

Interested Party Reference number: [REDACTED]

Recently I attempted to speak at the OFH but was completely overwhelmed by emotion at having to publicly voice my experience of living next to the site of the SPR substations. The constant stress for myself and my husband can often be completely overwhelming.

Both [REDACTED] showed me great kindness and compassion and invited me to put in my submission in writing. As I explain to [REDACTED], 'putting into writing' is much harder than it sounds - not only am I not adept at the skill of consolidating information and presenting it in a succinct way but my mental health is severely compromised - having to relive past experiences in order to facilitate the ExA with the reality of what we are experiencing forces me to hold these unpleasant moments in the present which it is a hard thing to do. It is my view that I have no choice but to comply with this request, as failure to do so could be interpreted as indifference or even support for this application. I am therefore impelled to share a few experiences of the reality of living next to the SPR substation site in the hope that you will turn down the National Grid Sealink application.

My husband and I live in Friston in a Grade II listed house that shares a boundary with the SPR substation site at Friston. When the first application was made by SPR and the local community expressed their concerns about traffic, roads not being fit for purpose, mental health, noise, dust and light pollution - our concerns were dismissed and we were assured that procedures would be put in place that would protect us.

I am now living the reality and wanted to share that these procedures that were put in place by that ExA panel are not being followed. We have been abandoned to the behaviours of subcontractors whose focus is on their profit margins and not the wellbeing of those impacted by their cost cutting exercises.

We were assured that we would be kept well informed, there would be designated routes for large heavy plant; there would be mitigation for dust; noise and light pollution would be monitored. However, the sub-contractors employed on this project are not following many of these guidelines... not until they are made to by us reporting problems - that comes at a cost to us, both mentally and literally.

We were also told that we would have a say in the design of the final buildings, colour, roof type etc... (non of this was available at the time for the ExA as SPR wanted to use the latest/best design and materials which were constantly improving - a plausible explanation if were only true.) We are currently being presented with the final designs etc... during this three stage process suggestions were put forward by us the community, these were very firmly rejected by the people in charge as their brief is to build to a very tight budget - so instead of doing the right thing for the community, environment and wildlife, the whole project is being lead by the most cost efficient option for them and their shareholders - we are getting the cheapest option, there is no 'design' of merit involved.

A representative of SPR told us to keep receipts for any planting we did in order to provide mitigation for the house. We have spent many thousands of pounds planting trees and shrubs between the proposed site and our home - when we went to present the receipts were were told that it had not been in the remit of that person to make that claim. The cost was ours to bear.

We are now unable to enjoy our house or garden due to the disruption from the site - Estate Agents have advised us that our property is currently unsellable - we have to wait for the projects to be completed so that a prospective buyer knows what the reality of living next to substations and an inter-connector will be, and even then, due to the blight from the projects, we should expect the property value to be for far less than we paid for it. That means we are stuck, unable to move - with the responsibility of maintaining a grade II listed house that has been stripped of the heritage provided by its surrounding landscape - we would never have even contemplated buying this house had we known of what was coming. We are old, so if we die before the projects are completed, that burden falls on our children. This is a huge financial and emotional cost to us, with no acknowledgment or compensation from National Grid and SPR - and now National Grid and Sealink want to access this site for their project to connect to the grid, thus extending the length of time and disruption for us. All that is bad enough, but in addition we have to act as policeman to ensure that subcontractors are doing the 'right thing' so that we can have some semblance of a life - This constant task of keeping SPR honest makes its ever more difficult to find any joy in our circumstances.

Archeological digs: Sounds pretty harmless but this has involved dumper trucks, bull dozers and cranes, often working in teams (One crane to three dumper trucks), usually there were two teams and a bulldozer to mangle the enormous earth mountains that were created. As the days got hotter the dust problem got progressively worse until it was unbearable, our eyes were constantly itchy - we rang the Community contact person to say that they needed to increase the dust mitigation as it wasn't sufficient, only to discover that there was non in place. The site was closed down whilst dust management was 'onboarded'. Several days passed, work on the site re-started and we were assured that the dust management was now in place. There didn't seem to be much of a difference, so when I was out walking the dog, which took me past the site, I enquired what dust management was in place and that perhaps it needed increasing as it clearly wasn't sufficient. I discovered that there was still no dust mitigation in place. The head Archeologist had just pulled part of his team off the site as the working conditions were not safe for them because of the dust - he asked if I was making a formal complaint, because if I was that enabled him to shut the entire site down. The site was shut down. What I found out was that they had got a bowser, but no driver with the correct licence, in addition they had not yet found a local water source to supply the bowser.

In short, the works on site had been started without the bowser in place, when work was halted due to our complaint they found a bowser (which was not fit for purpose as it had no driver or water source) and re-opened the site as they 'technically' had a bowser. They were 'found out' again by us complaining and work on site was halted until they had fulfilled their obligations. How dishonest and disappointing is that? That is the quality of person that our community is at the mercy of.

At the same time as all this we were also constantly feeding back how intolerable the noise was at our house - when they finally got the correct dust mitigation in place the type and number of dumper trucks changed - suddenly we had much larger ones, with huge wheels and quieter engines, their reversing warning was a squawk rather than a penetrating beep, resulting in a considerable reduction in the noise - yet again an example of us having to fight for the protections that had been put in place. We had had to endure many weeks of appalling disruption before 'the right thing' was done.

Additionally, all the earth that was moved (which was many, many tones) then had to be put back into the vast trenches

(which were easily the size of large lakes) for the next lot of contractors to arrive.... who are moving all the soil again! We have been living for the entire summer, autumn and now coming into winter right next to major earth works with no acknowledgement of the destructive impact that is having on us.

Preparation of compounds: - currently the work on site is preparing the compounds and access roads. There is a great deal of heavy plant, in particular a roller which has a vibrate setting to help compact the ground, when this is being used it causes vibrations that make the whole house shake, to the point where the glasses in our cupboards are clanking together. There are days when it sounds like an enormous Chinook helicopter is hovering by the house, on other days it feels and sounds like an army of tanks is about to burst into the garden. They know that this machine causes huge vibration and noise - why are we not warned when it will be working on site so that we can make plans to be out for the day?

This Sunday (23rd November 2025) we have been disturbed by the noise on site - there is meant to be no work on a Sunday - a diesel engine pumping out the puddles forming behind one of the bunds into a bowser, which then drove approx 50m and pumped its load into what will be the SUDS bed - my husband spoke to the workers when he was walking the dog, they made a phone call and left the site - only to return again shortly after. One of the few rays of hope is looking forward to a Sunday and knowing that there will be no work on the site. Yet again, we have had to be the 'police' - no one can be relied upon to do the right thing - they are always pushing the envelope to see what they can get away with - I am aware that this is indeed a tactic - the hope is to exhaust us so that we give up... have you any idea what being on the receiving end of this kind of behaviour does to someones wellbeing? It is simply awful - I wouldn't dream of treating someone in this way.

Damage to property from lorry not using the designated route: a 'lost' aggregate lorry turned off Church Road in Friston (a narrow single lane, designated as a 'quiet lane') into the dirt and grass track of our neighbours drive - It aggressively turned around, narrowly missing the neighbours car and drove up the bank and crushed the York stone step leading to the church gate on our property in its hurry to go back the way it had come (how it did not spill its load when it turned is a blessing). Luckily for us this was witnessed - it has now been repaired but only on the understanding that 'no liability is accepted' - we had to report it and pursue the repair - this all takes time that we will not get back and the steps will never be the same.

Now National Grid are proposing more substations across the valley at Saxmundham - so a whole town will have to endure the horror that will entail - the proposal also includes access to the substations here at Friston - so that means our lives can be disrupted for even more years, they will tear through swathes of mitigation that SPR are putting in place. If the small village of Friston had indeed been the ideal site for this huge energy project (which I would strongly question), then National Grid should have been made to do the right thing and buy out all the houses impacted directly by their project for a fair price. Its got away with not doing the right thing then and is now planning on completely spoiling the lives of a town - you have the opportunity to save the people who live in the town of Saxmundham and prevent further distress for us who live next to the substations and connection point at Friston.

If this project must go right next to Saxmundham, insist that National Grid relocate those in the town that are impacted, buy their houses for a fair price, along with those houses that surround the substation at Friston, and allow the people to go and find peace somewhere else. At the very least they should be paying out considerable compensation for the reduced value to these properties due to blight from their project and for the distress this development is causing the occupants.

The wider impact of yet another development in this area with the constant road closures, traffic disruption etc... the destruction to the landscape, wildlife, tourism, local businesses and peoples way of life is too much for a single area to bear - to just keep trouble shooting with solutions of replacing the trees and hedgerows, building haul roads, building another bridge over an existing bridge because it can't support the weight load required is madness - this is the wrong place... further development in this area will kill a successful coastal community stone dead - find the right place with the correct access and infrastructure already in place - don't destroy a successful community just because this is where National Grid has given a connection point to the grid based on a desktop survey.

Nicola (Ning) Fulford, [REDACTED] - Interested Party Reference number: [REDACTED]