

Topcroft Parish Council fully supports the submissions put in to the Planning Inspectorate by Block East Pye Solar. They have all the detail necessary to counteract the proposals put in by EPS. It has been carried out by a team of dedicated people who have full time jobs and who understand what is required, much better than we, as councillors have time to devote to. In many places they understand more of what has been submitted than EPS themselves or their representatives understand.

We reiterate that the whole process is discriminatory. It discriminates against, not only anyone who is not computer literate, it also discriminates anyone with: a job, a family life, (who have very little time), the inability to read and retain vast stores of information whilst cross-referencing and deciphering the proposals and comments. That means almost anyone without a degree in business or law or some such high level subject. i.e. the process excludes most of the population. TPC is in favour of relying less on fossil fuels and it understands the need for Solar panels in the right place to aim towards 'Net zero'. We do not believe this should happen at the expense of our way of life, our countryside, our tourist industry, our businesses and livelihoods, our outdoor pursuits and our health and wellbeing. We do not want to leave a poison chalice legacy for future generations to clear up.

1` Submission on Behalf of Topcroft Parish Council

1. Introduction

Hello. My name is [REDACTED], and I am speaking today on behalf of **Topcroft Parish Council**.

Let me be clear: Topcroft Parish Council does not oppose renewable energy. We understand the necessity of national climate targets. However, good planning requires a balance, and the **East Pye Solar scheme** shatters that balance. Island Green Power's proposal is not a green energy solution that would benefit us at all; it is an **industrial-scale imposition** that will permanently disfigure our countryside, destroy productive agricultural land, and compromise our rural infrastructure. For Topcroft and our surrounding parishes, this project shifts our reality from living in peaceful, food-producing rural communities to being trapped inside a sprawling, 2,700-acre industrial energy zone. The cumulative effect with other projects will annihilate the character of Norfolk.

2. Local Business and Ecological Destruction

The developer seems to treat this landscape as empty space, completely ignoring the fact that it is a **working, thriving rural economy**. South Norfolk relies heavily on tourism, countryside recreation, and local businesses many of which support visitors. Enclosing our footpaths and country lanes in literally miles of security fencing and industrial solar arrays is an appalling thought. It will adversely affect businesses such as pubs, farm shops, holiday lets, and the shops etc. that families rely on for their livelihoods. Fencing will also affect the movement of animals through the countryside.

There will be other environmental harms. Most critically, the project sits directly within the core foraging and maternity zones of **Barbastelle bats**—a critically rare and strictly protected species on the UK Red List. These bats are active around **Spring Wood**, a local ancient woodland; an area that many locals visit for well-being and recreation. The extensive removal of nearby trees and hedgerows, combined with the introduction of artificial lighting and solar arrays, will disrupt their flight lines and normal behaviours. It would make a nonsense of the legal protection if this massive infrastructure project goes ahead.

3. Farmland and Infrastructure

This ecological risk sits alongside the permanent loss of thousands of acres of productive, high-grade agricultural farmland during a time of national food **insecurity**.

For local communities including Topcroft, the immediate human impacts are just as severe. We have deep worries regarding the scale of the proposed **Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)**. The huge lithium battery containers bring high risks of thermal runaway with wide-ranging devastation. Our narrow lanes and local emergency services are ill equipped to handle such problems. Also, the years of heavy construction traffic will decimate our fragile road network.

4. The Structural Injustice of the Process

Adding to the physical impacts, Topcroft Parish Council wishes to strongly voice an objection to the **procedural injustice** of this entire process. This system is structurally loaded against ordinary people.

The developer has generated thousands of pages of highly technical, dense, and sometimes misleading documentation. No individual resident, parish councillor, or local business owner has

the time or resources to read through this mountain of paperwork to extract the truth. This makes the process difficult or impossible to follow. It means local residents and businesses remain in ignorance of the facts, turning what should be a fair, democratic consultation, into a David-and-Goliath struggle resulting in local voices being unheard and ignored. We are grateful to Block East Pye Solar for their hard work. We would be unaware of what is happening without them.

5. Conclusion

National policy wants renewable targets to be met but there are other ways by using **brownfield sites and rooftops**. We ask the Examining Authority to see the reality of the devastating impact of this project.

On behalf of Topcroft Parish Council, we urge you to protect our heritage, our environment, food security and our local democracy, and firmly recommend the **refusal** of this Development Consent Order.

Thank you.