From: [redacted]
To: South East Anglia Link
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: Work prior to decisdion
Date: 02 October 2026 11:07:04

Good morning,
National grid has applied to build a converter station on Minster Marshes which was the subject of a public consultation by the Planning Inspectorate. The decision of the Inspectorate has yet to be published, but in spite of that, National grid have already begam]n work both on the marshes and Pegwell Bay Nature Reserve. The work involves heavy duty plant and survey vessels in the bay.
Please explain why they seem to be flouting the law and have proceeded with preparatory work despite not having permission to do so. Surely this is illegal?
I await your urgent comments.
Thanks and best regards,
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Minster Marshes construction starts before the papers are signed



There's something maddening about watching machinery move onto land before anyone has said yes.

That's where things stand at Minster Marshes, where National Grid's Sea Link project, the giant subsea cable and converter station meant to connect Suffolk to Thanet, is moving ahead before being given the go ahead by Miatta Fahnbulleh, the Secretary of State for Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).

The cost - Sea Link was first costed at £1.1 billion, a figure fixed back in 2022 and built on 2018 prices. Now OFGEM's assessment puts the real total close to £3.2 billion; rising costs of this size do not disappear. They are recovered through electricity bills. The gap between the consultation and the number OFGEM has approved is one we all end up paying for.

Work under way - A final decision on planning consent isn't due until 30th October from DESNZ. Until then, Sea Link has no permission to build anything. Even so, work has been spotted at the converter site. Local MP Sir Roger Gale has been vocal about this; he's previously said the works make a mockery of the planning process, and on 1st September he raised the issue in the House of Commons, calling on Prime Minister Andy Burnham to intervene.

Unwritten costs - Behind the figures, around 9 hectares of good farmland will be lost permanently to the converter station, inside a wider 170-hectare order boundary. Several farmers have compulsory purchase orders to sell at agricultural use rates, for land about to become a 28-metre industrial site. One farmer says he can no longer bring himself to drive past or look at what's happening now.

The marshes themselves aren't just farmland; the site sits alongside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a National Nature Reserve, and land with SPA and Ramsar protection, part of a flyway used by migrating birds heading in and out of Pegwell Bay and other important breeding areas in the UK. The ground underneath is soft alluvial soil, the remains of an old sea channel, which makes it an impractical choice to build on and slow to heal. Archaeological trial pits dug at the converter site a couple of years ago still haven't recovered. This is a small, visible sign of what deeper, permanent works might do to land that was never meant to be built on.

The cost has nearly tripled since the consultation figure. Construction has started before consent. For the people who work this land, and the wildlife that lives amongst it, the damage has already begun, whatever the Secretary of State decides by the end of October. You can join the fight for wildlife and our pockets at Save Minster Marshes on **www.minstermarshes.com** and Facebook.

***Kaz**, Save Minster Marshes*

Photo by George Cooper

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