

Shotesham Parish Council: Presentation to East Pye Open Flooring Hearing 2 -16 September 2026

1. My name is [REDACTED] and I speak on behalf of Shotesham Parish Council. I am also a Councillor at South Norfolk Council and the County Council.
2. The Parish Council is not against solar power and recognizes the role that solar can play in meeting the energy needs of the country. The PC does object to this patchwork proposal and the harms it would cause to individuals, communities and the environment across a broad swathe of South Norfolk.
3. Heather Jackson, chair of Shotesham Parish Council, will also be speaking on behalf of the Council this morning.
4. When the Applicant first announced this scheme, the Parish Council was shocked to see sites 8A and 8B as part of the scheme. We considered the area completely inappropriate and inconsistent with other solar schemes approved for Norfolk. We have fewer concerns about Site 7I which is also in the parish.
5. As a member of SNC planning committee, I have reviewed applications for other local schemes which have been approved. I find it difficult to believe that this area would ever be approved for a stand alone scheme, and it is difficult to understand why adding it to an NSIP should make it acceptable.
6. Since the Council first raised concerns and noted obvious errors, the applicant has attempted to add mitigation to limit the impact of the scheme on the community and the landscape. However, the fact remains that mitigation alone cannot correct poor site selection.
7. The Site Selection Assessment report seems to raise more questions than it answers:
 - i) The complexity of the layout and the lack of indexing made it virtually unreadable
 - ii) The level of errors and inconsistency within the document were disturbing – it was as if the applicant was trying to make the site selection process as obscure as possible.
 - iii) Based on the assessment criteria the applicant claims to have used we believe that 8A and 8B should not have passed East Pye's initial screening for topology, flood risk, and accessibility
 - iv) Furthermore, the analysis of possible sites centered on the Great Moulton POC does not appear to identify 8A and 8B as suitable sites.

Knowing the topology of South Norfolk, it seems intuitive that there might be preferable sites much closer to Great Moulton – the land tends to be flatter and the levels of population generally lower than as you move closer to Norwich.

The site assessment document seems to confirm this, and the applicant recognises that sites closer to attachment point are preferred. Yet in para 5.1.30, we read the applicant did not approach landowners in the area around Great Moulton. So a very poorly designed scheme indeed.

SNC has adopted a supplementary planning document on the susceptibility of the landscape to new energy infrastructure. It was designed to steer developers away from the most sensitive areas of landscape, like Sites 8A and 8B. I question if this was read at a sufficiently early stage in the project.

The applicant has consistently misrepresented the level of flood risk in this area – Market Lane is prone to significant flash flooding, and the flood risk extends to properties in the centre of the village. We fully support the flood risk report privately commissioned by Jill Guy, and linked to her relevant representation. This identifies continuing concerns and errors.

Access

As many others have said, the applicant appears to wish to use local roads for HGVs and AILs – in conflict with NCC Highways advice. This is entirely inappropriate. Between 8A and 8B runs the Tas – a narrow ditch for much of the year. The applicant proposes to use a very short stretch of Market Lane – a narrow metalled U road running between fields – rather than construct a crossing within the redline boundary. The proposed route runs over a culvert, unlikely to withstand heavy loads which becomes a seasonal ford prone to flooding and requires a drop from the field to the road. This will do significant damage to verges, banks, trees and hedges – and lead to high levels of noise and disruption for Market Lane Farm located only metres away.

I note that the original EIA scoping proposal showed most access coming off A and B roads. While the outline needed more work, it is clear that this is a feasible option.

8. In relation, to sites 8A and 8B, we ask the Inspectors to:

- a. Consider if the relatively small contribution made from solar on Site 8A and 8B, are sufficient to offset the multiple harms it would lead to – and -
- b. If appropriate consider what additional mitigation measures are required to reduce the impact on flooding, water quality and on nearby residential dwellings during construction, operation and decommissioning.

- c. Give full weight to the concerns and issues raised by NCC Highways on the highway network including the unnecessary use of local roads.
9. Many speakers have requested site visits to their property. We are aware of a request from South Norfolk and a request from Mr Shearer for site visits in our village. The Parish Council wishes to speak to a small number of residents to determine if an accompanied site visit is appropriate. We ask the Inspectors to accept any request submitted.
10. I note that there is great concern that these industrial sites will continue in operation for more than 60 years, or will see future industrial or residential development. We appreciate that it is difficult to futureproof a development consent order, but we request the inspectorate ensure that
- a. Any approved development cannot be considered “previously developed land “ under the current DCO.
 - b. The applicant is required to establish a sinking fund to ensure that adequate secured and earmarked funds for land reinstatement are built up over the expected lifetime of the project, to ensure that the owner at the time does not simply walk away at the end of the site’s useful life (as happens in so many industrial sites).
11. I think in many developments of this nature there can be a lack of trust between residents and the applicant – perhaps some of this is inevitable. In this case I think the lack of trust comes directly from the poor quality of the information provided by East Pye, the lack of transparency – even at application stage - and a failure to provide the detailed information that planners and residents can reasonably expect. This does not augur well for the future if consent is given, and I encourage the Inspectorate to ensure that any DCO is as robust as possible to limit wiggle room in the future.

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Shotesham Parish Council

Note – Paragraph 10 was omitted due to time