



Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Paul Chapman, Chair of Cliffsend Parish Council. I speak on behalf of all Cliffsend Councillors and the many residents who have made their views known. Please see my submitted paper as an interested party. That submission contains more detail than I can cover in my allotted 6 minutes now.

Some key points are: -

1. We fully understand and support the need to enhance the UK's electricity distribution infrastructure.
2. We recognise that National Grid is a private company with a responsibility to generate returns for its shareholders and investors.
3. We also acknowledge that National Grid holds a unique and privileged monopoly. With such privilege comes a duty to act in the national interest and to exercise that responsibility with integrity, transparency, and respect for the communities it affects.
4. While the proposed landfall site at Pegwell Bay—and the associated converter station at Minster—may be the cheapest and easiest option for National Grid, we do not believe it is the most appropriate. We are not convinced that alternative sites have been adequately or objectively assessed. It appears that this option was selected from the outset for convenience, not for merit. That is, pre-determined. It does not reflect the responsible stewardship expected of a monopoly operating in the public interest.
5. Our objections are not abstract. They are rooted in real, tangible harm — to our environment, to our wildlife, and to our way of life. These concerns have been echoed by countless organisations and individuals, and I will not repeat now what others will rightly say, and what we have also included in our written submissions. But I must speak to the impact on Cliffsend itself — both during the long years of construction, and for generations to come.
6. We must highlight the lack of any meaningful mitigation for the residents and visitors of Cliffsend—both during the prolonged construction phase and in perpetuity thereafter.
7. First, for our residents: the project will bring relentless convoys of heavy lorries and industrial vehicles thundering through our village, causing noise, congestion, road damage, and likely structural vibration to nearby homes. These journeys - numbering in the tens of thousands or likely hundreds of thousands - will occur from early morning until late at night, weekends included, for many years. It will be even worse if someone needs to move house, as their property will be significantly devalued during these years. And make no mistake, projects of this magnitude always over-run from their initial optimistic timescale estimates.

Despite this, no compensation has been offered to residents. This is simply not acceptable and needs to be rectified.

8. Secondly, for the village itself: the project threatens to degrade the enjoyment and heritage of Hugins Green, a cherished public space on the England Coast Path overlooking Pegwell Bay. The view across the bay - currently of white cliffs and open sea to the coast of France - would be replaced by industrial infrastructure for several years. More importantly, this area holds deep historical significance. This is where Julius Caesar first set foot in Britain, where the Vikings landed, and where St Augustine brought Christianity to our shores. Hugins Green commemorates these events with a full-scale replica the original Viking ship, signposts to Rome, and a nearby monument to mark St Augustine's first meeting with King Ethelbert. Visitors and pilgrims come from far and wide to visit.
9. Therefore, we request a community fund, a Section 106-style contribution, to support three specific initiatives on Hugins Green:
 - 1) The establishment of a trust with funding to preserve and maintain the Viking ship on Hugins Green.
 - 2) The refurbishment of the public toilets to provide disabled access and baby-changing facilities.
 - 3) A financial contribution towards the creation of a small visitor centre to honour the site's historical importance.
10. We believe these requests are appropriate, proportionate, and entirely reasonable in the context of this multi-billion-pound infrastructure project.
11. But let me be clear: this request for mitigation does not weaken our fundamental objection to the choice of Pegwell Bay as the landfall site. However, should the Secretary of State be minded to approve this location, we strongly urge that the conditions of approval include both compensation for affected residents and the financial support for the three heritage initiatives as I have just described.
12. We trust that the Planning Inspectorate and the Secretary of State will give full and fair consideration to the views of Cliffsend's residents and its elected representatives.

Thank you.

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