

I am submitting this as someone who grew up here and still lives here. I walk this land and have come to know the old Hoverport site as a place of refuge, nature and quiet connection.

My family use it regularly, walking our dog, but also simply as open space — for birdsong, for calm, and for the ability to breathe in a landscape that has slowly healed itself over time.

What is now being proposed by National Grid feels like the erasure of a place that has quietly become something precious.

For more than thirty years the former Hoverport has been left alone. In that time it has rewilded. Scrub has taken hold, saltmarsh has crept back, birds have returned, and the site has become part of the wider living system of Pegwell Bay. It now sits within a Ramsar site, a National Nature Reserve and a Site of Special Scientific Interest — designations that exist precisely because places like this matter.

Yet National Grid's proposals show little evidence that they truly see what is here.

There appears to have been no serious attempt to understand the wildlife that now depends on this land — what species are present, how they use the site, or how it connects to the Minster Marshes and the wider bay. Without that understanding, the damage they risk causing cannot possibly be properly assessed. This is not an empty or redundant space. It is a living one.

I am also deeply worried about what lies beneath the surface. Much of the Hoverport was constructed on reclaimed land, built up using spoil from Chislet Colliery. This includes coal waste and other material known to cause long-term pollution if disturbed. The concrete surface that covers large parts of the site is already fragile and degrading.

The proposal to bring heavy machinery, vehicles and prolonged construction activity onto this ground risks breaking that surface and releasing contaminants into surrounding land and water. Pegwell Bay is not an appropriate place to gamble with pollution. Once damage is done here, it cannot simply be undone.

National Grid describes the loss of the

Hoverport as a public amenity as “insignificant”. I find that deeply upsetting.

This space is used every day by local people. It offers peace, openness and freedom to explore. It supports mental and physical health. It is one of the few places where people can walk without fences, tickets, or pressure to move on.

To suggest that a narrow strip beside an active construction compound offers anything like the same experience is simply not credible.

The soundscape alone will be transformed — birdsong replaced by machinery, quiet replaced by noise and exhaust fumes. For many residents, including myself, this will represent a genuine and lasting loss.

Perhaps most troubling of all is how this site appears to have been selected. It was added late to the process. The case for compulsory purchase is unclear. There has been no transparent explanation as to why this particular site is essential, or why other brownfield sites could not be used instead.

It feels as though the Hoverport has been chosen because it is seen as cheap, expendable, or politically easier to take — despite sitting within one of the most environmentally sensitive areas in Thanet.

If compulsory purchase goes ahead, the loss will be permanent. Public access will be gone. The damage to wildlife and landscape will not be temporary. A place that has spent decades recovering will be sacrificed.

I do not believe National Grid has properly understood what this site has become, or what would be lost if their proposal is approved. Pegwell Bay and the Minster Marshes deserve better than this level of consideration.

This is not opposition for the sake of it. It is a plea to recognise the real value of this land — not on a balance sheet, but in lived experience, biodiversity, and the quiet importance of a place that has been allowed to heal.