

# Fordham Parish Council

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Date: 23.2.2026.

Interested Party Reference number: [REDACTED]

Dear Planning inspectorate,

We are taking this opportunity to state, in the strongest possible terms, our objections to National Grid's (NG) proposed route through our parish.

As stated by Colchester City Council (CCC), we consider the Colne River valley as environmentally and aesthetically important as the ANOB of the Dedham Vale and is a "Valued Landscape."

As I understand it, the only reason NG have chosen the route through these areas is based on where they have sited the EACN (East Anglia Connection Node), this could have been sited elsewhere, thus avoiding these sensitive places. As I also understand it, the planning laws require NG to avoid such areas entirely.

If I might quote from someone else:

"A Superior and Cheaper Alternative (to) National Grid's own Strategic Options Back check and Review confirms that the EAS1 southern route meets all project objectives, completely avoids the Dedham Vale, and would reduce lifetime costs by around £140 million. This route runs largely parallel to existing infrastructure, thereby minimising new harm. Yet EAS1 was withheld from consultation and then summarily dismissed. That failure breaches the principle of meaningful public participation required under the Gunning Principles and is contrary to the requirements set out in NPS-EN5. In policy, where an alternative exists which avoids damage to a National Landscape, the duty to select it is absolute even if it results in a longer cable run or increased costs. The failure to adopt or even consult upon EAS1 represents a fundamental procedural defect."

NG have failed to fully investigate all alternatives, costing them honestly against the proposed pylon route, because they have already decided the route and spent a large amount on it already.

Regarding the public consultations:

At no point were we ever "consulted" in any meaningful sense, they just presented their plans, offered no alternatives and showed no interest in our views.

Regarding our affected area:

The Essex Way PROW runs alongside the River Colne through our parish, on its way from Epping to Harwich, a distance of eighty one miles. It will be a shame when walkers through the parish, and we get many all year round, have 160 foot steel pylons and long stretches of buzzing cables looming over them as they do so.

On the subject of looming, when people enter the parish, passing the old mill house then climbing Mill Road, they will have a pylon, very close to the road, towering over them as they pass

But why are they going overland in the first place?

The offshore cable route offers a simple, non-invasive, non-destructive alternative.

NG are laying offshore cables in other places around our coast and across the sea, so why not avoid all the planning and logistical problems, the fierce and multiple public objections and go undersea?

Aside from the temporary and permanent damage to our parish's visual appeal we have a wealth of archaeological heritage that lies underground in the path of the pylons/cables.

In fact NG plan to build directly on top of our community dig which has been running for close on eleven years. This is a high status Roman site built over an earlier Bronze/Iron Age site and includes three Roman burials (so far) and later, carbon dated Saxon burials. It has nationally rare features. This has been on the Heritage Environment record for decades, and is clearly visible on Google Earth satellite images from 2016 onwards. NG claim they did a "desktop survey" of the pylon route, yet they have made no attempt to avoid the site.

One of the pylons will sit directly on top of a future extension to the site that we know has an un-excavated but verified building in it.

And the archaeological heritage destruction won't end there, just half a mile to the north east, around Fossetts Lane there are a further three confirmed Roman sites, two Prehistoric sites and a medieval site. There is also a potentially very important site to us going back to, at least, 1250 (dated finds) which is likely to be the lost, moated manor house of Great Fordham. This has also been on the HER for a long time.

When I say confirmed, I mean by fieldwalking pottery finds, metal detecting coin finds and geophysical surveys by magnetometer that show underground archaeology.

All of these sites are in the path of or very close to the pylons and/or temporary construction roads NG plan to build. They will be severely impacted, if not utterly destroyed by the construction work.

A pylon or underground cable route through our parish will be devastating in so many ways.

It must be stopped.

Yours sincerely, [REDACTED]  
Fordham Parish Council (chairman).

[REDACTED].