

Planning Inspectorate meeting 15th September 2026

East Pye Solar project (EN0110014)

Interested Party Reference number: [REDACTED]

Summary of oral presentation:

Thank you Mr Chairman,

Good afternoon, I am Dr Emma Harrold.

I am a resident of Stoke Holy Cross with a long-standing family connection of generations to this land and community, I strongly object to the East Pye Scheme and ask you to consider the accumulative impact and irreversible harm these would cause. We should pay attention to how the world has moved on since the original application. I understand the need for renewable energy but consider this could be expanded to rooftops without sacrificing productive farmland.

The village communities of South Norfolk live here and our life stories are intertwined to this landscape. I have issue that the proposed scheme would industrialise a landscape that is both agriculturally productive, a place of human habitation and historically significant—particularly the historic route of the Pye Road/A140 whose significance few know about, whose legacy of 2000 years, it's a Roman road, the proposal overlooks. It is a living history lesson for teachers and children. That the proposed scheme bisects the historic route of the Pye Road/A140 and is named after it, is in my view, inappropriate and disregards the area's legacy. It commercialises or misrepresents our heritage.

I have issue with the impact to this vast area, that is rich in history, has delicate natural habitats of streams, hedgerows and narrow lanes. It is valued for its tranquillity and heritage. The proposed scheme is unsuitable and would harm this attractive, rural area.

Environmental concerns are paramount. The loss and disruption of natural habitat by the proposed scheme would negatively impact local wildlife. There is no credible evidence that farmland, once converted for industrial use, can be restored to its original state. Chalk streams are globally rare, established ecosystems, formed in the Ice Age, 10,000 years ago. Sixtytwo of Norfolk's counsellors demanded urgent action to protect these in 2025. Any alteration to surrounding land use risks degrading water quality, flow patterns, and the habitats that wildlife depend on.

A third issue, there is no credible evidence that with decommissioning, restoration can be achieved, which risks our food security.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the planning inspectorate to realise the accumulative impact of this proposal to reject it in favour of alternatives that protect South Norfolk's heritage, human habitation and productive countryside.

Thank you for your attention.

Dr Emma Harrold [REDACTED]

Comments and further supporting details.

1. Application and examination process issues

The inspectorate meeting highlighted multiple issues, the inspectorate and the East Pye Solar team noted these to the applicant. However satisfactory answers from the applicant were lacking. For example when asked if the proposal was suitable they replied that it met the planning criteria. There were many instances when applicant had not described a clear process. When the proposal was rejected for the Norwich power station to accommodate by the National Grid the electricity incurred, the applicant acknowledged the process of a search did not start again with approaching potential sites, but used the existing identified sites for considering the alternative of the Great Moulton power station, which was not satisfactory as it stands.

The transcript for the inspectorate meeting 15th September 2026 has spellings incorrect for names of speakers, importantly the villages and the features of the landscape, these could have been uploaded before or edited after the meeting to ensure the transcript is correct as much as possible. This is unfortunate as research tools which could aid the process do not find key words due to spelling inaccuracies.

2. Community impact and human habitation:

People who spoke to me from the parishes affected, at the inspectorate meeting, were those threatened with devaluation of their homes, those who could not sell the home of a deceased relative due to the devaluation treat of the application and those threatened by solar overlooking their homes, who would have to sell, leave their homes and did not want to.

As a consultant clinical psychologist in my work role in the NHS, the lack and inaccessibility of information, guidance and support is evident. The stress and distress this application process causes and the process itself has seemed avoidable with a negative impact on the people of our communities. Specialists in the planning arena have advised me that there is no social policy guidance for planning applications for solar at industrial scale and national infrastructure. Therefore it seems unfortunate that the planning inspectorate have no social policy to refer to as guidance for their decisions. I believe there are many public health risks, not least from the cumulative impact of threatened major solar projects in Norfolk amounting to 12,000 areas of countryside, it is all the more important therefore that our generation advocate for the vulnerable in our communities and highlight what risks these parishes are being subjected to.

3. Accumulated impact

There were evidently people from the 16 parishes consisting of 26 villages, presenting on implications of the proposal for affecting their daily lives and homes. That the East Pye Scheme is one of three schemes with potentially 9,000 – 12,000 acres affected in Norfolk, this would devastate our heritage landscape, the livelihoods and tourism which depend on it. Industrial-scale solar infrastructure is not appropriate in this quiet, attractive, rural area as the local communities depend on the landscape, heritage, productive farmland, habitats and waterways. The village of Hempnall is the source of the chalk stream river Tas. The Tas valley is described by South Norfolk Council (SNC, 2021) as a 'highly sensitive landscape' with a peaceful rural quality and a wide, open valley floor. The accumulated impact of these proposals would cause irrevocable visual harm to the Tas valley.

4. Impact on rural areas and need to support participation – evidence for my comments:

I feel strongly about the need for an accessible and transparent process for those thousands of people affected. There shouldn't be an expectation that people in rural areas would have access to the internet for the intensive work involved in researching the application and its implications for local communities. There were many relevant issues raised about the accessibility of the documents, consultation process and the inspectorate meetings to the people of our local parishes. A main issue I noted being lack of library facilities for those who do not have a computer or the digital literacy to use one and the suggestion of printing the materials seeming impractical given the hundreds of documents, perhaps a consequence itself of the electronic era.

5. Threat to biodiversity – evidence for my comments:

I have issue with the use of AI in the process for the inbuilt in accuracies and lack of trust and evidence for general reliance on AI. Specifically, the applicant's reference to their desk top research. A clear example is with the following images of typical narrow lane and delicate verges of the south Norfolk countryside. A desk top search does not show the landscape in detail, overlooking the attractive nature, biodiversity and intrinsic value of our countryside. The destruction of such verges and lanes in our countryside would be experienced every day by the community and visiting public. Photo comparison of desk top research and photos showing the actual detail:

a. Google maps desk top image of a verge



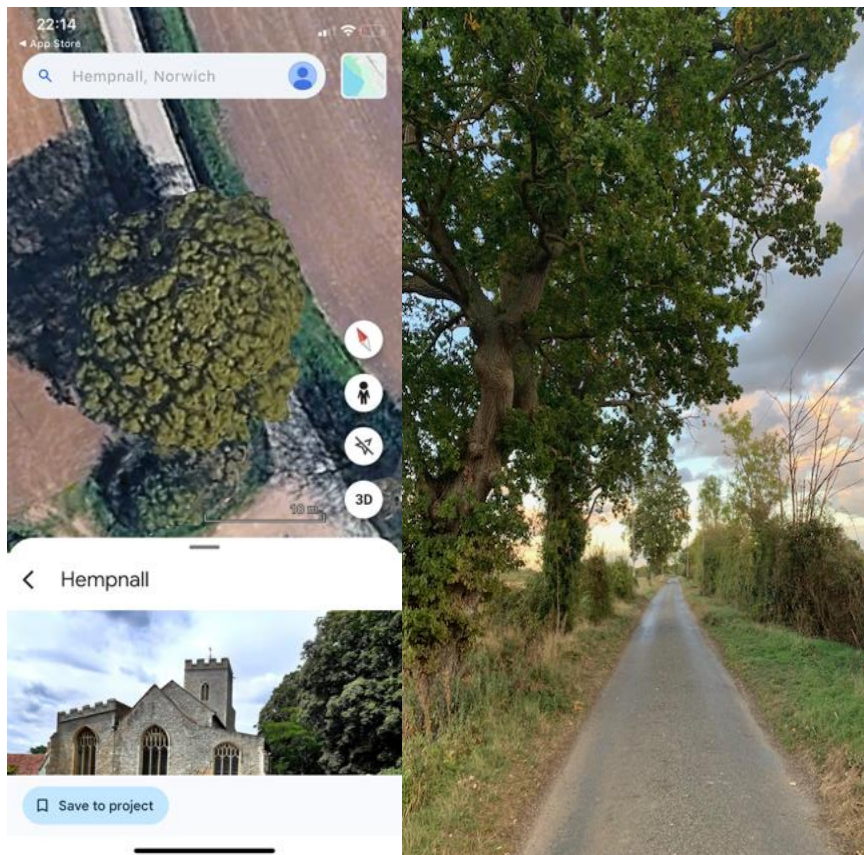
b. Photo of actual verge side flowers:



b. The proposal threatens our countryside lanes and roads

The lanes of South Norfolk other than main roads are typically single vehicle. These lanes and village roads are suitable for one vehicle and cars not large vehicles such as lorries. Many oak trees are found over-handing these lanes. The delicate verges are essential habitats for nature and keystone species as oak trees host thousands of other species. All these habitats are threatened by industrialisation of the countryside on an unheard of scale. We have seen destruction of the country side in Norfolk and wish to avoid any more of the destruction. We know we have an attractive area and do not want to lose it. A desk top search, frequently mentioned by the applicant at the inspectorate meeting doesn't reveal the fragile ecosystem of our countryside. Here I illustrate this point with photographic evidence.

- a. Google image of an oak tree. b. Photo of an oak tree over hanging a road (keystone species):



b. On the historic roots of the Pye Roman Road (A140):

Dr Emma Harrold’s excerpt of her statement at the planning inspectorate meeting day one, 15.09.26:

“The proposal threatens our heritage such as the Pye Roman Road which is bisected by the proposal industrial site. The village communities of South Norfolk live here and our life stories are intertwined to this landscape. I have issue that the proposed scheme would industrialise a landscape that is both agriculturally productive, a place of human habitation and historically significant—particularly the historic route of the Pye Road/A140 whose significance few know about, whose legacy of 2000 years, it’s a Roman road, the proposal overlooks. It is a living history lesson for teachers and children. That the proposed scheme bisects the historic route of the Pye Road/A140 and is named after it, is in my view, inappropriate and disregards the area’s legacy. It commercialises or misrepresents our heritage.”

Supporting information: “The Pye Road is a Roman Road running from the capital of the Iceni at Venta Icenorum (Caistor St Edmund near Norwich) to the original Roman provincial capital and legionary base at Camulodunum (Colchester)... later extended...over the Thames at Londinium (London) although part of this route is known by the name Great Road”. [www.https://Roman-Britain.co.uk](https://Roman-Britain.co.uk)

The Pye Roman Road as the A140 is called, extends from the Roman/Iceni site of Venta Icenorum in Caistor St Edmund to Colchester and London in the south. Venta Icenorum existed as an important site of human habitation before the city of Norwich existed and the site is south of the city, the road stretches south from Caistor St Edmund to Colchester and London. The road is evidenced in Margary’s (1973) definitive text on Roman roads in the UK. It describes the baseline alignment for the Pye Road, giving it official designation as a Roman road.

Norfolk has networks of Roman tracks. Woodward (1831), historian cited by Cubitt (2008), records there is further local Roman history notable and relevant to this application. He recorded existence of a “massive Roman Road” going through Hempnall east-west. The Roman ‘street’ names are also in evidence to this day in Hempnall e.g. ‘Street Meadow’ and ‘Street Close’. The Roman units were recalled to Italy by AD410, leaving their traditions and crafts. Cubitt (2008) describes evidence of Roman history in ‘The book of Hempnall - a treasure trove of history’, see map image (1).

The cultural significance of the Pye Roman Road for the people of South Norfolk and importance to the UK to this day, is shown by the many contemporary references on history and heritage websites on the Internet. The Pye Roman Road/A140 is referred to as ‘East Anglia’s most important route linking Caistor St Edmund to Colchester and London’.

The A140 is variously referred to as the Pye Road, Pye Roman Road and the Roman Pye Road. Four hundred years ago the road acquired the name Pye Road in the 1600s. The significance of the Pye Roman road is evidenced here with many references from published information both printed books and on-line websites.

Evidence is given in important on-line sources, with examples, such as a PhD thesis and educational webpages:

Roman Roads in the Changing Landscape of Eastern England c.AD410 – 1850. PhD dissertation by James Edward Albone (2016). **“The most significant Roman road serving Venta Icenorum was the Pye Road “**

Kids Encyclopedia (on-line): **“Pye Road facts for kids”. “The Pye Road was a very important [Roman road](#) in ancient Britain.”**

Travelling with the Romans (on-line): **“The Roman Road from Scole to Coddanham - The Pye Road”. “This was possibly East Anglia’s most important route linking Caistor St Edmund to Colchester and London. Caistor, Venta Icenorum, was the regional capital of the Iceni Tribe.”**

The Pye Roman road - East Norfolk Explorer (on-line website): **“In Norfolk this Roman road runs between Scole and the Roman town of Venta Icenorum at Caistor St Edmund.”**

Wikipedia (on-line): **“Pye Road is a [Roman road](#) running from the capital of the [Iceni](#) at [Venta Icenorum](#) ([Caistor St Edmund](#) near [Norwich](#)) to the original [Roman](#) provincial capital and legionary base at [Camulodunum](#)([Colchester](#)).”**

On-line talk: **‘Roman Roads in Norfolk – a talk by James Albone’**

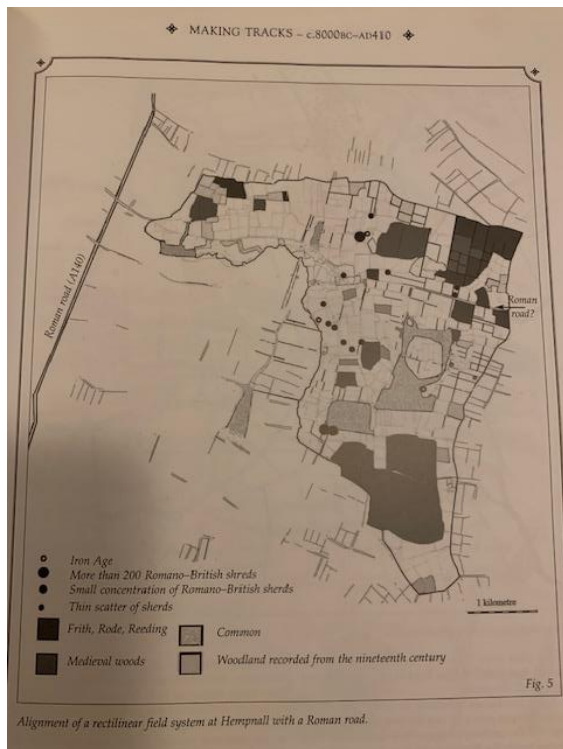


Image (1) of map: Pye Road/A140, Hempnall village and roman roads. Reproduced from M. Cubitt (2008) 'The book of Hempnall – a treasure trove of history'.

Conclusion: This is strong evidence supporting my comment opposing the scheme, that the proposed scheme bisecting the historic route of the Pye Road/A140, named after it, is in my view, inappropriate and disregards the area's legacy. It commercialises or misrepresents a touchstone in our important cultural heritage.

References:

I Margary (1973) 'Roman Roads in Britain'.
 S. Woodward (1831) 'A descriptive outline of Roman Remains in Norfolk.' Society of Antiquaries pp. 358-73.
 cited by
 M. Cubitt (2008) 'The book of Hempnall – a treasure trove of history'

9. The proposal threatens the chalk stream rivers.

The river Tas is one of 25 chalk streams in Norfolk. Chalk streams are globally rare, crystal-clear, spring-fed waterways shaped by ice age glacial activity roughly 10,000 years ago. These are an irreplaceable habitat ('Save our chalk streams', Norfolk Wildlife Trust, 2026). Also highlighted by the national Wildlife Trust's 'Clean Water' campaign, 2026

These are fragile ecosystems which face ongoing threats. They have flora which provide specialist habitats for iconic and vulnerable fauna such as kingfisher, freshwater cray-fish, water voles, brown trout, banded demoiselle damselfly and otters.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust, local groups and our communities actively strive to protect and improve chalk streams.

References:

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/about-us/what-we-do/our-work-land/water/water->

<https://www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/SaveOurChalkStreams>

10. The proposal is a threat to food security - evidence for my comments:

Professor Anne Marie Minihane's comment that food supply risk in the UK are such that no land should be decommissioned from farming food production to other uses.

The proposal of converting around 2,700 acres of productive South Norfolk agricultural land into industrial-scale energy infrastructure represents a threat our food security. Critics, local campaigners, and MPs argue that this land conversion to industry, set to be for many decades, directly undermines domestic agricultural capacity. There is a cumulative impact of such schemes in Norfolk together would take 12,000 acres of farm land out of food production. There is no evidence that dual purpose farming is sustainable, there is a lack of evidence of net gain in biodiversity of such projects.

11. Conclusion:

This evidence supports and develops the ideas from my opposition to the proposal in my oral presentation and initial submission. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further details.

Dr Emma Harrold. [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]

**Planning Act 2008 – section 88 and 89 and The Infrastructure Planning
(Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – rules 6, 9 and 13**

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