

MABEL & CO

Good afternoon, my name is James Jenkins and Katie and I run a studio & shop on the Suffolk Coast, with a twin focus on sustainability and traditional craft practice. Let me be absolutely clear from the outset, our business relies on the vibrant visitor economy that the Suffolk Coast has always benefited from and we are deeply concerned about the impact the Sea Link project will have on this.

I could have told you about any number of similar conversations with visitors from this year, but have chosen a couple I met at an event we were running in Dunwich in September. As retired folk they were typical of the late summer visitors that are vital at that time of year - drawn by the landscape and nature around us.

They were staying in Aldeburgh and had visited Minsmere nature reserve that morning, before coming on Dunwich, where they had had lunch at Flora's tearoom. As I was putting the items they were kindly buying from us in a bag, I asked if they were having a nice holiday.

Well yes, she said, hesitantly. But we cannot believe how much has changed over the last year. Her husband commented.

No, quite I replied, embarrassed.

It's really sad to see it, she went on. It's a place that's very special to us and I'm not sure we want to keep coming back just to see it destroyed.

We're thinking it might be time to try somewhere new next year, he said.

That's what he said, but what I heard was that the Aldeburgh Hotel wasn't going to be getting their booking next year, so their cleaner would get less hours. Minsmere would miss out on the money for their vital conservation work. Dunwich Town Council wouldn't be getting the donation for the carparking, which goes to the town's upkeep & museum and Flora's tearoom would be two lunches down, which pays for their loyal and local staff.

Cont.

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And they wouldn't be standing in front of me next year, as I packed their items into a bag, helping, in the hand to mouth existence of a craftsperson and artist, to pay our bills that week and put food on our table.

The decisions you make have real world consequences. The submissions you will hear today, couched perhaps in figures and statistics, are not the witterings of NIMBYS; they are the deeply felt concerns of those who call this place home and reveal the genuine impact on the local economy and local working people of these proposed plans, which are already being felt.

The Suffolk Coast, a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, has been dealt a terrible hand with the imposition of Sizewell C and other projects

. We know that government energy policy is not sufficiently taking into account the impact on nature and landscape in its planning. With charities deeply concerned by the watering down of protections. It is almost unbelievable that we are here today even contemplating this project which seriously impacts an important RSPB reserve with SSSI status, all within an AONB.

Our community faces one  of a fight to convince visitors that this is still a beautiful and nature focused destination, which is vital in order to maintain our local economy. To approve this project would be a huge blow to this task and for all the reasons that have been and will be outlined should be rejected.