

Gerald Prior

I use the area of Pegwell Bay known as the former Hoverport as a recreational area where I can get peace and tranquility. The area allows access with my Bicycle and mobility scooter right up to the waters edge and allows me to observe the varied bird life that use this area to feed and rest. If permission is granted for the Sealink project to use this area in the way they propose, it will leave me bereft of this recreational activity and completely ruin the tranquility that is enjoyed by myself and many others on a daily basis.

I have no confidence in the company to take sufficient care of this precious natural area during the construction phase of their proposed project or to provide adequate provision for mitigation to restore the area when the project is completed. There has not been enough investigation into the site itself by the company and the surveys they have completed are often incomplete and inadequate, leaving very important questions unanswered. The changes they have made to their previous application are passed off as minor but in fact are a completely different matter and change their use of the Hoverport area which will stop members of the public having access to this important resource and may well bring about irreparable damage to the environment. I have been informed that when the hoverport terminal was constructed back in the 1960s, there were tons of colliery spoil used to fill the area before the concrete and tarmac apron was constructed on top. If this were proposed in these more enlightened times that would be enough to stop the hoverport from being constructed, but it was constructed on top of material which has since been proved to carry many toxic chemicals within it. The use of heavy plant machinery on this apron will run the risk of these toxic chemicals escaping into the sand and mud of the salt marsh and intertidal area surrounding the hoverport, which could be catastrophic for the many species of plant, bird, fish and mammals that feed and use this area as their habitat. The area is now considered a rewilded brownfield site and has lain undisturbed for around forty or more years. In the process the area has acquired many rare plant species and is now home to a wide variety of small mammals and rare bird species and has acquired its own special beauty of reclaimed wilderness that is rare if not unique in this country.

It is at our own peril that this area of nature is disturbed and maybe destroyed by a company that is looking to increase its profits whilst disregarding the concerns of the local people. I feel sure that if they were to do their proper duty and investigate the effects of their project properly they would conclude that the risk of destroying the fragile nature of this area is too great and they must abandon this idea completely and develop a more innovative approach to bringing the wind power generated at sea ashore. The company want to use this area because it is their most economical option to bring power generated from wind farms at sea onto the land to be converted to power

used by consumers. There has been in the past, a promotion, by this company, of the idea of using offshore energy islands to convert the wind generated power into hydrogen energy which can be transported more easily and with less disruption than using the methods they are currently advocating. It seems that this idea has been abandoned in favour of the cheaper way to do things, it is ironic indeed that their so called green energy generation will destroy so much nature by bringing it ashore in this fashion.