

Written Representations submitted in response East Pye Solar By Michael Haslam

PINS Ref: EN9110014; [REDACTED]

AI has not been used in the preparation of this written statement.

I am a member of the Saxlingham Nethergate Parish Council and the Steering Committee of BEPS, I have assisted in the preparation of the submitted Written Representations of both and fully support the objections they have raised to the application. This written statement builds on and is additional to my relevant representations, RR1326, submitted earlier.

In the interests of brevity I am not going to rehearse here their objections to the application, but I want to draw the attention of the ExA to the very real problems experienced by local residents during the construction phase of the Cleve Hill Solar Farm in Kent, the first solar panel scheme to be approved and become operational under the NSIP procedures. Attached to these written representations are a note of the visit I made with a fellow member of BEPS and a leading county councillor to the Cleve Hill area on 7 July 2026 together with a statement by a local resident (name redacted) that is self-explanatory.

Please add my name to the many who have objected to the AIL route from Poringland through Stoke Holy Cross, Shotesham and then Saxlingham Nethergate. It makes no sense to route abnormal loads along unclassified roads and past so many houses and two village primary schools. The AIL route should be confined to A and B roads and specially constructed haul roads.

I urge the ExA to:

- support Norfolk County Council's objection to the use of single-track roads by delivery vehicles,
- support Norfolk County Council's proposal to ban the use of impact-driven piles in favour of screw piles to avoid the continuous noise and vibration that cause so much "soul destroying grief" to the local residents near the Cleve Hill scheme,
- require the developer to fund structural surveys of all houses and service pipes on the delivery access routes.

Finally I urge the ExA to recommend refusal of this application for the many reasons set out by Norfolk County and South Norfolk Councils, Saxlingham Nethergate and many other Parish Councils, BEPS and the many people who have raised objections to this application.

Michael Haslam OBE
October 2026

Notes on site visit to Cleve Hill Solar Farm Site, 7 July 2026

In attendance: Gillian Marklew-Alan and Mike Haslam

The Cleve Hill Solar Farm was the first to be approved under the NSIP procedures. It currently is the largest operational solar and battery storage park in the UK and is located on the Graveney Marshes in North Kent. It spans over 900 acres and comprises some 550,000 solar panels and is approximately one third the size of the East Pye scheme.

We were met by a small number of local residents who told that neither Kent CC or Swale District Council had taken much interest in the scheme so the local residents stepped in to fill the gap by seeking to minimise the impact of the scheme on local residents and they were most helpful. On one occasion they resorted to "direct action" by causing a vehicle to break down outside the village school and on a single track road and blocking it. The end product was the contractors agreeing to "pause" delivery vehicles for an hour in the mornings and afternoons to coincide with the start and finish of the school day. It was clear from our visit that only a very small number, about 6 houses, were directly affected by the panels, the real problems they had faced were with delivery lorry's, initially up to 6 in convoy, on narrow single-track lanes 12 hours per day over some 4 years leading to cracks in houses that the developer denied were caused by the lorries. The cracking was worse when more than one delivery lorry travelled "in convoy".

Following our visit our proposals are:

1. We should seek to require the developer to fund surveys of all houses and underground pipes on their delivery access routes.
2. We should back NCC's proposal for all delivery lorry's to use B roads and then on-site haul roads and not any single track village roads.
3. We should very strongly oppose the current access proposals which will cause years of real grief for those living on the single-track roads. The Cleve Hill scheme is "only" 900 acres and the construction phase was 2 years, ours is 3 times the size and will probably require 1.5 million panels!
4. We should strongly support NCC's proposal for no piling and only using screw piles. There was a very real problem with the incessant noise and vibration from piling each of the panels at Cleve Hill and its impact 12 hours per day on local residents.
5. We should seek substantial community benefits to offset the grief that the construction phase of an approval will inevitably cause to our local communities.
6. The developers of Cleve Hill came across as being remote and uncaring and dealing entirely through their consultants/contractors. If East Pye is to be approved we should seek a more collaborative relationship with the developer/contractor(s) in an attempt to minimise problems for our local residents.

Appended is a note prepared by a local resident that graphically sets out her experience of the construction phase of the Cleve Hill project. **NB:** I have simply copied from the WhatsApp copy and have not attempted to look at spelling etc.

"This [redacted] harrowing experience of living through the Cleve Hill construction..

"A nightmare": the grim reality of living next to a mega solar building site 27 October 2025
Dust, mud, noise and disruption, HGV convoys, broken promises and cracks in the walls of local houses. This is the reality at the Cleve Hill solar plant in Kent. But after two years of what was described by a local as a "nightmare" build programme at the UK's first 'NSIP'[link] solar facility to be constructed, locals say that there is still no sign of the landscape planting the developer was required to fund and deliver as part of its Development Consent Order. None of the agreed community 'benefits' have been delivered, and the promised biodiversity 'improvements' haven't materialised either. In the PR for the scheme, the original developer promoted Cleve Hill's ability to provide clean power to local homes. The output is instead sold under Power Purchase Agreements for Tesco and Shell. Residents living close to the building site had to deal with problem after problem, from flooding, through illegally closed footpaths, to "soul destroying" noise when the builders switched to a different pile-driving technique for the extensive foundations to support racking for the 600,000 solar panels. There was little respite with very long site working hours: 7am to 7pm every weekday and 7am to 2pm on Saturdays. [redacted] a resident in the nearby village of Graveney, says: "The constant thud, thud of pile driving from early in the morning and into the evening, drove us all mad. It was so intrusive that even when it stopped we felt we could hear it still, it had become so much of our world. It's a continuous low level noise that gets to you and can give you headache after headache. It's a constant reminder of what is being destroyed." Pile-driving wasn't the only noise: there was continuous drilling, equipment reverse alerts, and metallic noises from fitting the panels. On top of this, the noise and disruption that comes with the territory when hundreds of construction workers "take over" the area for two long years. Site workers came from all over Europe. The hundreds of thousands of panels are almost 4 metres high. Cleve Hill is configured in an east-west design, so the racked panels create a dark, almost continuous apex roof pattern across the 900-acre site. The construction traffic was a major issue for local residents. [redacted] talks about "thundering of lorries going past" and houses literally "shaking". Cracks have appeared in buildings on the HGV route. The construction traffic was so heavy at this rural location that the developer had to use a so called 'Golden hours' system. One hour in the morning, and one hour in the afternoon so that children could start and finish schools safely and local people could use their narrow country roads free of the HGV traffic needed to build the UK's first mega solar power plant. Says [redacted] "The road through the village is a rural road and the continuous HGV movements made it look as if a bomb had hit it. The verges were decimated, loads of mud, hollows, potholes. We had regular roadworks because of the gas and water leaks. These were rare before the development started but they became a regular occurrence – the developer said it had nothing to do with them, but we were getting regular convoys of up to six HGVs on a small rural road. We had steady streams of concrete mixer lorries." According to [redacted] local drivers found themselves pushed into the verge and hedges, damaging their cars, because they were faced with a convoy of HGVs after the escort vehicle repeatedly gave the warning too late. The developer ended up having to build a large marshalling area to streamline the flow of HGVs and prevent so many disruptive and dangerous convoys. The long construction project did not even bring local job opportunities – a Greek construction company won the £114 million contract. Cleve Hill is subsidised by a government-backed Contract for Difference. Locals, says [redacted] still feel powerless: "Many people feel that everything has been taken from them: nature, wildlife, birds – all the owls, ge