

S62A/2022/0011 Land East of Pelham substation, Maggots End Manuden

Ref Uttlesford application reference UTT/22/2624/PINS

Ref Uttlesford application reference UTT/21/3356/FUL

Ref East Herts application reference 3/21/2781/FUL

My name is John Archer and I am a resident of Manuden.

My address is [REDACTED]

S62A/2022/0011 | Construction and operation of a solar farm comprising ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) arrays and battery storage together with associated development, including inverter cabins, DNO substation, customer switchgear, access, fencing, CCTV cameras and landscaping | Land Near Pelham Substation Maggots End Road Manuden

I am sure that I am not the only person who has found this application very difficult to deal with because we clearly have to do something for our planet. But on reflection and after some research it really makes no sense at all to cover our “green and pleasant land” with Solar Farms of this magnitude. There are so many unused brown field sites and roofs that could so easily be used – maybe a t more cost to developer but surely we want more energy not necessarily more profits.

I know that this current plan is for one “solar factory” and at just a squeak less than 50 MW does not merit a Public Enquiry, clearly deliberate, but if all those that are planned within a small radius, all just under 50MW, were deemed to be one application then it would certainly have to be examined at a full Public Enquiry. I wish they could be looked at in the round.

I am lucky to live in a listed 15th Century jettied house on the stretch of T [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. A few years ago our houses suffered a “hit” from a passing farm vehicle – we were lucky not to lose the front of the houses in fact lucky not to lose the houses completely. We are very very concerned about the number of HGVs that this development and the others that are planned and being considered could generate. We understand that the routing for this particular plan is not through Manuden, but how will this be enforced? The longer route avoiding Manuden is some 13.5 miles (21.7 km) the shorter route through Manuden is 3.6 miles (5.8 km). I find it very hard to believe that drivers will go nearly 10 miles out of their way and so I fear they will be trundling past my house – I am not sure it will last another 500 years! An added concern is that this is just one proposal if they are all approved then we have to have planning conditions that installations cannot be simultaneous or even overlap! It would be a nightmare – either for Manuden, Clavering, Berden or Newport or all of them. Equally we must have planning conditions to determine the state of our listed buildings before and after the installation and not just the state of the highways.

I am a keen walker in the area and often walk the paths around Battles, Peyton Hall, Brick End etc, these paths are very well trodden and the cross field sections are easily spotted on satellite maps of the area. I can pretty much guarantee that they will not be so well used if surrounded by solar panels and high fences. A very valuable amenity – according to Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP “*a number of proposals for solar farms in the countryside have been rejected as causing visual harm, harm to amenity or harm to openness.*” - I do hope that Pelham Springs becomes one of the rejected proposals for exactly this reason.

It appears that the government itself agrees as **they prefer small community led solar projects** rather than such huge industrial units. They state that that the United Kingdom’s energy requirement will be satisfied 100% by offshore wind farms and supplemented with nuclear and **small scale** installations already mentioned. Assuming

that they have done their sums right then this would make Pelham Springs just another white elephant – a very large one and very costly one to remove! What are the chances that the promises made to return the land to its former state will be kept by LCG in, 10, 15, 20, 30, 40 years time? I suspect very little as they will be long gone.

I have a deep suspicion that these solar panels, coming from so far away, are nowhere near as green as they purport to be, that the only way they can be made so cheaply is through unfair government subsidies and possibly through the use of slave labour, though this is of course denied. In any event it seems most unfair to claim that we are approaching “zero carbon” at the expense of others.

The actuality of these industrial solar farms seems far away from the very pretty propaganda leaflets that the developers produce with sheep and cattle grazing, lots of wild flowers and beehives, we see can all see them in the countryside – very barren places, surrounded by mesh fencing and security. Please visit the reality rather than accept the myths of the pretty leaflets. Having lived my early life on various military bases the periphery of the solar farms that I have seen look remarkably similar, the mesh fencing, the CCTV, the barrenness is clear – massive “no man’s land”. The battery units, from a distance look like nissen huts.

Paraphrasing and mucking about with William Blake ... it would be such a shame in the far future if our ancestors won't be able to sing

“And did those feet in ancient time
walk upon England's pastures green?” (no mountains hereabouts!)

“not at any cost...

not in any place...

not if it rides roughshod over the views of local communities.

As we take solar to the next level, we must be thoughtful, sensitive to public opinion, and mindful of the wider environmental and visual impacts. “

[Greg Barker, ex Minister for Energy and Climate Change]