Planning Inspectorate
Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Hearing Transcript

Project:	Whitestone Solar Farm
Hearing:	Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH1) - Part 1
Date:	10 November 2026

Please note: This document is intended to assist Interested Parties.

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The video recording published on the Planning Inspectorate project page is the primary record of the hearing.

File Name: WHITESTONE_10NOV_OFH_PT1_Redaction.mp3
File Length: 01:38:10

FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

00:00:03:21 - 00:00:07:02
Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated.

00:00:08:17 - 00:00:21:25
Welcome. It is now two PM in time for this hearing to begin. I'd like to welcome you all to this open floor hearing for the Whitestone Solar Farm project. Can I just confirm that everybody can hear me?

00:00:25:08 - 00:00:30:24
And I also confirm with the case manager that the live streaming event has commenced.

00:00:32:22 - 00:00:47:23
Name is Craig Loughlin, chartered water and environmental manager, secretary of state to be a member of the panel to examine this application. I'm going to ask the other panel members to introduce themselves.

00:00:48:20 - 00:00:58:00
Thank you. My name is Rebecca Norman. I'm a chartered town planner and examining inspector. I've been appointed by the secretary of state to be the lead member of the panel to examine this application.

00:01:00:12 - 00:01:11:17
My name is Helen Van Willigan. I am a solicitor and a chartered town planner and have been appointed by the secretary of state to be a member of the panel to examine this application.

00:01:13:12 - 00:01:51:24
Thank you. Together, we constitute the examining authority for this application. At this point, I would like to introduce members of the plan and inspectorate's case team supporting us here today. We have Louise Hoverway, who is the case manager for this project, supported by case officers, Cameron Alford and Carolyn Hewen, as well as our operations manager, Sasha Cook. Another two case officers, Rebecca Quinlan and Harrison Coals, are providing online support. In addition, we have technicians from the audiovisual company, CVS International, be in attendance solely for the purpose of managing and recording and live streaming of this event.

00:01:52:23 - 00:02:17:01
I'll now briefly deal with some housekeeping matters for those here in person. Please can everyone either turn off or set all devices and to silent during the hearing so as not to interrupt anybody who is speaking. Toilets are situated on the first and second floors. These to the left near the stairs, gents to the right near the lift. There are also disabled toilets at either end of

00:02:19:03 - 00:02:28:04

There's no fire alarm scheduled today. Therefore, if the alarm sounds, please leave the building via the nearest clear exit, and do not reenter the building until instructed

00:02:28:06 - 00:02:29:18
to do so by staff.

00:02:30:14 - 00:02:43:01
All visitors should proceed through the fire exits clearly and make marked their way down the staircases, not not using the lifts, making your way over the separate crossing to the north car park and await further instructions.

00:02:44:22 - 00:03:04:27
If there's anyone present who needs assistance in the case of an emergency, please let the case manager know. Just regarding breaks, we're intended to have a break at around three thirty and and conclude this hearing by around six thirty this evening. If necessary, we will also look to have a short break at about five PM.

00:03:06:15 - 00:03:20:15
So moving on to the agenda. An agenda has been circulated for this hearing. Helpful to have a site of a copy. At this juncture, can I also ask the applicant's team now to display the agenda on screen?

00:03:34:23 - 00:03:38:18
Is there anyone from the applicant's team? Oops. Sorry. Thank you.

00:03:40:10 - 00:03:51:12
Thank you. The purpose of this open floor hearing is to hear from interested parties who registered to make oral representations elaborating on their written representation to date.

00:03:53:07 - 00:04:18:24
Order in which you will be invited to speak will follow the list provided to us by our case team and is based upon the order in which requests were received. Today's hearing is being undertaken in a hybrid way, means which some of you are here in person, has joined us virtually via Microsoft Teams. Make sure that however you've decided to attend today, you'll be all be given a fair opportunity to participate.

00:04:20:29 - 00:04:31:28
A recording of today's hearing will be made available on the Whitestone Solar Farm section of the National Infrastructure Planning website as soon as practicable after the hearing is finished.

00:04:33:25 - 00:04:58:07
With this in mind, please ensure that you speak clearly into a microphone stating your name and who you represent each time before you speak. If you're at the table with the microphone, please press the button to switch this on before you speak and then switch it off again once you've finished speaking. If you're not at a table with a microphone, there are two mo... Roving microphones, so just please wait for the case team to bring one to you.

00:05:00:07 - 00:05:31:07
A link to the plan inspectorate's privacy notice was provided in the notification for this hearing. Assume that everyone here today has familiarized themselves with that document. That document establishes how the personal data of our customers is handled in accordance with the principles set out in data protection laws. Please speak to a member of the case team if you have any further questions on that. I'll now pass to Mrs. Norman, who will outline the purpose of this hearing in more detail.

00:05:32:10 - 00:06:07:18
Thank you. So this open floor hearing provides an opportunity to raise anything directly to the examining authority that is important and relevant and that you think we should know about and consider. They're not about a particular topic or location. The substance of your representations you make about the proposals are therefore your choice. The hearing also gives the panel an opportunity to ask speakers questions about the evidence they've presented. Oral submissions made today should be based on representations previously made by participants. However, we have already read those written submissions, and they will all be afforded the same weight as those made orally.

00:06:07:20 - 00:06:39:02
We are asking that the written submissions are not repeated and that you take this opportunity to provide us with further details and any explanation to help us understand and fully appreciate the case you're seeking to make. Due to the large number of parties wishing to speak today, we will be setting a time limit of three minutes per person for individuals. And where you're speaking on behalf of an organisation, group or a number of individual parties, there will be a time limit of five minutes. There will be a timer displayed. And if you require it, we can indicate to you when you have about a minute left, and we'll ask that you keep to the timings.

00:06:39:28 - 00:07:30:00
Once you have spoken, the panel may wish to ask questions. And finally, the applicant will be given an opportunity to respond to any matters raised by each speaker once all speakers have been heard. And this may be done orally or in writing by deadline one on twenty four November twenty twenty six. We ask that those present do not interrupt whilst another person is speaking, even though you may disagree with what's being said. It's important that parties are given a fair opportunity to put forward their case without interruption or other distraction. The MHCLG guidance on the examination of applications for development consent explains that the examining authority may refuse to hear evidence which is, in its view, irrelevant, vexatious or frivolous, relates to the merits of a national policy statement, repeats other representations already made or relates to compensation for compulsory acquisition of land or an interest in or over land.

00:07:30:12 - 00:07:48:28
Additionally, the examining authority may request any persons behaving in a disruptive manner to leave the hearing or to remain only if that person complies with specified conditions. So that outlines the purpose of this open floor hearing, and I'll hand over to my colleague, Mrs Van Willigen, to take the introductions. Thank you.

00:07:52:00 - 00:08:02:29
Thank you. Before we hear from the individual speakers who've indicated they want to speak this afternoon, if I could ask who will be speaking for the applicant this afternoon?

00:08:06:24 - 00:08:08:19
I can I can see you, mister Walker?

00:08:14:09 - 00:08:30:19
So I'll now run through the list of the interested parties who have given us notice of their intention to speak today. We do have a lot of names, so we have put these in an order

00:08:32:09 - 00:09:03:25
that the requests were received for them to speak, though some people have indicated time constraints, which we have tried to accommodate. So with the list of individuals, as I read out names, if you could please just indicate that you are here and you still wish to speak so that we we know our list ready to get on with the open floor hearing. So firstly, I have mister Rob Gully.

00:09:05:25 - 00:09:11:15
Is there anybody else speaking for the councils with you, mister Gully?

00:09:17:03 - 00:09:19:05
I have lease... Lisa Brooks.

00:09:21:10 - 00:09:22:06
Thank you.

00:09:23:29 - 00:09:26:06
Thank you. Emma Keith.

00:09:30:24 - 00:09:32:00
Liz Duncan.

00:09:33:16 - 00:09:37:11
Thank you. Councillor Tim Dixon.

00:09:39:16 - 00:09:45:06
Thank you. Anthony Northcutt. Thank you. Kevin Downing.

00:09:49:20 - 00:09:53:25
Can't see a can't see a hand there. Anybody online?

00:09:55:27 - 00:10:08:20
Nicola Henderson, I have you down twice on our list as I understand that you're speaking for parish council and also for a number of individuals.

00:10:10:24 - 00:10:14:28
Thank you. Patricia Whitworth. Thank you.

00:10:18:02 - 00:10:20:21
Janet Greenwood. Thank you.

00:10:23:05 - 00:10:29:17
Philip Knight. Thank you. Paul Bray online.

00:10:30:13 - 00:10:31:26
Yep. I'm here. Thank you.

00:10:31:28 - 00:10:36:13
Thank you. Again, councillor Nicola Henderson.

00:10:37:29 - 00:10:39:08
Lauren Clay,

00:10:40:26 - 00:10:41:12
virtually.

00:10:45:15 - 00:11:01:10
Sorry. I believe she might be joining us later. Paul Hanby. Thank you. Jonathan Holdsworth. Thank you. And Lindsay Holdsworth. Okay. Ian Park virtually.

00:11:01:29 - 00:11:04:16
Yes. But I'm not intending to speak this afternoon.

00:11:05:03 - 00:11:08:00
Thank you. Nick Malone?

00:11:14:00 - 00:11:23:03
See anything virtually. Janet Greenwood, I think we've had your name earlier, but maybe for another

00:11:24:18 - 00:11:25:20
organization.

00:11:31:00 - 00:11:31:27
Liam Herbert?

00:11:34:10 - 00:11:40:06
Thank you. Gareth Denman online.

00:11:45:00 - 00:11:45:26
Greg Reynolds?

00:11:53:01 - 00:11:54:14
Malcolm Salisbury,

00:12:01:13 - 00:12:06:17
Julian Morley. Thank you. Mark Corrigan?

00:12:07:01 - 00:12:12:05
Yes, madam. I'm here. I intend to speak. I'm struggling to hear the room at the moment online.

00:12:14:00 - 00:12:14:15
Okay.

00:12:20:03 - 00:12:24:15
Walter Blakemore. Thank you. Trevor Sinclair.

00:12:27:21 - 00:12:57:06
Tim Stevens. Thank you. Sarah Day. Thank you. Jeanette Graham. Thank you. Holly Beckett. Thank you. Joan Jackson. Thank you. William Collins. Thank you. Terrence Huggett. Yep. I can see your net hand. Jeanette Pickersgill. Thank you. Erica Williamson.

00:13:00:09 - 00:13:01:01
Yes.

00:13:03:01 - 00:13:12:09
Thank you. Angela Eastwood. Thank you. Matthew Clay. Thank you. Patricia Smith.

00:13:16:06 - 00:13:22:11
Myra Robinson. Thank you. Richard Booth. Online.

00:13:28:11 - 00:13:30:11
Lauren

00:13:32:01 - 00:13:34:11
Clay, virtually.

00:13:39:10 - 00:13:44:04
Lee Sissons. Thank you. Claire Booth?

00:13:47:24 - 00:13:49:00
Paul Buckland?

00:13:49:02 - 00:13:50:13
Yes. Online.

00:13:50:23 - 00:13:53:00
Thank you. Peter Hubbard?

00:13:57:02 - 00:14:12:12
Oh, thank you. And we have two further people who haven't haven't registered, but if we have enough time, we will get to them. Roger Greenwood. Thank you.

00:14:15:26 - 00:14:25:05
Apologies. We will we will make every effort to come to you, mister Greenwood. And Christine Sandham. Thank you.

00:14:32:01 - 00:15:04:08
So as you can see, we do have a large number of people who we would like to hear from today, and we appreciate your patience in this. If when it's your turn, if you could... If you wish to come up to the front table and speak in the microphone there, if you just press the button to... Well, so it goes red for you to speak. We will be taking notes as you speak. So if we're not looking at you, please don't take that as a indication that we are not listening.

00:15:04:18 - 00:15:08:08
We are. We... We're we're taking notes as you are speaking.

00:15:11:26 - 00:15:18:13
Is there anybody else who wishes to speak at the meeting? I can see a hand... Couple of hands up.

00:15:24:21 - 00:15:27:06
I don't think I'm going to be able to hear you, unfortunately.

00:15:46:01 - 00:15:54:21
Okay, mister Stanway. We we will put your name on our list, and we will we will come to you. And, again, the gentleman with his hand up.

00:16:03:01 - 00:16:05:01
Okay. Mister Morley said.

00:16:10:18 - 00:16:12:13
Hello? Yeah.

00:16:18:28 - 00:16:22:04
Could could we get a microphone into

00:16:30:16 - 00:16:38:11
Sorry, madam. I'm here to represent myself as an individual and Connys Brewrunners as a group.

00:16:45:01 - 00:16:50:26
Apologies, mister Eastwood. We'd had a note to say that mister Huggett was speaking, on your behalf. Are you speaking now?

00:16:51:00 - 00:16:55:24

That's for Fursby Residence Association. Okay. Thank you very much. Still got two.

00:16:55:26 - 00:16:57:09
Yep. Perfect. Thank you.

00:17:01:14 - 00:17:02:18
Is there anybody else?

00:17:05:23 - 00:17:06:12
Okay.

00:17:08:14 - 00:17:29:24
If I could also reiterate that if you don't want to speak or there isn't time, you are very welcome to submit your representations, again, in writing, and they will carry as much weight with us as somebody who's attended and spoken personally.

00:17:33:11 - 00:17:39:21
And is there anybody else online I've missed? Don't see any hands raised.

00:17:41:07 - 00:17:50:28
So that we can now continue with the proceedings and start hearing from you one by one, I'm now going to pass to Mr. Loughlin to take this forward.

00:17:59:21 - 00:18:26:05
Thank you, Mrs. Van Willigen. So moving to our list, if we can begin to invite speakers. Can I just confirm with Mr? Walker for the applicant, you will be given time end of the hearing. You're not intended to make a... That's fine. Okay. So first of all, on our list, for the local authorities, Mr. Rob Gully, please.

00:18:34:11 - 00:19:04:27
Thank you, sir. Yes, Rob Gully for Rotterdam Metropolitan Borough Council and City of Doncaster Council. So just be a brief clarification. We'd originally asked to speak on topics of cultural heritage and green belt as we'd observed that they weren't covered in the agenda for the issue of specific hearings. We'd obviously covered that this morning the in procedural meeting. So thank you for the reassurance that those will be addressed down the line in the examining process. So we don't now intend to speak on those matters.

00:19:05:16 - 00:19:22:13
We will rely on the written representations, local impact report, issue specific hearings along the way. But obviously, we will be listening very intently to all of the representations that are made by other interested parties whilst we don't intend to say anything further ourselves. So thank you. Thank you.

00:19:37:12 - 00:19:39:02
If we could now have

00:19:41:04 - 00:19:43:28

councilor Tim Dixon, please.

00:19:53:12 - 00:19:54:13
Good afternoon.

00:19:58:13 - 00:20:30:08
Chair and members, I'm councilor Tim Dixon, Woodset's ward. I represent North and South Woodset's and Thorpe Salvin. Firstly, I'd like to say I remain firmly opposed to White's own solar farm. I support renewable energy in suitable locations, but that cannot mean accepting industrial scale developments regardless of its impact on our countryside and communities. And we are, in Aniston Woodset's ward, a rural countryside community. This is not simply about solar panels.

00:20:30:10 - 00:21:00:16
It's about fencing, infrastructure, construction, traffic, cabling across landscapes that defines our villages, nor is Whitestone an isolated proposal. Common Farm Solar Park is already under construction with a significant proportion of that development sitting within Anston Parish, and further solar developments are in the pipeline. Our communities are already experiencing the impact of renewable energy development.

00:21:00:25 - 00:21:36:06
We are playing our part, and we have done our bit. The cumulative effect of our country... On our countryside and farmland and communities must be properly assessed, the cumulative impact. And I particularly want to highlight the grade one listed Saint James's Church in South Aniston. And this doesn't just concern the picture postcard view that it gives. This is an important focal point of our communities and our village. For example, last Sunday is where all our community gathers to celebrate Remembrance Sunday.

00:21:36:19 - 00:22:06:23
People stand around there at the Litchgate, which is a Commonwealth war grave. And you... From there, the vantage point, you can see all across where the development's supposed to be. So the view towards the church, especially from the east, and the views across our historic landscape matters. Brotherhood councils raised concerns about the harm to the church setting its landscape. Advisers have also challenged the choice of viewpoints that have been picked to look at as far as I'm...

00:22:06:25 - 00:22:40:05
As where nobody has looked at it... Looked out from the church on top of the hill. I'm concerned that the important locations have not all been visited properly and assessed. How can the landscape and heritage impact be judged fairly without seeing these places affected? I ask the examining authorities to inspect those expanding viewpoints, including the views towards and from Saint Joseph's Church, Crogate, and other vantage points in North and South Anston. There are also unresolved concerns about Anston Brooks wetland woodland drainage and ecology and and archaeology.

00:22:40:15 - 00:23:13:02
And Thorpe Salvin faces disruption from the proposed cabling, including the effects on rural roads, rights of way, and the Chesterfield canal. These are not minor details to be dealt with after consent. They go to whether the true impacts are properly understood. National energy targets matter, but they

are not a blank check to industrialize our countryside. Please examine the cumulative harm. We require robust evidence, and please visit the places at risk. Whitestone is a wrong development at the wrong scale and in the wrong location.

00:23:13:11 - 00:23:19:03
And I ask, as many have come to me, that this is refused. Thank you.

00:23:27:20 - 00:23:28:17
Thank you, Councillor.

00:23:41:09 - 00:23:45:21
Can we now have Anthony Northcode, please, for the three joint parishes?

00:23:58:13 - 00:24:29:07
Good afternoon, sir. Anthony Northgate appearing on behalf of the joint... The three joint parishes, which is made up of Aniston, Hartlewood... Hartlewood Woodall and Wales Parish Councils. As you know, we've submitted a very detailed written relevant representation, and we are coming to the issues specific hearings. As such, this afternoon, I want to focus on the impact on people, which is not a topic really coming up at the issues specific hearings. Solar farms are continually described as temporary land uses.

00:24:29:17 - 00:25:04:23
However, an operational lifetime of sixty years for this project is a generational lifetime. I would make the point that on average, the coal fired power station in Nottingham coal fired power station in Nottinghamshire were only operational for forty three point six years. Those coal fired power stations in South Yorkshire were operational on average for only forty four point eight years. Modern power stations in Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire only have a design lifespan of twenty five to forty years. So sixty years lifetime for a solar farm in the context of electricity generation is enormous.

00:25:06:29 - 00:25:40:29
Overall, the three parishes are very concerned that the development fundamentally undermine the community spirit, civic pride and sense of place that residents attach to their area, and that's the same across the wide area. Harthill and Woodall have a very strong tradition of residents actively looking after the two villages, maintaining their appearance and traditions, which have been recognized, for example, through Yorkshire and Bloom Awards. There's a lot of evidence of community stewardship, attachment to the place where people live, and an active relationship between the villages and the rural setting.

00:25:42:02 - 00:25:52:08
In Harthill, there's a lot of residents and visitors come to the reservoir, local footpaths, and surrounding countryside, which provides an important setting for Harthill Conservation Area.

00:25:54:03 - 00:26:24:17
Aniston contains a site of special scientific interest, a designated nature reserve, two conservation areas and numerous listed buildings. It consists of two settlements, North and South Aniston, which are bisected by the age fifty seven. This is part of the area where farming quarrying were the activities

until coal mining came along, and that also brought railways. Anston has also seen large scale postwar expansion in the nineteen fifties and the sixties.

00:26:25:23 - 00:26:58:18
Locally, around Aniston, they put a huge amount of effort into trying to have environmental improvements, local tree planting, and flood mitigation. And it's been made the point already that Aniston is already playing its part with a solar farm currently being constructed. Wales and Kiverton Park are settlements with a strong community emphasis. Historically, Kiverton Park was parkland to the stately home known as Kiverton Hall. Coal mining, the railway, and the Chesterfield canal has shaped Kiverton Park as well as North and South Aniston.

00:26:59:10 - 00:27:27:15
Overall, in the area, there used to be five collieries. Wales and Kiverton Park has a community development trust that's put a huge amount of effort into regeneration of the former collieries across the area, and that's brought about economic development and the provision of green infrastructure. The social, environmental and economic benefits from that green infrastructure is now seriously threatened with proposed new industrialization of the countryside.

00:27:29:13 - 00:27:40:25
Having spent decades regenerating the environment from past industrialization to now propose new massive industrialization on the countryside is an insult to those communities.

00:27:42:23 - 00:28:17:04
I'd like you to think about things not just in a in a macro scale, but a micro scale. Lots of individual parcels, like various highway works, accesses proposed, they will all have a very significant impact, whether that's the loss of hedgerows or whether that's the loss of the old boundary wall that was... To the duke of Leeds estate going up dog cannel hill. Lots of these individual small elements cumulatively will just add collectively to the overall harm.

00:28:17:16 - 00:28:42:23
And as I said before, we'd like you to examine the proposal not just at the macro, but also the micro level for... To assess harm. All in all, the natural environment, the green belt, heritage, sense of place, and the character villages in the three joint parishes will be unacceptably adversely affected by the development, And I urge you to recommend dismissal. Thank you very much.

00:28:49:10 - 00:28:50:23
Thank you, Mr. Northcote.

00:28:52:20 - 00:29:01:26
Next, we have Janice Cotton, who will be joining us virtually on Teams. Are you there, Mrs. Cotton?

00:29:02:03 - 00:29:35:09
I am, yes. Yes, good afternoon. And thank you for allowing Lawton on the Moreland Parish Council to speak today. I'm the vice chair of Lawton Parish Council. I want to focus on two things which particularly concern us. The sheer scale of the proposed Whitestone Solar Farm and the effect of the

development like this have on the roads and countryside around our villages. Whitestone Solar Farm does not lie within Lorton on the modern parish, but our residents still feel its effects.

00:29:36:03 - 00:30:07:06
People travel every day from Lawton towards Dinnington, the A57 and the M1, as well as towards Rotherham and through the wider countryside around us. We are already seeing the effect of a much smaller solar development at Common Lane. There have been very disruptive road closures and diversions, hedgerows have been removed, and familiar routes have changed with green fields now displaced by metal structures. When roads are closed, traffic did not stay on the official diversion.

00:30:07:14 - 00:30:39:29
People found other ways through putting more traffic onto country lanes and through neighboring villages. That experience has shown us that the effects of the development are not confined to the site itself and that neighboring villages can feel the impact very directly. Following the common lane development, there are also a number of other solar battery and energy infrastructure developments currently in the planning system across Rotherham. Whitestown Solar Farm would then add a development on a completely different scale.

00:30:40:23 - 00:31:12:12
Our concern is what all of this means when you put it together. Rotherham would gradually become a patchwork of solar developments, each considered separately through the planning process, but together changing a very large area of our countryside. Taken together, that would create a much more industrialized landscape in the area that has taken many years to recover from the effects of coal mining. But this is not just about what the landscape looks like, it's about how people experience the place where they live.

00:31:12:27 - 00:31:48:19
Our residents drive through the countryside every day. They walk in it, cycle through it and spend their leisure time in it. It is the open space between our villages and part of what makes this area feel rural. If more and more that open countryside is changed in this way, people will experience Rotterdam differently in their everyday lives. Journeys between villages will look different. Familiar views will change. Areas which people have always known as open countryside will increasingly contain solar panels and associated infrastructure.

00:31:49:18 - 00:32:20:07
We are concerned that Rotherham is being asked to take more than its fair share of that disruption and change. We are not against renewable energy, but we do think there needs to be proper consideration of how much development one area should reasonably be expected to accommodate. We would ask that the examining authority to look at Whitestone Solar Farm as part of a much wider picture and consider what the combined effect will be on Rotherham's countryside, communities, and the people who live there.

00:32:20:22 - 00:32:29:01
For those reasons, Lautern and Moreland Parish Council maintained its objection to the proposed development. Thank you for listening to me.

00:32:37:12 - 00:32:47:07
Thank you, missus Cotton. I will now invite Nicola Henderson to come forward, please. Yeah.

00:32:48:28 - 00:32:51:15
It's on on behalf of our Aniston Parish Council.

00:32:55:16 - 00:32:58:29
And also, you're speaking letter for numerous individuals like others.

00:33:03:26 - 00:33:07:26
I'm also speaking for Salvin Parish Council afterwards.

00:33:08:22 - 00:33:11:18
Shall I do both Yes. Go ahead.

00:33:12:19 - 00:33:50:06
Good afternoon. I'm Councillor Nicola Henderson speaking on behalf of Aniston Parish Council. I'll address three critical issues for consultation, traffic safety, and rural crime. First consultation. Our parish has more than nine thousand residents, and we are one of the largest parishes directly affected by Whitestone. We consider it unacceptable that the applicant did not hold a single statutory consultation event in Anston. We raised this in our former responses, yet when the applicant held recent drop in sessions to help people register for this examination, Anston was left out again.

00:33:51:25 - 00:34:22:03
Many residents remain completely unaware of Whitestone. People can only have their say if they know what's been proposed and how it affects them. Turning to traffic, Anston will be one of the worst affected parishes with heavy construction traffic, site accesses and cable works surrounding both our villages. Our greatest concern is the safety of the people who live there. Our roads are small historic village routes never designed for sustained HGV traffic.

00:34:22:24 - 00:34:52:20
Crogate, Sheffield Road, and Dog Kennel Hill have houses next to the road, on street parking causing restricted visibility and limited room for the HGVs to pass. They are used daily by school children, elderly residents and cyclists. Our recreation ground used by children's football teams is at the top of Crowgate with a construction access proposed right next to it. The bus stop used by Wales High School pupils and the wider public is also there.

00:34:54:11 - 00:35:08:09
In light of residents at Brampton reporting cracks in their home during construction of the Common Road solar farm, has the applicant assessed for the potential for vibration and structural damage to houses along Anston's proposed construction routes?

00:35:09:29 - 00:35:48:24
The a fifty seven is already in an extremely busy and congested major route linking the m one and a one, carrying substantial traffic directly by our villages. Whitestone will add construction vehicles, site accesses, and cable crossings. With temporary lights and inevitable queues, how will pedestrians

cross safely and drivers pull out of side roads? We've seen the chaos and gridlock caused by the common farm project at Brampton. The recent Yorkshire waterworks have also brought Anston to a standstill with queues tailing back to Todwick and causing traffic to divert through our villages.

00:35:49:21 - 00:36:09:06
Whitestone presents a real risk of gridlock. How will an ambulance or a fire engine get through when residents need urgent help? Yet the applicant concludes that no areas of significant congestion have been identified within the study area. That does not reflect the reality of the A57 through Anston.

00:36:11:06 - 00:36:42:23
The applicant's drawing show the construction traffic route using Crowgate and Dog Kennel Hill, but neither road is described in the outlined construction traffic management plan, and we've been unable to identify a clear total for all construction traffic passing through Southampton. We do not have confidence that the safety risks and disruption that our parishioners will experience have been properly assessed. This disruption poses a direct threat to local businesses, deliveries, and livelihoods.

00:36:43:29 - 00:37:14:11
Finally, rural crime. Anston already suffers from it, including problems with off road bikes. Whitestone would bring solar construction and cable works right behind people's homes. Even if the solar sites have security guards, who will secure the open cable trenches? A local labor ward councilor has advised there were attempted thefts at Common Farm Solar Project on four consecutive days over the August bank holiday weekend, and a security guard was hospitalized.

00:37:15:01 - 00:37:51:03
She raised this with Whitestone at Ulley and came away without a satisfactory answer. Whitestone is on a much larger scale. We are concerned that criminals drawn here to steal cable and equipment could also target nearby homes, farms, and businesses. Has the applicant assessed the risk to our residents? It is our residents who will live with these impacts. Surely, there has to be a point at which the harm caused by a solar scheme outweighs its benefits. Anston Parish Council believes Whitestone crosses that line, and we ask you to recommend refusal.

00:37:51:05 - 00:37:51:20
Thank you.

00:38:01:27 - 00:38:35:07
I'll now speak for Thorpe Salvin Parish Council who are unable to attend. Our concerns centre on the cable route through our parish and whether the applicant has provided enough information to demonstrate that these works can be carried out safely. First, the crossing beneath the Sheffield Lincoln Railway, Chesterfield Canal, and its overflow conduit at Peck Mill Bottoms. We understand that trenchless drilling is proposed. Has the applicant demonstrated that the crossing can be strong to...

00:38:35:09 - 00:39:18:25
Constructed safely supported by investigations into ground conditions, groundwater, and former mine workings? Former collier is operated nearby at Kiverton Park and Shire Oaks. Mining related subsistence caused serious damage and collapse at the canal's Norwood Tunnel near Kiverton. What site specific evidence supports the applicant's statement that Kabiru L does not intersect her areas of

historic mining activity? How would drilling fluid escape, groundwater contamination or ground movement beneath the railway and canal be prevented and managed? What technical review have Network Rail, the Canal and River Trust and the Environmental Agency undertaken?

00:39:20:26 - 00:39:34:14
The book of reference, document four point three, page six seventy two, refers to pylons and permanent acquisition at plot twenty three nine. What does that entry mean, and are any above ground structures proposed?

00:39:36:08 - 00:40:09:11
Our second concern is access and the safety of our residents. What size of drilling plant and delivery vehicles will be needed, and how would they reach the working area? The plans identify crossings on Pacman Lane and Ladefield Road with accesses numbered twenty four one, twenty four two, twenty three five, and twenty three six. We've been unable to locate detailed access drawings, a construction traffic management plan for these roads, or a transport statement showing the anticipated numbers number, size, and frequency of construction vehicles.

00:40:10:22 - 00:41:05:12
Pacman Lane and other local roads are narrow and winding with brown bends and limited visibility. Pacman Lane is generally only only one car wide, while Ladefield Road is tight even for two cars passing and is also the village bus route. These roads are regularly used by cyclists and horse riders. How will their safety be ensured when they encounter large construction vehicles around blind bends with little room to pass or move out of the way? How will bus services and emergency access be maintained at all times? Will widening hedge removal or temporary tracks across fields be needed? Where would vehicles cross or share public paths? And how would walkers, cyclists, and horse riders be separated from machinery? The safety assessment must cover the entire route from the village roads to the working area.

00:41:06:11 - 00:41:17:22
Third, we must look at the construction site and its direct effects on the canal. A public bridleway and footpath run alongside work area twenty three nine between Lady Road and the canal.

00:41:19:09 - 00:41:42:02
How will walkers, cyclists, and horse riders be separated safely from drilling pits, deep excavations, and heavy construction traffic? How many workers would be involved? Where would they park? And what welfare facilities would be needed? How much land would compounds, plant, materials, and excavated spoil occupy on each side of the crossing?

00:41:44:21 - 00:42:17:19
The Chesterfield canal is a valued recreational route and wildlife corridor. The canal and river trust questioned whether the applicant had correctly recognized that the local wildlife site designation includes the crossing location. Has this been resolved and have the effects of drilling, vegetation clearance and temporary works been assessed specifically for this sensitive habitat? How would the works affect the canal setting and access to the towpath? What closures or diversions will be required and for how long?

00:42:19:05 - 00:43:14:25
Fourthly, we also ask about aviation safety. Sheffield Aero Club operates light aircraft from Nether Thorpe Airfield just outside outside Thorpe Salvin. Has the assessment considered glint glare and distraction for pilots approaching, departing, and flying circuits, including the combined effect of the proposed panel areas? What consultation has taken place with the airfield? Finally, what will remain in our parish after construction? Which accesses and structures will be retained permanently and what long term land rights for future maintenance are being sought? How often could inspection, maintenance, or replacement bring machinery back through the parish? Who would reinstate the land and repair damage? The information currently available does not give us confidence that these severe risks to public safety and the local environment have been adequately assessed.

00:43:15:02 - 00:43:22:13
We ask the panel to require clear, evidentiary answers from the applicant before reaching its final recommendation. Thank you.

00:43:29:01 - 00:43:30:26
Thank you, councilor Hanson.

00:43:36:14 - 00:43:40:09
Could I now invite, mister Paul Handy, please, to come forward?

00:43:54:15 - 00:43:57:11
Apologize. I have...

00:44:00:24 - 00:44:02:20
Sorry. Patricia Whitworth, please.

00:44:26:19 - 00:45:00:03
Good afternoon. I'm speaking on behalf of Ravenfield Parish Council. My name is, Patricia Whitworth. Ravenfield Parish Council formally objects to the proposed White Stone Solar Farm development. We recognize the national importance of renewable energy and the need to move towards more sustainable sources of power. However, this must not come at the expense of proper consultation, thorough assessment, or the protection of our communities, countryside, and the heritage.

00:45:01:26 - 00:45:34:28
Ravenfield is one of the closest settlements to Whitestone one, yet yet our community was excluded from the applicant's initial engagement arrangements. Residents report that they did not receive the initial consultation leaflets, and no applicant... Applicated. Sorry, no applicant, public meeting was held in Ravenfield during the first consultation. For a community so close to the proposed developments, we found this particularly disappointing.

00:45:35:23 - 00:46:11:27
Residents who attended consultation events elsewhere also reported difficulties obtaining clear answers to important local questions. This raises questions about how fully the applicant understood Ravenfield and its surrounding landscape at the outset. In May twenty twenty five, Ravenfield Parish

Council formally requested that Whitestone assess the whole of the parish. We raised concerns about landscape and heritage impacts, resident...

00:46:11:29 - 00:46:41:08
Residential views, construction traffic, noise, public rights of way, drainage, and flooding. These concerns were raised well before the application was submitted. They remain central to our relevant representation. We therefore ask the examination authority to establish what changes have been made in response to these concerns and whether the evidence demonstrates that they have been properly addressed.

00:46:42:26 - 00:47:13:06
One particular example is Ravenfield footpath ten. Whitestores viewpoint nine is positioned towards the lower end of the footpath near Garden Lane. However, the route climbs towards Braithwall Road where both the elevation and the surrounding views change considerably. Residents have identified views towards Cunnisbury Castle and the historic landscape of Cunnisbury Park from higher sections of this room.

00:47:13:08 - 00:47:32:03
The viewpoint taken from the lower end of the footpath cannot, on its own represent the experience of walking the entire route. Whitestone has also introduced viewpoint sixty five associated with Ravenfield Bridleway four. We ask the examination... Sorry,

00:47:34:01 - 00:47:51:12
we ask the examining authority to consider whether these viewpoints adequately represent the visual and heritage impact experienced along these roads. We would particularly welcome an inspection of these locations.

00:47:53:12 - 00:48:33:00
We also remain concerned about the proposed cable corridors. Residents have raised questions about the extent of the works, construction methods, land requirements and potential permanent restrictions. Of particular concern is the suitability and safety of local roads that may be used during the cable corridor construction. We also ask that the justification for land acquisition and permanent rights is carefully examined, including whether alternatives have been fully considered and whether the powers sought are proportionate.

00:48:33:07 - 00:48:38:13
Importantly, construction traffic, noise, drainage, flooding, biodiversity

00:48:40:06 - 00:48:53:22
and landscape impacts should not be considered solely in isolation. Our residents will experience the combined effects of this development in their everyday lives.

00:49:07:25 - 00:49:34:02
Another important issue is public confidence in the consultation and the examination process. In January twenty twenty five, the Parish Council found it necessary to correct inaccurate information

concerning a proposed consultation meeting. More recently, on the twenty first of August twenty twenty six, Ravenfield Parish Hall was used by Whitestone to assist residents with registering

00:49:36:28 - 00:49:38:21
as interested parties.

00:49:38:23 - 00:49:41:27
Missus missus Wood, I thought you're about to to close-up there just to give you

00:49:42:02 - 00:49:42:26
Okay. Thanks.

00:49:42:28 - 00:49:44:07
For your last point, please.

00:49:47:06 - 00:50:23:04
Braydenfield Parish Council will continue to pass participate actively throughout the examination, representing residents scrutinising the evidence and submitting further information where appropriate. In closing, we ask that the examining authority be given particular attention to the adequacy of consultation, the reliability of the landscape and heritage assessments, the proposed cable corridor arrangements and the cumulative effects upon Ravenfield.

00:50:25:08 - 00:50:25:25
Thank you.

00:50:34:11 - 00:50:38:28
Thank you, missus Cotton. Can we now have Liam Herbert, please?

00:50:55:16 - 00:51:18:00
Good afternoon. Thank you. My name is Liam Herbert. I'm chair of Hooten Roberts and Fursby Parish meeting. We're the civil civil parish authority for Hooten Roberts and Hamlet of Fursby on the bottom side of the boundary for this application. We're a statutory consultee under section forty two, and the applicant's own environmental statement records that Firsbee abuts the order limits.

00:51:19:25 - 00:51:36:20
Our position is that consent should be refused for Whitestone one. We're not asking you to revisit the need for renewable energy. Our case is that the effects on this parish have not been properly assessed and that the order does not secure what the applicant reply... Relies upon.

00:51:38:27 - 00:52:17:25
Hooten Roberts and Fursby have been one community for centuries. Fursby is a small hamlet of homes. Its people come to Hooten Roberts for church, for the parish, and for each other. The old route between Hooten Roberts and Micklebring has run through this landscape for many hundreds of years, and it remains well used and active today. Whitestone one would surround that route with fencing and panels for sixty years. In practical terms, they would sever Firsby from the village it belongs to. The

families at Firsby would look out from their homes across panels and fencing and reach their own homes through an industrial site for a generation.

00:52:18:14 - 00:52:21:10
That's not something the environmental statement recognizes.

00:52:23:20 - 00:52:36:22
Every part of that route within Whitestone one can be closed under schedule five of the draft order. Nothing stops those closures happening at the same time. No maximum period is set. Nothing requires a through route to be kept open.

00:52:38:20 - 00:52:57:00
On landscape, the applicant concedes permanent significant harm at Fursby Lane and at Micklebring. It treats our footpaths as a single set of views and then discounts the harm because no one view lasts. An historic route is a journey. It should be assessed as one.

00:52:59:17 - 00:53:30:23
The land around Firsbee is also some of the most historic in the area. The Romano British Villa within Whitestone one was scheduled in July twenty twenty five as a scheduled monument, one four nine one seven five one. There is a medieval pottery industry at Fursby. There's the old deer park. The applicant survey of this ground is incomplete. Further evaluation would take place only after consent when the layout can no longer change. The draft order contains no hedge... Heritage requirement.

00:53:31:10 - 00:53:43:27
The exclusion zones and the two hundred and seventy meter standoff the applicant relies exist on only in the environmental statement. We share Doncaster Council's view that these effects cannot be adequately mitigated.

00:53:45:22 - 00:54:18:02
On traffic, the a six thirty runs through Hooten Roberts past Saint John's Church, which has sat on that site for almost a thousand years. Equally, we have homes fronting the road. The applicant rates this as high sensitivity. It sends one hundred and seventy two construction work and vehicle movements a day along it, more than any other servicing road White Stonewall. It then screens that out as a one point two percent increase. A percentage of it on on a busy main road cannot tell you what traffic means for a small village.

00:54:19:29 - 00:54:34:13
Hooten Roberts and Firsby Lane in particular also faces a second solar panel proposal under a separate application, which is before Rotterdam Borough Council. The combined effect of these two schemes on the lane and the footpath needs to be considered collectively.

00:54:36:05 - 00:55:06:24
We have submitted a list of site specific locations, and we ask for you to consider. And we ask you to walk the route from Fursby Hall Farm along footpath three to Park Lane and to stand on Fursby Lane at viewpoint thirteen. We also ask that you see you see the proposed access on the a six thirty and the

road through Hooten Roberts at a shift change. A walk of an hour would tell you more than any photo montage, and we're happy to help arrange this. Finally, our requests.

00:55:07:28 - 00:55:34:29
In the unfortunate circumstances that you're reminded to recommend consent, we would ask that the order contains a heritage requirement that secures the mitigation the applicant relies upon. We ask for requirements protecting the route between Hooten, Roberts and Micklebring, and for the access and amenities of residents of Fursby. However, principally, we ask that you recommend consent be refused to Whitestone one and it be excluded from the order. Thank you.

00:55:43:21 - 00:55:44:27
Thank you, mister Herbert.

00:55:46:28 - 00:55:49:24
Could I now invite mister Philip Knight, please?

00:56:13:06 - 00:56:18:16
But night, Carnesbury Parks, Parish Council, also a statutory consultee.

00:56:20:18 - 00:56:51:17
Just in relation to the statement I'm making today, I would like it to be read alongside our relevant representation, r r zero four nine nine, our submission, p d one seventy nine, and our scheduled proposed inspection locations PD one forty six. Whitestone one lies predominantly within our rural parish. We recognize the importance of renewal energy, but productive farmland, domestic food production and greenbelt countryside also matter nationally.

00:56:53:07 - 00:57:23:09
Our parish includes Clifton and its conservation area established in nineteen seventy seven, historic buildings, archaeological remains, farmland, footpaths, and bridleways with valued views towards Gunnersburgh Castle. Around one in three of our residents are aged over sixty five, and we are concerned that this community's particular needs have not been fully understood to date. We are proud of our heritage and our countryside. This is our home.

00:57:23:28 - 00:57:54:29
These are places where residents walk, ride, exercise, and find peace and mental health and well-being. Their value is felt every day in their lives, not simply recorded in assessment documents and material presented to the examiner. The Whitestone One development, predominantly within our parish, sits in a landscape forming a natural bowl overlooked by a number of higher villages, Clifton being one of them, with superb vistas across the landscape.

00:57:55:15 - 00:58:03:20
Its fields, old routes, farm tracks, connected communities, connects the communities with their historic surroundings.

00:58:05:09 - 00:58:36:21

We ask that this distinct archaeological, historic and landscape characteristics are examined in their own right within the wider application. On heritage, we strongly support the concerns expressed by City of Doncaster Council and South Yorkshire Archaeological Service. In particular, we share their concerns about the assessment of the castle and the Roman villa, a scheduled monument, incomplete archaeological investigations, and the relationship between the remains across the wider historic landscape.

00:58:37:10 - 00:58:50:25
For our parish, these are connected parts of our shared history. Our history does not stop at the boundary of a scheduled monument. We ask that these relationships are properly understood and the protections enforceable.

00:58:52:22 - 00:59:25:18
We also question the selected viewpoints adequate... Whether they adequately represent what people see. Our supplied submitted schedule p d one forty six one dash forty six, sorry, identifies views across locations. We ask you to inspect with reasons for each. Please consider these alongside the applicant's viewpoints to understand residents' experiences of the landscape. Footpath sixteen and bridalways two and four raise concerns about safety, continuity, and enjoyment.

00:59:26:02 - 01:00:02:15
Keeping a path open does not preserve everything people value about it. A countryside walk could remain available but feel very different and intrusive alongside panels, fencing, CCTV. Please consider the whole journey not simply a line on a map. Park Lane from the a six thirty proposed accesses and narrow roads raise concerns about construction traffic and vulnerable users. Any assurance on paper must be tested in reality and must work on these narrow lanes.

01:00:02:29 - 01:00:40:27
We seek scrutiny of runoff and flood risk, particularly in relation to Keersley Brook as it runs through Connorsburgh and in relation to downstream flooding. We also particularly draw our attention to City of Doncaster Council's level one strategic flood risk analysis that's been updated in February twenty six, which seems to have not been taken into account. We also have particular concern to green belt openness and combined effects with other developments, some of which have been referred to in relation to adjacent solar development proposed and with Rotterdam Council.

01:00:41:21 - 01:01:15:00
Please also examine differential effects on older and disabled residents. And also, alongside Conyersburg is the village of Conyersborough, which is a socially deprived area, many of which are limited by digital access points. We will contribute further evidence including residents' long standing knowledge of the area. Please consider these impacts together as residents would experience them, changes to their outlook, journeys and connection with this place.

01:01:15:22 - 01:01:28:10
Future generations deserve a countryside they can enjoy and an historic landscape they can still understand, set against the suggestion that this is a temporary impact of a sixty year development.

01:01:33:01 - 01:01:34:12

Thank you, mister Nick. Thank you.

01:01:44:20 - 01:01:53:11
Thank you, mister Nick. Can I just check? Might... Mister councilor Liz Duncan, would you like to speak? Thank you.

01:02:10:00 - 01:02:40:20
Good afternoon. I'm council Ellis Duncan, the elected member for Bramley and Ravenfield Ward in Rotherham, which includes the parish of Hooten Roberts in Fursby also. I welcome the opportunity to speak on behalf of the residents in my ward. My concerns remain those raised in my relevant representation, namely highway safety, local heritage, flooding, landscape and residential impacts. Since the first public consultation, I've been regularly contacted by ward residents asking for assistance.

01:02:41:13 - 01:03:09:17
Many residents have found the process of consultation and the communication with the applicant difficult and frustrating, and the recent difficulties with the interested party registration have only added to those concerns. The applicant distributed forms which PINS could not accept, explaining that it had acted on its understanding of the guidance, yet PINS confirmed that the guidance had not changed. How could an applicant with professional advisers get such a fundamental participation procedure wrong?

01:03:11:02 - 01:03:44:04
Highway safety, especially during the construction phase, remains a big concern for my residents. The a six thirty is a busy, frequently congested road with a history of serious collisions. The principal Whitestone one construction access is proposed off this road. Where is the evidence demonstrating that the access can operate safely, particularly during peak traffic and disruption? I'm also concerned about smaller accesses, including along Sherburne Avenue in Bramley via Broadlands.

01:03:44:16 - 01:04:25:05
It's a residential street of family homes. The application proposes using this road to access an area of cable corridor construction, the drawings, including articulated HGV movements, and possible temporary parking restrictions. Rotherham Council has also raised safety concerns about this access. Have the affected households been properly informed, and have safer air... Alternatives been considered? I remain concerned too about flooding at Fursby. Residents of Fursby have sent me both picture and video evidence showing flooding following heavy rainfall in recent years and the surrounding fields drained towards this low lying community.

01:04:26:02 - 01:04:58:01
What evidence demonstrates that the proposed panels, access tracks, and associated infrastructure will not worsen existing problems. Heritage and landscape are equally important, and I remain of the view that the Whitestone application fundamentally underestimates the heritage significance of the Whitestone area, Whitestone one area, and therefore, the development of a solar farm at this site would have a severely detrimental impact on the important historical sites both on and adjacent to the proposed site.

01:04:59:07 - 01:05:30:23
From Ravenfield, public rights of way offer extensive and changing views over the former Deer Park landscape. Have these views been properly represented, including the highest sections of the routes both from and towards Ravenfield? And what about individual homes down in Firsby, which is immediately adjacent to Whitestone one? Properties have different orientations and outlooks, and yet the applicant has decided that a separate residential visual amenity assessment is unnecessary.

01:05:31:17 - 01:05:51:06
Why? I ask the examining authority to test these matters carefully as our residents deserve evidence, not assurances. And where the applicant cannot demonstrate that the effects of Whitestone are accept... Acceptable, I ask you to consider recommending its removal from the DCO. Thank you.

01:06:00:12 - 01:06:11:18
Thank you, councillor Duncan. We're now going to go to Paul Bray, mister Paul Bray, who is online. Are you there, mister Bray?

01:06:12:14 - 01:06:47:10
I am. Yes. So my name is Paul Bray. I'm a member of Weston Parish Council, and I I would like to raise some points from our representation letter that was submitted on the thirteenth of October this year. We remain concerned that the scheme potentially will degrade the appearance and character of of the area both in in our parish and the adjacent parishes as we've heard already. I would have to say probably the the issues raised are similar across all the parishes affected.

01:06:49:02 - 01:07:28:17
In particular, our parish is subject to a number of developments currently. So we have the Exogen solar farm development which is currently proposed that may well progress in in parallel. Have two housing developments of numbering four fifty... Four hundred and fifty houses and one hundred and seventy houses. And we also have the National Grid Substation, which has been approved. So all of these things taking up a substantial amount of the open countryside in our area, in particular, bounding the the village of of Weston on the south side of Rotherham.

01:07:33:12 - 01:07:40:23
We feel that the the visual impact of the scheme has been really very poorly presented

01:07:43:10 - 01:07:50:06
both to ourselves during consultation and and also in in the documents that have been presented to date.

01:07:52:28 - 01:08:10:13
Essentially, the the scale of the scheme, the... How is this thing going to look from the various footpaths and viewpoints in our area area. Whiston itself has been very much on on the boundary of what has been considered to date, but is substantially affected.

01:08:13:07 - 01:08:32:29

We're also substantially affected by the cable routes which are constructed through through our parish and extend from sections where they're fairly close to housing, perhaps perhaps a hundred meters away, right up to to the motorway. Our our parish is bisected by by the m one.

01:08:35:18 - 01:08:59:24
These cable routes, again, the the application seems very open in terms of what the the applicant is asking for. For example, they... They're asking for a... Typically, a forty meter corridor will be constructed in... Within a width of two hundred meters that's been identified. But that's a typical construction. They're not actually asking for what they need to use.

01:09:01:12 - 01:09:23:04
Similarly, gaps in hedgerows, it's not clear what extent of hedgerows will need to be taken down. Again, it suggests minimum required for construction, but there's no proposed figures on the actual limits. And there are numerous bullet points of that sort of of nature which are outlined in in our letter. It would be appreciated

01:09:24:24 - 01:09:36:00
if the examination authority would take a look at these issues and consider reasonable limits that should be applied should the scheme be given the go ahead.

01:09:39:21 - 01:10:11:20
I think perhaps one one final point we wanted to make is is it the the visualization that has been given again, I apologize if I'm repeating, but the visualization in terms of the solar panel arrays, the substations, and the battery energy storage systems are unclear. It's not obvious to us what they're going to look like, to what degree they will be screened if at all, but equally, it's not being consulted with our parishioners on that basis.

01:10:13:01 - 01:10:33:16
I would urge that the panel ask for additional information and visualizations and visit these parishes. We have put an invitation to the examination authorities to do just that. And come and see for yourselves just how valuable our countryside areas are to our local residents. Alright. Thank you.

01:10:40:03 - 01:10:41:14
Thank you for that, mister Brue.

01:10:44:05 - 01:10:49:23
We're now gonna come back to the room. And can we have Paul Handy, please?

01:10:57:20 - 01:10:58:14
Apologies.

01:11:01:10 - 01:11:04:18
Moving on. Jonathan Holdsworth, please.

01:11:22:23 - 01:11:36:29

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. I'm Jonathan Holesworth. I'm speaking on behalf of Fursby Way Working Dogs, and, also, I'd like to speak on behalf of Gunniesborough as we haven't got a parish council.

01:11:39:13 - 01:12:19:08
First of all, we have Fuseby Way Working Dogs. This development is going to absolutely destroy our business. We have a breeding business for dogs and a training business. We've had the opportunity to use the parks for the last twenty years with permission of the landowners or the tenant farmers. If this is taken away, the business will not be able to carry on. It will take away the open spaces which is needed for our business to carry on, which would affect me, my wife, and my children who work in the business.

01:12:20:22 - 01:12:51:06
We cannot take the work anywhere else. We asked Whitestone to try and help us solve the problems. They come up with different ways to try and solve it, but nothing could solve the problems which we would have carrying on. The open spaces is needed for myself as well as a business. I have also got a property on Fursby Lane. Whitestone have put the development right up to the border of the property.

01:12:52:13 - 01:13:07:05
Also, with the Ilios development at the side of it, he's going to be surrounded by solar or solar developments, which he will move out because he would not be able to live under them conditions.

01:13:08:22 - 01:13:44:23
Also, as Connorsburgh Village has got no representative for her parish council, I'd like to state that it is a very deprived area which hasn't got many open spaces available for the people to use. I worked in the regeneration housing development. I saw how people lived and what they had. They had nothing. A lot of people at the lower end of the valuation of properties in the village didn't have the money to go to the other places.

01:13:45:00 - 01:14:06:09
What they did have is the open spaces available for people to walk with their families and to get out into the openness. This would be taken away from our village. There's nobody else to represent us here. So I have brought that forward to yourselves, and I appreciate your time. Thank you very much.

01:14:16:21 - 01:14:25:15
Thank you, mister Holdsworth. Comments duly noted. We move on, Just going through my list.

01:14:27:05 - 01:14:32:01
Think we're now at Janet Greenwood for Save Our Greenbelt.

01:14:45:13 - 01:15:04:24
Good afternoon. My name is Janet Greenwood. I'm the vice chair of Save Our Greenbelt, Conyersburg Parks. I want you to understand that this doesn't preclude us from the detailed report that we'll be putting in for opposition around this... For... On the twenty seventh of October.

01:15:06:12 - 01:15:46:25

I'm speaking on behalf of save our Greenbelt, Conyersburg Parks. We are a constituted community organization formed by residents from Conyersborough Parks, Conyersborough, Clifton Village, Micklebring, Thursby, Hooten Roberts and Ravenfield. We are about the people. We came together because we recognized that our communities were facing a development that could fundamentally change the landscape, heritage and setting of the places we call home. We are concerned the apparent absence of any connection between the name given to these developments and the actual history and heritage, identity and communities of the land of which it's proposed.

01:15:47:14 - 01:16:20:07
It's troubling that a basic Internet search of the word whitestone brings up an association with a fictional virtual world of dwarfs, goblins and castles. I sincerely hope that the applicant's choice of name was not intended to trivialize our homes and land affected. Maybe the inspector can clarify that for us. Connysboro is the largest residential area we represent with approximately sixteen thousand residents, yet it is the only community in our group without a parish council.

01:16:20:26 - 01:16:56:00
Residents, therefore, depend entirely on their elected representatives for local representation. Our organization has provided an additional and much needed voice. I want to make one thing absolutely clear. We embrace the green energy agenda. Some of our own members rely on oil fired central heating because there is no gas supply available to them, and we understand the need for renewable energy. Our objection is not to green energy but to the location, scale and consequences of this particular development.

01:16:56:17 - 01:17:33:06
We recognize its importance, but renewable energy cannot come at any cost and for... And the need for it does not remove the responsibility to get the planning decisions right. We are immensely proud of our heritage and the landscape in which our communities sit. Whitestone One occupies a shallow natural bowl surrounded by elevated villages with far reaching views across a landscape that has remained largely undeveloped for thousands of years. Its character is defined by open countryside, historic connections, public rights of way, and farm tracks.

01:17:34:07 - 01:18:11:15
The setting of these communities, particularly in relation to Connysborough Castle and its historic landscape, is distinctive. It's unique. We do not believe it can be properly assessed through a generic approach alongside one and... Alongside Whitestone two and three. This is why we have asked the inspector to consider Whitestone one as a distinctive development with its own archaeological, historic and landscape characteristics. We ask you to consider our request for specific site visits to experience what we experience daily and understand the generational impact this Whitestone development will have.

01:18:12:18 - 01:18:41:21
We have also been concerned about the selectivity of Green Nations community engagement. In our experience, some communities have received more opportunities for dialogue than others despite the potential effects on those less frequently consulted. Our group has worked hard to give those communities a voice. We have identified visual receptors, which we believe are the actual windows through which residents experience Whitestone one, and questioned whether ir for

01:18:50:12 - 01:18:51:04
have have

01:18:51:06 - 01:18:51:21
have

01:18:52:22 - 01:19:29:09
for residents in the Connysboro and Dennerby are either not online or do not have Internet access. For some, there are also financial equipment and IT skill barriers. This means some of the people potentially most affected have been the least able to participate in this complex planning process. In fact, indeed, that some even now don't know of the proposal. We have organised public meetings and events to improve awareness, openness and access to information. We have paid for rooms, printing, newsletters and other information from our fundraising.

01:19:29:28 - 01:19:44:21
Respectfully, this should not have been our responsibility. We are a voluntary community organisation, and the money we have worked so hard to raise should be supporting our own communities, not overcoming barriers for public engagement.

01:19:47:15 - 01:20:05:04
We also know the choice of venue. We do think it's questionable. We asked why this venue was selected. The location is not on a public transport route. And as we've discovered, there are no facilities for refreshments or snacks, etcetera. I believe the inspector are going to address this.

01:20:06:02 - 01:20:11:15
Mrs Greenwood, can I just notify you are over time? Can you just come to your concluding remarks? Thank you.

01:20:11:17 - 01:20:12:02
Finally,

01:20:12:26 - 01:20:48:06
we respectfully ask you to consider holding at least part of the examination within the local communities practicable. This would provide residents with a more accessible opportunity to understand and engage. We are simply asking for a fair hearing, proper consideration of this unique landscape. Please see each one of the two thousand plus registrations and ten thousand plus objection letters received through the consultation, not just as pieces of paper, but behind each of those interactions is a person, a family, a home, a community.

01:20:48:09 - 01:20:49:05
Thank you.

01:20:57:17 - 01:20:59:00
Thank you, missus Greenwood.

01:21:06:19 - 01:21:15:23
We now have... We do have a Gareth Denman on on virtual dial in. Mister Denman?

01:21:25:16 - 01:21:31:08
K. We will try... Mister Greg Reynolds, are you in the room?

01:21:33:28 - 01:21:35:06
Please come forward, mister Reynolds.

01:21:55:03 - 01:21:59:01
Please take your seat minutes at Reynolds, and you have three minutes to make your points. Thank you.

01:21:59:03 - 01:22:35:11
Thank you. It's Greg Reynolds from... Councillor for Radonfield and Bramley. I'd just like to I'd just like to to say the big disappointment for me was that there was no consultation. We've never had a Bramfield option presented to us. How can that be fair? How can that be equitable? And why have they dismissed it immediately and not discussed it? That, for the town of Rotherham, would be a win win situation. We'd be turning derelict land, yeah, into an oasis of power production.

01:22:35:13 - 01:23:12:25
You're not gonna tell me that Rotherham hasn't got enough brownfield sites to to to to pick and choose from. I've contacted Whitestones on many, many occasions. They won't even tell me how many Branfield sites were looked at. All they would say was there were several. Now several could be two or more. Why wouldn't they tell me that? It seems to me that the Branfield option was looked at and immediately dismissed because it's never been mentioned. Mentioned.

01:23:12:27 - 01:23:57:23
Mentioned. The the the analysis has never been shown that Branfield could be made to work in a place like Rotherham. And what I would say, in addition, Rotherham's had enough of Westminster imposing its will on the people of Rotherham. Look at HS two and what a disaster that was. And I went all to all to those consultations, and they were not consultations, they were presentations. And I just want it clearly noted that through this whole thing there seems to be a real reticence of Whitestones to genuinely communicate rather than do the minimum possible just to tick the box.

01:23:59:18 - 01:24:27:13
I I wanted to thank Liz Duncan for her point of detail. But I just wanna say overall, you cannot ignore the numbers of people that are objecting to this. I I I just think that it's a it's a chance to show that democracy works and a process is actually fair. I hope that's the case, and I'll leave it there.

01:24:27:15 - 01:24:28:05
Thanks very much.

01:24:41:17 - 01:25:02:03
Thank you very much, mister Reynolds, for your comments. We're now going to come back to Councillor Nicola Henderson, who is speaking on a group of fourteen individuals. So Councillor

Henderson, you have another eleven minutes. And then I propose at that point, it will be about twenty five to four. We'll we'll take a break at that point. Okay?

01:25:15:00 - 01:25:19:00
So, yep, missus Henderson, you have eleven minutes. So go ahead, please.

01:25:19:05 - 01:25:20:03
Thank you.

01:25:21:07 - 01:25:57:22
So I'm Nicola Henderson speaking on behalf of fourteen individuals who have asked me to represent them, as well as the SK fifty eight Birders Conservation Group and the conservation volunteers. We want to address the cumulative loss of countryside between our villages and what that would mean for wildlife and the people who live here. Our concern is the combined effect of Whitestone across the whole Rutherallah area. Brampton Straight Mile already has the Common Lane solar farm under construction. Whitestone would take the rest of the fields on both sides of the road from Anston all the way to Brampton.

01:25:58:09 - 01:26:32:05
From Woodall to Wiston, fields between our villages would be filled with panels, fencing, access tracks, and electrical equipment. These spaces give our villages their separate identities. As those spaces are filled, the industrial appearance of our one... Of one development would lead on to the next. Residents face the prospect of traveling through successive solar developments with very little open farmland remaining along routes previously surrounded by beautiful countryside. These fields have been farmed for centuries.

01:26:32:19 - 01:26:59:10
Over two thousand three hundred acres of food producing land will be lost for decades, and that's excluding the cable corridors. How has that loss been assessed alongside other solar developments, and what would it mean for our ability to produce food locally and for national food security for our growing population? The value of this land needs to be considered over the full lifetime of the scheme.

01:27:00:28 - 01:27:37:09
Our communities lived with coal mining and its industrial landscape for decades. We have since seen former mining land regenerated into woodland, wildlife habitat, and places for walking, cycling, and recreation. People have watched these landscapes recover and have come to value them. It is deeply unfair to ask these same communities to accept another extensive industrial landscape across the countryside around them. We ask the panel to consider that history and the cumulative effect on the green spaces people now enjoy.

01:27:38:24 - 01:28:11:27
The wildlife evidence shows why these fields matter. SK fifty eight birders and the conservation volunteers are seriously concerned about Whitestone's effect across Anston, Dinnington, Thurcroft, Brankton and Kiverton. Axel Lane supports lots and lots of red listed birds, while North Anston Pit

Top supports breeding, wintering and migrating birds, including declining farming land species. Barn owls breed in the North Anston area proposed for the panels.

01:28:12:28 - 01:28:18:28
We are concerned that the applicant surveys have not adequately covered these areas. I don't believe one was done.

01:28:21:07 - 01:28:52:21
Anston Stones is both a local nature reserve and a site of special scientific interest with a scheduled monument. It's owned by Anston Parish Council. Around one hundred and five bird species have been recorded there over time, including red listed species, and barn owls breed in local nest boxes. Its ancient woodland provides shelter and nesting habitat, while surrounding fields and hedgerows provide feeding and hunting areas.

01:28:53:17 - 01:29:03:03
Anston Brook runs through it with panels proposed on either side of it further upstream. We do not believe that these connections have been adequately addressed.

01:29:04:28 - 01:29:37:18
At Kiverton Community Woodland, breeding long eared, barn, little and tawny owls rely on nearby open areas and field margins for hunting. Red listed birds use the woodland for shelter and roosting, then feed in surrounding farmland. Some of migrants also nest and feed here. Protecting woodland woodland boundaries does not protect the habitat these birds depend on beyond them. What happens when extensive areas of that farmland are changed simultaneously?

01:29:39:13 - 01:30:15:16
Deer also use these fields as wildlife corridors. Since construction began at Common Lane Solar Farm, there have been reports of deer found dead on nearby roads and grass snakes displaced into gardens. What would happen across an area as extensive as Whitestone? Where would wildlife go during construction, and how would it move between habitats once the sites are fenced? Has the combined loss of feeding areas, shelter, and established routes been assessed, including displacement onto roads or into gardens.

01:30:16:19 - 01:30:22:24
We cannot assume wildlife will find suitable habitat nearby when neighboring fields are also affected.

01:30:24:18 - 01:30:50:04
Woodland, fields, hedgerows, and water courses must be assessed together. We should be creating habitat and helping these populations recover, not taking it away. Please assess Whitestone sites and cable corridors alongside other solar farms and infrastructure developments across our Rother Valley landscape. We believe the cumulative harm is unacceptable and ask you to recommend refusal.

01:30:53:15 - 01:31:08:26
I'll now move on to my personal statement. So I've lived in Southampton nearly all my life since nineteen seventy five. And first, I want to focus on cable route l, which impacts me directly.

01:31:10:12 - 01:31:40:15
During initial consultation, two routes were presented, c r three a and three b. Three a ran between Todrick and Southampton, probably about half a mile from the nearest houses, with a hill screening the works from the residents. Instead, the applicant has chosen route three b, which passes right behind our houses, and I found no clear justification for choosing the route that inflict...

01:31:40:17 - 01:31:43:11
Inflicts maximum disruption to everybody.

01:31:45:09 - 01:32:16:20
The route cuts across the Axel Lane bridleway, which are numbered seven and eight, and I use it every day. Axel Lane is the green heart of our community. It's used constantly by walkers, horse riders, cyclists, and children walking to Wales High School. How will it be kept safe and accessible, and what closures or diversions will there be? From Axel Lane, the elevated view currently looks across open countryside separating Todwick and Anston.

01:32:17:27 - 01:32:30:18
The proposed panels will swallow that view, extending an industrial landscape right up to the North Anston Trading Estate and beyond. I ask the panel to stand on Axel Lane and consider that view.

01:32:32:15 - 01:32:52:22
If you drive along the a fifty seven, you see this open countryside with our grade one listed Saint James's Church as a key landmark. Our villages are listed in the doomsday book. What will be left of our historic views? It will completely shatter how people experience and arrive in Anston for decades to come.

01:32:54:12 - 01:33:13:14
Our area is defined by a close network of distinct villages separated by short fields acting as essential green buffers. The majority of this land is protected green belt. The fundal per... Fundamental purpose of which is to prevent neighboring communities from merging,

01:33:15:25 - 01:34:07:29
safeguard the countryside and preserve the setting and special character of historic villages. Whitestone violates these core purposes, swallowing our green buffers for a highly fragmented sprawling layout with miles of winding underground cables and complex infrastructure crossings to link them together. Trying to force a massive project in between our villages creates a sprawling mess that surely is incredibly inefficient and expensive. What price must this electricity be sold at to make such a fragmented scheme viable, and will it lower our bills? Furthermore, is it truly net zero when you account for the massive carbon emissions generated from building miles of underground infrastructure, manufacturing panels overseas in coal reliant grids, and the electricity we must import when they aren't generating.

01:34:08:23 - 01:34:48:12
I also want to know what will happen to all the people who will lose their livelihoods due to the loss of this agricultural land, the farmers, their contractors and suppliers, and the businesses that pack and process what those farms grow. We will not gain anything from this scheme. The proposed

community fund falls short... Far short of making up for the harm that we will bear for generations. We don't want it. Yet if it goes ahead, we'll be forced to pay for it through our bills while living with the disruption. Why not use brownfield sites and put solar panels on people's roofs so that communities can directly benefit from lower bills rather than taking our green spaces.

01:34:49:09 - 01:35:20:02
This is a landscape embedded within our everyday lives, and I ask the panel to recommend refusal. I've also got one for Hilda Littlewood who can't be here. I don't... I've not got much time, but my husband and I moved here just under forty years ago from the South Midlands. I was immediately bowled over by the beauty on our doorstep. Nearly forty years later, it still brings me the same joy. Within a few hundred yards of home, I can step into glorious countryside.

01:35:20:12 - 01:35:55:15
I walk there regularly as do many others. It makes a real difference to my mental well-being. I am deeply concerned about Whitestone's sheer and size its effect on this green belt landscape. The fields, crops, pasture, and changing views are part of why we chose to live here and have stayed. Whitestone's brochures photographs don't convey its full beauty. They appear to show dull days and leafless trees often looking between hilltops. Please visit the paths residents use and experience this undulating landscape when the trees are in leaf and the fields are full of crops.

01:35:56:10 - 01:36:31:02
I'm extremely concerned about taking food producing farmland out of agricultural use for so long. I question the project's cost and practicality. What assurance is there that those responsible have the resources to honor their commitments through construction, operation, and eventual removal? What would happen during a serious battery storage fire or other incident? How would residents be protected, and how has flood risk influenced its location? How would overseas equipment be checked for security, particularly equipment capable of remote communication or control?

01:36:33:07 - 01:37:08:22
Large construction vehicles would use village roads never built for that pressure. I worry about safety, damage to homes, disruption to businesses, house values, and people's ability to move. I have tried to participate, but the volume of documents and official language is overwhelming. This place matters deeply to me. Understanding the pro... Proposals should not require residents to work through so much technical paperwork. Are ordinary people being given a fair opportunity to understand and respond? We've had solar panels ourselves and thought they were fabulous.

01:37:08:27 - 01:37:26:09
Why can't more be done on suitable rooftops, car parks, industrial buildings, and new developments before changing countryside like ours. Please give proper weight to what this landscape mean... Landscape means to the people who live here, use it every day, and would have to live with its loss. Thank you.

01:37:31:20 - 01:37:33:08
Thank you.

01:37:35:18 - 01:37:36:28

You, Councillor Anderson.

01:37:40:12 - 01:37:51:24
And thank you to everyone who's contributed to that session. Comments all comments are gratefully received. I'm now going to propose that we adjourn for a break.

01:37:53:09 - 01:37:58:11
Everyone's happy, shall we say, fifteen minutes. So we will

01:38:00:04 - 01:38:07:22
rejoin at five to four, so fifteen fifty five. So for now, this hearing is adjourned. Thank you.