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Submission to open floor hearing, Tuesday 11 November 2025, Discovery Park Visitors Centre, Innovation House, Sandwich

The aim of achieving Net Zero is entirely laudable but to build infrastructure at a site as environmentally important as Minster Marshes should have no place in it. Climate change is just one part of the wider ecological crisis now upon us due to our consistent and reckless failure to practise truly sustainable development by respecting the natural world and our dependence on it; contrary to normal linguistic usage the natural world is not our environment but our life support system, a whole of which we are part. To harm it is to harm ourselves. The present proposal is yet another example of this recklessness and self-harm. Minster Marshes are protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a Special Protection Area, and under Ramsar, the Convention on Wetlands. This should have excluded them from consideration from the outset. So too should the unique importance of wetlands and the fact that over the past century more than ninety percent of the UK's wetlands have been destroyed, meaning that they now cover just three percent of the country. Wetlands sequester more carbon dioxide than forests and act as the Earth's kidneys by filtering pollution and replenishing water sources. They also mitigate storm damage and flooding. All of these functions are becoming ever more important as the effects of climate change increasingly make themselves felt. As a resident of Minster I don't want to be exposed to greater risk of flooding and storm damage because the Marshes have been decimated. Moreover, as well as the climate crisis we are in the throes of a human-made biodiversity crisis - in the past fifty years more than two-thirds of the world's wildlife has become extinct - and wetlands are essential to biodiversity. In terms both of climate change and of biodiversity, therefore, this proposal is a disaster. It is also a personal disaster for all who love this beautiful, unique, tranquil place with its teeming life and big skies; indeed, I've found this submission difficult to write because I find the subject so upsetting.

National Grid claim that to site the Sealink infrastructure at Minster Marshes is the cheapest option but this disregards the environmental and human costs of decimating the Marshes, the social and political costs of ignoring statutory protections when they become inconvenient, and the cost to the credibility of green energy of pursuing it in such a damaging way. Incompatible with true sustainability, this proposal makes Sealink an exercise in mere greenwashing. It should never have been considered in the first place and should now be abandoned without delay in favour of an environmentally sensitive solution that will help us to achieve Net Zero with integrity and true sustainability.