

**Registration reference Number:** [REDACTED]

**Interest Party Reference :** [REDACTED]

Thank you for the opportunity to speak at the Open Hearing in Ipswich on 10<sup>th</sup> February.

**This is the written script of the representation made that evening.**

National Grid have been disingenuous from the start. The initial title of “East Anglia Green” communicated through a “Community Newsletter” with pictures of people skipping through fields without a pylon in sight, was soon dropped when it dawned that 180km of steel and concrete and millions of felled trees and hedgerows was anything but Green

The consultation process has felt like nothing but a sham from the start. We have been through three consultations, submitted copious feedback, met with NGs agents and expressed our concerns, NOT ONE of our questions has been answered.

Not questions about aesthetics and views, although these are heartbreaking, a beautiful valley on the edge of the National Landscape to be filled with steel and concrete which will be seen for miles, passing close to numerous listed buildings, ancient woodland, impacting a wildlife corridor and intersecting a wildfowl flight path.

Functional questions about the impact of the tons of concrete under the pylons and of service roads on a slope just above a stream. Increased water run-off would cause the stream to ford over the driveway to our home more frequently and deeply, preventing access. Run-off from the fields onto the highway races down a steep hill, already causing erosion in heavy rain, an increase will create even more damage and dangerous road conditions.

The buzzing and wind noise for the homes SO close to the power line, given the unique topography of the valley and our experience of noise channelling through it.

The impact on the huge variety of bird and wildlife on our land, on the bat and owl nesting sites, badger sets, the flight path of the wildfowl on the pond, all right next to the pylon line. Ecologists have visited and told us it is a rich habitat and that further assessments will be needed, but there have been no subsequent surveys.

Why do NG propose to fell trees to bury an existing wire only metres from open farmland.

Only last week the House of Lords was told that we are the most severely nature depleted nation globally. This is a clear example of why.

So many unanswered questions - so how can this be properly costed?  
National Grid's problem – or ours?

We have felt an arrogance that this is a done deal. Some people have been told as much. No alternatives presented. Not consultations - presentations. Ticking boxes?

When NESO published their findings of the East Anglia Study in 2024, that an underground HVDC line could be delivered at only a small incremental cost to the proposed overhead line, although it would take longer, we thought sense would prevail. A much lower long-term impact on the landscape, wildlife and communities. A result also more secure against adverse weather and sabotage.

But no, NG plough on with their proposal regardless. We were told the HVDC would take longer due to the wait time for cable – yet we see newspaper headlines of cable manufacturers laying off staff because projects have been cancelled.

We can't understand why this much hated project is being pursued at all costs. Most likely it will be late, costs will balloon and all the destruction will have been for nothing, another national infrastructure disaster in the making.

**In order to comply with the time limit I was not able to make all the points I would have liked to so am taking the opportunity to add further points in this written submission.**

### *Impact on listed buildings*

NG reference documents in the Consultation understated the impact of the project. Our property is a grade II listed building.

The documents described the farmhouse dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> C or earlier and its distinctive roof. The next paragraph describes the setting, surrounded by picturesque agricultural fields which provide a peaceful and spacious atmosphere. The farmhouse has farm buildings to the rear (uphill side) and views to the east and south. The paragraph notes that a small woodland blocks the view to the east but does note that “due to the proximity (of the pylons) there is a probability that the top of the pylons would be visible from the asset”.

The person making this comment has clearly not stood on the property site. The pylons will be placed just behind the described woodland, the slope rises, the trees are approximately 20 metres tall. There is no “probability” that the pylons will be seen. It is CERTAIN and due to the topography of the land they will tower for at least 30 metres, possibly more, over the top of the trees, the description of being able to see the “top” of the pylons is misleading and understates the impact. The Pylons and overhead wires will give the impression of towering over the property and all the pylons and the sealing end compound at the end of Crabtree Lane (TB35/TB36) to TB40 (possibly more) will clearly be visible from this elevation. This was also evident from your simulation seen at one of the consultations. I was shocked at how clearly the sealing end compound could be seen and how close the pylons were.

The NG document stated that the sealing end compound is located in a dip, however height differential of that and the surrounding land is minimal and the extremely industrialised infrastructure can clearly be seen and has an impact upon a number of listed buildings around it, including Highfield Farmhouse. The sealing end compounds are industrial and incongruous and it is not acceptable for them to be visible from any listed building or residential property.

TB40 which is placed opposite the end of the driveway, is a larger pylon due to the angle change of the line. The impact is massive and shocking.

The woodland is deciduous and therefore in the winter months will provide no screening at all, the pylons will be visible from top to bottom.

There are multiple listed properties across the Fordham valley, all quite different in character. When we adapted our property to accommodate my husband’s disabilities it involved many lengthy discussions with the local

conservation office, numerous site visits and three iterations of plans. There was a requirement to not change in any way the elevation when viewed from the south and from across the valley. Any new roof elevations to the rear of the house had to be lower than the main farmhouse roof and not visible from across the valley so as not to alter the view from other areas of the valley. All building materials had to be approved and be “conservation” or reclaimed. This materially increased the cost of the project but was accepted as part of the responsibility of owning a listed property set in beautiful countryside and we understood the importance of not changing the views for our neighbours or the image of the heritage building. The material adverse change to the setting of the listed properties across the Fordham Valley will diminish their value and appeal, but most importantly there will not be investment into these listed buildings, they are by their construction nature and the requirements of the listings very expensive to maintain, they will be of very limited appeal and fall into disrepair and the region will lose its heritage assets.

#### *Impact on wildlife and the Fordham valley landscape*

The area has been carefully managed over 20 years to provide areas of grazing but also substantial areas of set aside and undisturbed meadows and woodland. It is ecologically a very rich and diverse habitat. The proposed industrial construction along its perimeter will disturb the wildlife. The area accommodates a plethora of wildlife, including but not limited to Roe Deer, Muntjac, Fox, Badger, Brown Hare, Rabbits and many other small mammals. Bird life is abundant, both Tawney Owls and Little Owls nest here and Barn Owls hunt the paddocks and meadows. We have also seen a Long-Eared Owl in this area, Red Kite and Buzzards hunt over the paddocks and a very wide variety of smaller bird species nest in the trees and hedgerows. It is a rare, undisturbed, high quality water meadow habitat. Bats fly around the house and over the pond on warmer evenings and nest in the outbuildings and we believe, in the woodland. Skylarks are in the adjacent fields.

This area is alongside a stream which runs into the river Colne, part of it forms a large pond. As well as the aesthetic quality of this, it is home to a wide variety of bird and waterfowl species and visited by many more. Birds regularly fly between this pond and the reservoir a short distance upstream. Swans fly between the two water areas, there are resident Herons, Coots, Mallards and Kingfishers. Visiting birds include many other

species of duck, geese, and Great and Little Egrets. The overhead wires will be directly in the flight paths of these birds.

When we purchased the property 21 years ago, the area was designated a Conservation Area by Colchester City Council, this was for good reason, the very diverse habitat and gently undulating landscape is particularly attractive and peaceful, the Colne valley and its tributaries are of significant landscape value and equal in quality to the Dedham Vale, this landscape should be preserved for future generations.

*Our concerns about EMF* and the possible impact on my husband's health [REDACTED] are covered in his submission.

These subjects and more are covered in more detail in our submissions to NG we are happy to forward that in full if it is of value.

In summary we would like the alternatives to Overhead lines to be fully assessed. All along it has felt that the route has been selected on a map without any real consideration for the landscape or environment. NG have "back-tested" with the aim of justifying their original selection rather than really considering whether this is the appropriate approach. As set out, it would encircle the Dedham Vale in a ring of steel, it would also be clearly visible from Colchester, England's oldest recorded town and would industrialise treasured landscapes and the surroundings of many heritage assets.

I endorse requests for focused consultations considering the alternatives and the impact on Heritage Assets.

We would also like to invite the Panel to view our stunning valley and landscapes so they can understand the extreme adverse impact on the Fordham and Colne valley area.