

## National Grid Enquiry

Interested party reference number [REDACTED]

The importance of the proposed Sea Link Project site to the environment, local communities and agricultural businesses is immeasurable and cannot be understated.

The proposed development will form an unnatural barrier of electrical infrastructure plus noise and light pollution across the main route for birds migrating to and from Europe and Africa. The area cannot be considered in isolation as it forms part of a much larger system of interconnected marshes with biodiverse wildlife habitat not only supporting migrating birds such as Honey Buzzards, Ospreys and Turtle Doves but other threatened species like eels, water voles, beavers etc.

The water level of all these marshes is controlled by the main drainage channel called the Minster Stream which flows past the proposed site to a tidal flap at the Kingfisher sluice. This fresh water is used for irrigation by all the agricultural businesses spread across the marshes. Any pollution caused by National Grid especially during the proposed pile driving which will disturb historic sedimentary layers of salt and will be catastrophic to all these businesses and the local environment.

The soils at the site are alluvial clays and sands which have built up over millions of years while the area was under the sea, this sea channel eventually silted up. The area is extremely wet especially in the winter months due to this no agricultural practises can take place on the land from the end of October until the end of March the following year. The locals call the soils bottomless as once a vehicle and machinery get stuck they continue to sink.

The surface water runoff from the size of the proposed development sites will be significant. Although National Grid in their planning applications have said that the area isn't at risk from flooding this isn't correct as the area suffers from pluvial flooding every year and they contradict themselves as they propose to raise the whole site by two meters so protecting their infrastructure but increasing the risk of flooding to neighbouring villages and businesses which is illegal under planning law. This is not only a problem now but especially in the future with climate change causing higher rainfall events and sea level rise.

Unfortunately, we have seen from past experience with National Grid and its contractors as during the Richborough Connection Project that they have no regard for the environment and the wildlife it contains or the farms trying to make a living from the land. They polluted the water courses, destroyed drainage infrastructure and soil structure which is still being rectified to this day. Even the death of hundreds of swans hitting their cables was ignored until it was reported by the National Press with headlines: The Killing Fields of Thanet.

National Grid maintain that this is the only suitable site available even though there are other brownfield sites with electrical connection infrastructure already in place which are away from local communities and important ecological sites. The closeness of the proposed site to Pegwell Bay and to the existing Belgium Nemo link means that National Grid can presumably export electricity to Europe increasing their profits but not necessarily reducing British users' electricity bills.

The sad fact is that all these meetings are just National Grid paying lip service to the planning procedure whilst in reality they are already working on the site.

Nicola Dyas

