

I am an ordinary but very concerned person. I am retired and I love nature, I am a sea and landscape painter and a bird watcher and so spend most of my time outdoors. I am very fortunate to have a home which overlooks Pegwell Bay, I regularly visit the Pegwell bay nature reserve and the former Hoverport, which has been left to return to nature over the last forty or so years and has turned a former environmental disaster and commercial area, into a natural wild space with access over degraded tarmac and concrete all the way to the waters edge. It has become an important resource for those people with wheels, like cyclists or users of mobility scooters or wheelchairs to be able to observe wildlife up close and in their natural habitats. This is a very rare facility that is an important resource for the public to enjoy and is a great boon to those who need respite and relief from mental health issues and are also of limited mobility. I myself am a person with [REDACTED] and I find it an impossible amount of physical effort to use the various footpaths around the cliff edges of Pegwell, but was overjoyed to discover this accessible way down to the waters edge on my mobility scooter and using my pedal assist bicycle. There are many other people who use the area in this way.

It is National Grids intent to take over this site and discontinue its use by the general public, to use this area as a storage and facilitation area to support the building of the converter station.

The Hoverport site was built on approx 300,000 tons of colliery spoil from the Chislet coal mine. They would have to remove all the standard contaminants in the coal spoil before their heavy plant operations could proceed. They would need to address heavy metals (such as arsenic, mercury, lead, cadmium, chromium and selenium plus sulphur compounds and PAH's. These can leach into the environment (ie Pegwell Bay SSSI) causing possible acid mine poisoning, contaminated marshland and habitats harmful to ecosystems and public health. The site is tested once a month for pollutants, this is whilst the site is stable and not subject to heavy plant use and construction material storage. Even if this is a temporary arrangement, there is no assurance that the area will be returned to its present state when the project is completed, it will be forever changed, maybe even forever destroyed. They intend to bring an offshore cable onto land and to tunnel to a massive converter station over ten stories [28m] high they propose to build in the middle of Minster Marshes, which will become an eyesore in itself and is out of character with the area, a wild marsh up till now. There will also be an increase to the number and size of electrical pilons, also additional lighting, fencing and access areas that will completely change the ambience of the area from one of agricultural and wilderness landscape, to that of industrial, concrete and metal wasteland.

There are historical sites located both within and without the project boundaries that need to be preserved for future generations so that our heritage is not lost for the sake of this development, never mind the preposterous idea of building such a large and heavy structure in a wetland marsh that makes it prone to sinking into the soft and sodden landscape. Have they not heard of the concept of not building on marshland? There can be no assurance that this project will not need further remedial work in the future for it to continue its operation.

I refer to the work that was needed in Richborough to shore up the subsiding water towers before their eventual decommissioning and demolition. Surely there is a tangible risk that this huge building will be abandoned or discarded when the inevitable march of progress renders it a useless and a huge mistake in the light of future advances of technology that could miniaturise the whole process or eventually remove the need for wiring of this size and complexity. As I write these comments, there are developments being made in wireless technology that would have seemed impossible just a few short years ago.

This project is short sighted and seems to concern itself only with the life of human beings, but I would like to remind anyone that reads this, that all life on this planet should be regarded as important and especially important to us, in order for us human beings to continue our lives. If nature is continually destroyed in order to support the life of humans only, then we leave a barren and forsaken future to our children who will have to cope with what will be seen as the folly of corporations interested only in making more profit for themselves at the cost of our natural world, this could lead to the collapse of the whole of our much needed ecological system.

We only have to look at the runaway effects of climate change that are currently part of our lives, the warming of the oceans and devastating effects of storms and flooding that have become part of our recent history to realise that we are just one small part of a massively complex system that is not yet fully understood and that more devastation to our lives is the most likely outcome of decisions that are made too hurriedly and only afford us some immediate economic gain as was so often done in the past.

This project has not been designed to give the consumer cheaper electricity but is a supposed expansion in network capacity. In my opinion this project is being foisted upon us so that the company National Grid can make more profit. Currently the UK has the most expensive electricity in Europe but this company regularly posts many millions of pounds profit, this project will allow them to make even more.

Once disturbed and developed, our natural environment will be changed in ways that cannot be foreseen and even if remedial measures are enforced to reinstate what has been dug up and tunnelled through, nature will struggle to return to its former glorious state. We cannot afford to lose more of the natural resources we have left, and if they are destroyed it will be at our own peril.

Britain is one of the most nature depleted countries in Europe. and Pegwell bay, one of the least disturbed areas in Kent, there are many species of endangered and rare birds that live in the Pegwell Bay Area as well as seals that use the mud flats and wild ponies that live in the nature Reserve.

If this company were to invest into being more innovative and careful in their approach, they could come up with a solution that would not destroy our nature and allow the increased capacity of offshore wind power to reach the businesses and industries that need it, mostly I think in the London area and not in this relatively quiet and wild part of rural Kent. There was a Graphic put out by this company some time ago that talked of so called 'energy islands' at sea and the idea of converting the offshore wind power produced by wind farms into much easier to transport Hydrogen power in order to reduce the infrastructure encroachment on the landscape around all of our coastal districts. However this idea seems to have been abandoned in favour of their current proposal. It seems to me that the company uses false propaganda methods to blind people to the devastating effects their projects can have on the coastal districts where their cables come ashore and the fact that once ashore, the current needs to be changed from DC to AC in order to become usable by consumers. In my opinion, the better solution would be the use of these offshore energy islands where the conversion of wind power could be undertaken without destroying the delicate landscape around Kent as proposed in this scheme. Of

course it would seem it is much more expensive to do this, so the whole idea has been abandoned even though it seems to be a better and longer lasting solution.

It also seems that the company has been devious and cunning in the way that it has produced certain figures about the impact assessment of its proposed work and have tried to skew the assessment of the impact of their project in their favour so that it would get approval to proceed. I would refer the reader to the Thanet District Council report of their impact assessment. At the very least a completely independent and separate evaluation of all the various impacts should be undertaken to assure the public of the correct and proper assessment of the effect of the development should it go ahead and until that is achieved there should be no further work undertaken by the company, or money given to them to ease the facilitation of the project.

I will continue to campaign and protest and do everything in my power as a citizen to protect the environment they intend to destroy with their profiteering mindset.

There is an alternative site at the isle of grain which has not been fully explored and consulted over, as the Pegwell bay site is the cheapest option, the best for their bottom line and is the priority and favourite, allowing an easier route to the profits that can be made by selling electricity to Europe.

As it is, they seem willing to ride roughshod over the protective measures seemingly already in place and cause massive harm to the nature that is left and struggling to survive here only for the sake of spending less at the present time.

I have spoken to a number of people who have the impression that the area of Pegwell Bay is an area who's wild life is protected and therefore the project will not be allowed to continue. I pray that this is in fact the case and the many protective measures that have already been put in place are given the respect they deserve and the project refused.

This scheme seems to be the worst possible option for the environment but it seems to be the cheapest option for the shareholders of a private company which will maximise their profit at the expense of OUR natural resources and wildlife which is in desperate need of our care and protection. The net effect of this scheme will be the opposite of green energy as it will cause so much environmental devastation.

I urge the panel to deny permission for this development, and for the company to be compelled to explore further the use of the less nature rich and delicate site at the Isle of Grain and to pursue further their proposal of using energy islands and converting power into hydrogen, to achieve their expansion.