, and I won't possibly be able respond to all to of those now in in sufficient detail to justify that. And the open floor hearing is primarily for other interested parties to come and be able to have that say in the examination process.

01:57:25:11 - 01:57:59:13

I won't attempt to try and touch on all those in detail, But to reassure that all of those matters, including the likes of cumulative and transport and access, ecology and barbstone bats, etcetera, will obviously be dealt with at the issue specific hearings later this week or in written submissions going forward in examination and potentially future hearings as well. So they will be addressed in detail. At this point, just two, I think, particularly key clarifications, which will hopefully give comfort based on some matters that were raised.

01:58:00:05 - 01:58:32:17

Firstly, it's just to confirm that no part of the registered title for the war memorial or the old rectory falls within the order limits, so the red line boundary, no powers of compulsory acquisition or acquisition of rights are sought over either of those properties and neither title are within the scheme. So hopefully, that gives some some comfort and clarification there. And then secondly, just to confirm that the applicant is not seeking to acquire any residential properties. Again, that was a specific concern raised.

01:58:32:19 - 01:59:09:20

And just to clarify why residents may or will have received communications in respect of compulsory acquisition when, as I say, the case is that the applicant is not seeking to acquire any residential properties is that the land agents for the applicant and would Dalk or McLaren as part of a statutory process or legally obliged to serve notices on owners of land or property where other powers of acquisition may be sought. So for example, I think the lady that was referenced earlier, looked at the book of reference, and that would be where, for example, we're seeking rights.

01:59:09:22 - 01:59:37:02

So compulsory acquisition of rights for a cable route, so it doesn't involve her residential property. And that still saw as a fallback. Discussions are ongoing with each of those owners with land voluntary agreement and the example that was given by the interested party before for that lady, for example, heads of terms have been agreed, that process is moving forward. But I just want to state this opportunity to confirm that no powers are being sought to acquire the residential properties themselves.

01:59:40:04 - 01:59:42:06

You. Sir, please continue.

01:59:43:07 - 02:00:13:28

Thank you, sir. They were the two key points I just wanted to clarify at this stage. But as I say, with the exception of consultation, which is a matter that has been addressed through the acceptance of the application into examination, each of the other substantive issues that were raised today will continue to be engaged with and addressed by the applicant. As I say, that's all starting particularly tomorrow afternoon at the issue specific hearing, which touches on many of the principal issues that have been identified by the examining authority.

02:00:14:25 - 02:00:44:01

Thank you for your submission and for the clarification regarding the war memorial and residential properties. Thank you. With that, we come to closing remarks. If there's no other relevant business, may I remind you that the timetable for this examination requires that parties provide any post hearing documents including written summaries from individuals who spoke today on or before deadline one, which is the sixth of October.

02:00:46:01 - 02:01:06:15

May I also remind you that the recording of this hearing will be placed on the planning inspectorate's website as soon as practicable after this meeting. And as a personal note of thanks from the examining authority to all of those who've made oral submissions today, Thank you for coming here and for giving your information to us. Greatly received. Thank you.

02:01:08:05 - 02:01:17:06

That's okay. The next event is the second open floor hearing which will take place tomorrow at this venue at ten a. M.

02:01:20:12 - 02:01:33:08

Details and the agendas can be found in the rule six letter. Once again, many thanks. The time is now seventeen forty four. And this open floor hearing is now closed.