

Interested Party Reference number: [REDACTED] (Stuart McRae)

Today National Grid are carrying out investigation operations on Minster Marshes and you can visibly see their contempt for the fragile environment they are working in as they pollute the Minster Stream and tear up the ground around. Surely this is an indicator that this environment is unsuitable to build anything on.

However, this environment is absolutely suitable for a wide range of indigenous wildlife, rare plants and migratory species of birds who use Pegwell Bay, Minster Marshes and the connecting wildlife corridor.

I am just going to highlight the migratory bird element.

Migratory birds come to these vitally protected spaces at differing times of the year to stay for a while, to safely feed before making onward journeys, or to breed. Many have flown vast distances from many places like southern Europe and Africa and anyone who has flown to Africa will recall that it takes a few hours by jet. Now imagine doing it by flapping your arms all the way! We can only marvel at a bird's ability to make these journeys, following ancient routes shown to them by previous generations.

We know habitat loss is the biggest cause of wildlife decline globally with the UK being one of the most wildlife depleted countries anywhere in the world. Pegwell and the Minster Marshes are last bastions of wild habitat left in Thanet and is heavily protected. If these sites are disturbed and built upon the effects will be catastrophic with many species no longer able to feel comfortable using what's left of the space during and after the proposed development. Their life balance becomes disturbed, they fail to breed with the net effect being depletion of the species. National Grid's idea that you can simply mitigate the effects of their destruction by setting aside a piece of land somewhere else is utterly absurd.

The SeaLink project is showing National Grid to be in the very fortunate position of making vast profits from its monopoly with little consideration for the environment, or common sense. It has been repeatedly told over and over again by experts and knowledgeable people in environmental ecology that the current proposed sites will be too damaging to the environment and more suitable sites must be sought.

We can't allow National Grid to simply trash these fragile environments in the name of NIP's and the need to achieve our net zero targets. They must be forced to be more constructive in their approach. At the end of the day sustainability is about ensuring what you do today does not have a negative impact on tomorrow.

I have faith that the Planning Inspectorate will do the right thing and force National Grid to Re-Think SeaLink.

Thank You

Stuart McRae