

Members of the Planning Inspectorate, I stand before you not as an opponent of energy progress, but as a devoted voice for a precious landscape offered up for sacrifice.

This is not merely a piece of land; it is an area of irreplaceable national and international significance. Pegwell Bay is functionally linked to Minster Marshes and holds every special accreditation possible: it is a National Nature Reserve, a Special Protected Area, a RAMSAR site, and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. This is a vital artery that cannot be disturbed and industrialized without devastating consequence.

Yet, National Grid has approached this project with alarming haste and utter disregard for due process. The damage they plan to inflict is terrifyingly irreversible, and the mitigation measures proposed are fundamentally inadequate.

We are told this destruction is in the name of green energy—the irony is suffocating. To disturb and damage a living, breathing, biodiverse rich, carbon-sequestering salt marsh and marshland for a green energy project is a moral failure. Building on marshland has a giant carbon footprint and hand in hand with the climate crises goes the biodiversity crisis and this area is habitat for many species of Greatest conservation concern

Compounding this environmental negligence is National Grid's plan for one of the giant construction compounds. They intend to take over the abandoned hoverport site—an area that has been reclaimed by nature for nearly 40 years and is now rich in biodiversity, directly linked to the Pegwell Bay.

Crucially, this site is also known to be highly contaminated. Despite this clear and documented risk, National Grid has failed to conduct surveys on the land. They prefer instead to bulldoze the habitat, placing the surrounding environment at unnecessary risk. This oversight demonstrates a profound failure of corporate responsibility and due diligence.

We face the cumulative industrialisation of our irreplaceable landscape: noise and light pollution, EMF exposure, the danger of bird strike from giant pylons and cables, the fragmentation of connective habitats, and inhibiting the Marshes ability to soak up water increasing the flood risk.

Finally, let us address the process itself. This entire undertaking has been designed as smoke and mirrors, making it technically intimidating and nearly impossible for ordinary people to follow, let alone fight. Here I stand, taking more time off work and sacrificing more precious time needed to earn money to provide for my family, simply to defend our environment. It is not easy, particularly for my generation, to fight these profound threats when we are already fighting to keep on top of our bills. The process itself is a deterrent.

Inspector, this is a moment of profound choice. Are we to be complicit in the destruction of an irreplaceable ecological treasure—a place that holds the highest levels of protection—simply because it is the most convenient option for a corporation?

What we need now more than anything from our landscape is carbon sequestration, flood risk reduction, and biodiversity improvement. We must reject this shortsighted plan. We must protect this place!