NSIP Open Floor Hearing Presentation Script

Good morning.. My name is **Chris Whitfield**, and I am speaking as an Interested Party, and resident of Ardleigh for more than 35 years.
I am here to address the profound and irreversible harm that National Grid's proposed pylon alignment will inflict on the historic core of Ardleigh.
Our village crossroads contains a dense, sensitive cluster of medieval listed buildings and the **Grade II star** listed Church of St Mary's, all protected within a designated Conservation Area. National Grid's application proposes to encircle this ancient settlement on three sides with 50-metre lattice pylons. Crucially, the 400kV conductor arrays will hang directly in the visual airspace of our listed buildings and slice through the historic street scene immediately behind the church. The revised visualisation 7.12 c show with a single dotted green line how the cable array would be seen above the medieval listed buildings and crossing the street behind the Church 7.12 e shows how the array would be visible to the east of the crossroads."

Under National Policy Statement **EN-1**, the applicant is required to minimise harm to the historic environment. In their Environmental Statement, APP 215 National Grid assesses the impact on St Mary's Church as **'Lower Less Than Substantial Harm.'**
We strongly reject this downplaying of the impact. 'Less than Substantial' is a broad spectrum, not a minor category. By literally surrounding our village core with 50-metre pylons and cutting off the historic context of St Mary's Church, this project does not cause 'lower' harm. It pushes the impact to the absolute **upper boundary** of that threshold, in our view to **Substantial Harm**.
We believe National Grid is confusing the *absence of physical damage* to the bricks and mortar with the *scale of visual destruction* to the setting. Stringing industrial cables across the street layout behind St Mary's permanently destroys the 'day to day' views and character of the village' experienced by the public. This is a severe, high-level impact on the setting that their assessment conveniently minimises.

National Grid has failed to prove that a less harmful alternative route is impossible. The applicant has already conceded that undergrounding cables is necessary through the adjacent Dedham Vale National Landscape. However, they have failed to provide a robust, transparent justification as to why the East Anglia Connection Node cannot be located elsewhere. The concentrated heritage at the centre of our village deserves protection.

The cumulative impact of the massive new substations, the haul roads, and this arc of pylons will completely obliterate the historic character of this rural parish."

We urge the Examining Authority to robustly scrutinise National Grid's options appraisal. and recommend the refusal of this specific pylon alignment in your final report to the Secretary of State. T

Thank you."

Chris Whitfield
23 June 2026

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OS reference:	605362E 229462N	Horizontal field of view:	90° (cylindrical projection)	Camera:	Canon EOS 6D Mark II	Photography Date:	10/01/2025
AOD:	36.46 m	Principal distance:	522 mm	Lens:	50mm Fixed Focal Length	Photography Time:	08:54
Direction of view:	335°	Paper size:	841 x 297 mm (half A1)	Camera height:	1.5 m		
Nearest pylon:	0.52 km	Correct printed image size:	820 x 260 mm				

- 6 m increase in height, based on the average height of all pylons which are within the horizontal field of view
- Ground level lateral and longitudinal Limit of Deviation, indicating the area within which a pylon could be located
- Indicative pylon location if moved perpendicular from the existing location to the nearest edge of the Limit of Deviation'

Norwich to Tilbury
Figure: 7.12.F234_HE25c(ii)
Viewpoint HE25: Ardleigh

nationalgrid

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