

17 August 2021

Dear Chair of Parish Council,

We are writing to you in connection with the EDF East Stour Solar Farm project which is currently out for consultation. We are two residents living in Church Lane where we and our respective families have lived for a total of more than 50 years. We have spoken to all of those living in the lane, all of whom object to the solar farm proposal and many will by now have submitted their objections to the consultation process.

### **Solar Farms – at what cost?**

As you will appreciate, this is the second such Solar Farm scheme centred on Church Lane in the East Stour Valley Landscape Character Area, the last constructed in 2015/2016. That earlier scheme is approximately 50 acres whereas this new scheme is very much larger and in its current form covers about 252 acres (five times as big as the last scheme).

In the context of climate change and the need to move away from reliance on fossil fuels, solar farms perhaps like windfarms are often considered as an “accepted good thing”.

However, a big question mark still hangs over these schemes in terms of their “earth costs” (their carbon footprint from manufacture through to disposal in landfill – remembering the units may well be replaced a number of times).

It is important that through focusing on carbon emission targets we don't inadvertently blight the parish by “deleting” a huge area of its countryside for 40 years – or indeed longer if such land at the end of that period is deemed “brown” and suitable for development when the panels are finally removed.

### **Heritage Assets**

We suggest that a much longer-term view is merited, as set out in the Ashford Landscape Character Assessment Policies TRS17 and TRS18, which considers the effects of the scheme, in its current form, on the oldest part of Aldington and its setting. This outlying area comprises the 10<sup>th</sup> Century Grade 1 listed Church of St Martin, the remains of the ancient and Grade 2\* listed 14<sup>th</sup> Century Archbishop's Palace, and its immediate estate estimated at 1000 acres including Deer Park and fishponds purchased by Henry VIII in 1540.

Furthermore, there are heritage buildings in Church Lane including a total of 15 Listed Buildings (some residential some agricultural) many dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries – some even earlier. The main cluster of these around the Church also fall within a designated Conservation Area. These are the most concentrated group of listed buildings within a 1Km radius of the site – a radius that records a total of 50 listed buildings (3 are Grade 1 and 1 Grade 2\*).

Central Government through its National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out safeguards for what it terms “Heritage Assets” like these that we have clustered around the Church and along the lane. The NPPF provides guidance to local planning authorities in relation to certain types of development – including applications that relate to large-scale ground mounted solar photovoltaic farms such as this.

Specifically, there is a requirement in the NPPF for these solar farms to: *“take great care to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of the proposals on views important to their setting”*. It goes further and says that *“.... a large-scale solar farm within the setting of a heritage asset may cause substantial harm to the significance of the asset”*.

### **Why this site?**

EDF are promoting this site because they are under pressure to achieve a greater amount of electricity from renewable sources. The site has the advantage of being close to a suitable connection point into the National Grid and they will believe has the benefit that the earlier (although much smaller) nearby scheme has set some form of precedent.

However, it is completely wrong to consider this earlier scheme as anything like comparable to the scheme now being proposed:

- The earlier scheme is wholly on poor Grade 3 agricultural land. Much of Bested Hill and quite possibly the easternmost part of the now proposed scheme is Grade 2 land (defined as “very good” in the agricultural land classification series). We should not be losing good quality agricultural land to these schemes. As the Inspector said at the Appeal on the earlier solar farm in the lane – *“Development should avoid using the best and most versatile agricultural land”*.
- The earlier scheme (before any landscape mitigation was undertaken) is naturally well screened on low-lying land. It is difficult to see it from a highway or from any footpath vantage point whereas the proposed scheme is visible from a number of areas including the Conservation Area and the much-used footpath to the west of the Church numbered AE/474/2, the footpaths to the east of the Church (AE/477) and northeast (AE/478). It is a concern that it will also be visible (the Bested Hill element) from various points on the Pilgrims’ Way (see photos). It will also be very visible to anyone approaching from the north along Church Lane from the A20 - no matter what landscaping and planting may be proposed because of the rising ground.

In summary:

### Protection of Heritage Assets

- We ask that the village through the Parish Council recognises that this is not just a problem for Church Lane. If a “line in the sand” is not drawn and established now the village runs the risk of further extensions to this solar farm into areas where it will be even more visible and affect the enjoyment of those living more centrally.
- Everything is about connection points on these schemes and the converter station offers that connection hub and therefore the potential for further planning applications coming forward and affecting the village is real.
- Whilst there will be many that believe you can't stop this sort of scheme in the current climate where solar and wind power projects are always presumed “good” there are, as indicated, clear provisions set out in central government planning guidance where *heritage assets* need to be taken into account in the context of solar farms - notwithstanding other factors that might suggest a site is suitable.
- Whilst we believe the scheme should be contained entirely within the area identified between the M20 and the railway, if that is not possible then, at the very least we should be agreeing a “Cordon Sanitaire” that protects the existing views enjoyed looking north both from the Church and from the rights of way that run on the high ground between the Church and the village. These views encompass
  - the valley (which also at the lowest point contains the ancient fishponds that were part of the archbishop's ownership) the Point-to-Point course – itself long established and reckoned to be one of the most scenically attractive courses in the country with its own backdrop looking towards the Church and the old village properties in the lane
  - Bested Hill (particularly its south/Church facing slope) and the easternmost area, south of Round Wood (easily visible from the Church and properties in and around the Conservation Area).

We are in this letter we are only trying to reflect the views of the parishioners we have spoken to in the lane, and we do not act for them in any official capacity.

Some are much more affected by these proposals than others. All would prefer the scheme was revised entirely so that it (and any Battery component – on which we have very little information so far) is contained wholly within the area between the M20 and the railway.

However, the substantial majority see the sense in some form of long-term solution involving a compromise where the project boundary line is amended – something which we have looked at in some detail and would like to discuss with you at a meeting as soon as possible. We hope at such a meeting we will be able to convince you of the good sense in

taking this approach. If so, we would like to see whether a further meeting could be convened to discuss this with the Planning Officer.

We hope we have been able to clearly explain our concerns while at the same time outlining a way forward – which if handled correctly – should not easily enable the further loss of agricultural land through enlargement of this type of commercial land use within the parish.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Tennant and Alison Baldwin



View of the proposed site – Bested Hill from the footpath to the East of St Martin's Church.





View of Bested hill from pPilgrims' Way in Brabourne. Due to the size and prominent location of this site it can be seen from approximately 5 miles from the site. This photograph was taken in August 2021 and shows maximum shielding from trees in winter months more of this site would be visible







ALISON BALDWIN Comment left on 18/10/2022 Stance Object

With the new Minister for DEFRA now saying solar farms should not be built on farmland used for food production this application should be rejected, especially given the size of the adjoining Stone Street Green site and the devastating and cumulative effect it will have on a rural farming community.



ALISON BALDWIN

Comment left on  
19/2/2024

Stance

Object

Despite reaching out to the applicant on a number of occasions over a 2-3 year period to engage with them positively and constructively on the views of Church Lane residents, they have refused to remove from the application as requested the area facing South on Bested Hill (towards Aldington Village, Aldington Corner and the Grade 1 St Martin's Church), estimated to be approx 15 acres and for this reason I still object to the scheme. I think it is also disingenuous in the photo montages provided by the applicant particularly part 4 of 5 that this area appears to be 'missing' from the visual representation (view from the footpath opposite the Church walking towards Aldington Corner) even though it appears in the subsequent application details. I also strongly object to the application because the traffic management plan is completely inadequate and residents of Church Lane know from bitter experience from works carried out over a recent 18 month period at the Converter station and the previous construction of the existing solar farm, that this project will lead to: oversize vehicles trying to navigate the lane from the Roman Road to reach the North side of the lane (passing over the narrow river bridge and trying to squeeze under the height restricted railway bridge), an increase in use from contractor's vehicles who ignore notices not to access the site from the South / Roman Road and an increase in litter thrown from vehicles, damage to the verges (which have in places been replanted with wildflower seeds) due to their being limited places for vehicles to pass, a risk of damage to resident's driveways, verges, fences, walls and in some instances due to their proximity to the lane of Grade II listed buildings from passing vehicles, disruption and delay caused by vehicles getting stuck in the lane as there are no suitable turning sites for oversize vehicles or vehicles who are delayed / slowed by the movement of panels along the lane. This is also compounded when the M20 is closed or severely delayed with many vehicles using Church Lane as a cut through to the Roman Road to avoid stationary traffic along the A20 towards Sellindge. Residents also had to wait several months for repairs to the surface and verge of the lane from the previous works at the Converter Station to be repaired, which has caused damage to a number of vehicles. The only positive comment to note is that the applicant and the Converter Station have both said that they would support a road closure of Church Lane if the site is approved which will greatly reduce the impact on residents lives and enjoyment of the lane. I would finally urge Ashford Borough Council to consider the cumulative effect approving this will have alongside the existing solar farm and the proposed Stone Street Green Solar Farm which will both adjoin this site. Having three such large sites will have a permanent effect on the rural landscape for generations, when there are alternative other sites with more suitable topography and access and also rooftop solar options. There is also the longer term conversation which needs to be had about the UK's ability to produce sufficient food for a growing population and taking several hundred acres of land out of food production will have an impact because it is happening unchecked across the country.

ALICE BOSLEY Comment left on 08/11/2022 Stance Object

Covering farmland in solar panels is not the answer to producing more energy. It's a money making scheme for few. Offer free solar panels to every household and it might help residents and the environment. Solar panels look horrendous (negative visual impact), are environmentally bad for the land & organisms there, mean that food cannot be grown & are shipped from China.



DEREK BURLES Comment left on 23/9/2022 Stance Object

I have considered this application very carefully; I wish to confirm my OBJECTION to the scheme as proposed but would be willing to withdraw my objection if my concerns that follow can be addressed through amendment:

1. : It is firmly established that solar panel developments, forecast to generate 50MW (or more) of electricity, will be classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and must apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO) under the provisions of the Planning Act 2008.

Eight other solar applications submitted by EDF have all been based on the same electricity generation forecast of 49.9MW, regardless of the acreage of each site (ranging in size from 59 acres to 250 acres) and regardless of their geographical location (ranging from Redcar in the north to Aldington in the south) notwithstanding a huge variation in irradiation levels between sites.

Business and viability models must be available within EDF based on the projected generation output for each site. Why is there nowhere any explanation about these huge acreage discrepancies? I would ask the planning authority to investigate this aspect to check whether in this respect (and there may indeed be others) the scheme should not be considered as an NSIP.

2.The planned development is incomplete: The initial EDF consultation document stated that 'we currently expect the battery storage to come forward as a separate planning application'. How can this overt separation of this component be justified in the context of the development as a whole?

It is my understanding that the solar panel development cannot become operational without a battery storage facility.

The visual aspects of this application in the landscape are a key consideration - especially around Bested Hill. What if, for example, the later and separate application for battery storage is refused and the applicant then applies for

battery storage within the solar panel development area - as an amendment? If the scheme won't function without it, then presumably EDF can 'ransom' the planning authority since if they refuse then the approved scheme can't function.

In fact if, for whatever reason, there is a change proposed in terms of battery storage it could be that this comes forward in the form of white units in a shape and form similar to metal shipping containers across the landscape.

Does the absence of this key component not also run the risk of compromising the process, given the potential for the solar panel component being approved ahead of the energy storage planning application. Here again the planning authority (and Aldington) could be held to ransom.

Does it not also set a dangerous precedent given the forthcoming planning application from Evolution Power for the Stonestreet Green solar development. As things stand, this scheme is designed to operate with energy storage as a consolidated component "in the field".

Finally on this point, given that the EDF and Evolution Power developments are planned for adjacent sites, both connecting to the National Grid via the same Converter Station, with the same or similar parameters concerning grid capacity and storage, is it not logical that they are required to talk to each other about consolidation? This is not to prejudge the outcome of either application but, as things stand, it would surely be far better to remove large numbers of battery units from the landscape (Evolution Power's approach) and for the Pivot Power scheme to be enlarged to incorporate both projects?

I am in no way accepting of the Evolution Power scheme (there is far too little detail as yet to form an opinion on that scheme) but if both applicants are not at least talking to each other in principle about a consolidated storage system, creating the optimised kind of solution that cannot be achieved through independent storage systems, why on earth not?

3. Impact on PROWs: I write as a committed and experienced walker and note the direct impact of the development on public footpaths AE 432, AE437, AE 457 and AE459, together with the indirect impact on the wider connecting network.

The proposals for AE459 deserve greatest attention, so as to avoid the creation of corridors and negative walking experiences, borne out of intrusive fencing and 'danger of death' signage. In their place should be walkways, consisting of 10M wide grassed areas, accompanied by the planting of indigenous hedges to screen the panels, enhance the experience and support wildlife. With the hedges maintained at the appropriate height, throughout the lifetime of the development, as part of the broader mitigation package.

As a side note, this is the kind of solution agreed for similar circumstances at the EDF Glassthorpe solar development. Which begs the question why the applicant does not adopt consistent solutions for such situations?

Alternatively, dispense with the planned triangular areas to the south of the footpath and eradicate the corridors completely.

A similar 10M wide pathway solution is required where AE 432 runs between the M20 embankment and on towards the railway line. Elsewhere, the continuation of AE 432 alongside the M20 embankment, requires a similar treatment with a 10M wide footpath and hedges on the development side of the path, in order to maintain a positive walking experience.

With the 'permitted path' situated alongside the M20 embankment, with the AE 432 junction at one end and Park Wood at the other, would also benefit from such an approach.

Finally, correct PROW related standards set here will create a positive precedent for the following Evolution Power scheme. Conversely, poor PROW standards here will create negative precedents and further deterioration of the footpaths and the community benefits accrued from them.

4. Misleading communications and the Community Benefit Scheme (CBS): It is understood that such funding does not form part of the formal planning process. But it is a key part of the relationship between developer and community which needs to be addressed in parallel with the planning process.

The applicant treats the residents of Aldington and Ashford as fools when promoting as fact that the development will 'meet the needs of approx. 16,900 homes in the Borough of Ashford'. With the clear implication that Borough residents will directly benefit from the output of this development. Which of course is utter nonsense, given the output will pass into the National Grid and just as likely consumed in Aberdeen or Torquay.

On this basis, should this development proceed, may the developers be required to consider the CBS in the context of bringing true benefits to the village of Aldington, largely in accordance with the requests made by the Church Lane Group, but that consultation takes place with the Aldington community in the form of a survey amongst all households to determine their preferences, followed by a Village Meeting to conclude the process based on the results of the survey, thus ensuring that the community's views are truly represented, heard and acted upon.

5. Traffic Management Plan (TMP): Agreement with all requests made by the Church Lane Group, but with the implementation of a financial bond that will be held pending the preservation and/or return of all roads and roadside components, including both hardware and natural features, to their pre-construction status.

6. Preserving Aldington's history: Church Lane sits at the heart of Aldington's history. St Martins Church has been located there in one form or another since 600CE. Adjacent to the Church is the site of Thomas Becket's Archbishops Palace. The Lane is the site of the original village that had to be abandoned due to the Plague in the 1340s. It was the site of Aldington's first, but long gone, pub. In more recent times, it has become the home of point-to-point racing in the village.

Though some may naturally disagree, it is probably the prettiest part of Aldington. In addition to the church, it's combination of level and undulating farmland, woodland, farms, racecourse, pretty homes and narrow thoroughfare combine to create a unique part of the Garden of England.

Sight lines and a whole host of other planning considerations may provide some pause for thought during the planning process, but let's not lose sight of what the Church Lane area truly contributes to the village of Aldington and protect it.

Like the rest of Aldington, Church Lane has faced its fair share of recent, significant development, not least of all, the massive Converter Station completed in 1980 at one end of the Lane. Followed



by the M20 motorway and the high-speed railway line. Like the rest of Aldington, please acknowledge that Church Lane deserves a break.

7. Communication: Managed well, this topic has the power to smooth the most difficult of challenges. In which context is a request, if the development goes ahead to effectively communicate with the village throughout the process.

This to take 2 forms. One, the maintenance of a website which provides details of the developments progress, in an interesting way that everyone can understand. Two, periodic – maybe quarterly, village meetings to report on progress in an interesting way, whilst providing the opportunity for questions, answers and discussion.

In respect of all other matters relating to the Mitigating Impact on Designated Landscapes and the Landscape Environmental Management Plan, my inputs concur with those of the Church Lane Group and their submission.

Derek Burles  
23rd September 2022

It is inappropriate to cover greenfield sites with solar panels. If it is land suitable for agricultural use it should be used for producing food. If not, it is very likely to be suitable for planting trees which will act as a carbon sink and increase biodiversity.

Apps such as 'Gridwatch' make it possible to see the mix of methods of electricity generation during the course of the day. It is possible to see that the contribution from solar panels is really quite small when averaged over 24 hours, despite the wide installation of them on the roofs of houses and existing solar farms across the country. To make the contribution much more significant by the use of solar farms as proposed here would require unacceptable amounts of countryside to be taken up. It would also require significant means of storage to time-shift the power generated. If that is to be by batteries that would produce significant environment and oversees exploitation of labour concerns and further consumption of limited and valuable resources.

There are many other potential sites where solar panels could be placed without using greenfield sites. All developers should be mandated to put solar panels on the roofs of new houses. Put them on existing and new commercial buildings and beside motorways and railway lines and over lorry parks providing shade and reducing light pollution. The infrastructure being developed to provide charging for electric vehicles can also be used to connect the PVs.

Wind generation especially offshore produces a bigger and steadier supply without rendering agricultural land unusable.

Whilst one can see the attraction of using an existing node on the National Grid the following observations are pertinent. Aldington already has had its fair share of blight through the existence of the converter station and the nearby existing solar farm at the bottom of Church Lane. Beyond these the undulating countryside through which Church Lane meanders is a particularly attractive and unspoilt approach to the ancient and historic village of Aldington. It provides the site of the much enjoyed Aldington Point to Point. The proposed solar farm would have a serious impact on the beautiful views across this landscape.

The wider area has already had its fair share of disruption and impact through the development of the high-speed rail-link and the effects of Brexit on traffic in the area.

There are serious concerns about the disruption caused during installation of the proposed solar farm. EDF does not seem to have addressed sufficiently the problems likely to be caused by small bridges under the railway and over the East Stour River at the bottom of Church Lane where only the smallest lorries can travel and certainly not pass each other. It would be truly unacceptable for heavy lorries to pass through the village, past the school to the top of Church Lane to approach the site from that direction. Enough is enough.



JEFFREY L COULLING Comment left on 09/9/2022 Stance Object

Jeff Coulling and Linda Coulling 09 Sept. 2022

We have lived in Church Lane for 45 years, when we moved here it was a quiet country lane, then came the motorway bridge, then the convertor station, then extension upon extension upon extension, now some sort of battery storage system !! Then came a solar farm and now a much larger solar farm, to put it mildly I don't think it is fair on the residents of Aldington. We have put up with so much over the years i.e. closing the lane completely and having to go through the village for months on end. You have to ask yourself, is this nightmare ever going to finish.

The management of the converter station make no attempt to keep the lane tidy the grass verges are a disgrace where they

allow heavy vehicles to park on them, also they make no attempt to shield the ugly site from Church lane. It looks like Butlins.

To finish up, I believe the convertor station has broken the law by painting a white line where their entrance is. It has encroached

on the Kings highway causing a bottle neck on the bend plus workmen signs reducing the width of the lane even more.

Thank you,  
Lin & Jeff Coulling.

SARA EMMERSON Comment left on 29/9/2022 Stance Object  
Your ref: 22/0068/AS // East Stour Solar Farm

I wish to register my objection to the above planning application. I fully endorse the comments and objections set out in the Church Lane residents' group letter from Jonathan Tennant and the comments posted by Derek Burles. I share the concerns about the lack of collaboration between the solar farm proposals, there is no evidence of sharing of infrastructure, the companies backing both schemes are working in spite of each other. I also object to the fact there is no benefit to the village of cheaper rate of electricity given the inconvenience the building of this site will create and the negative impact on property value. I would like to understand why obsolete technology is being used when solar roof tiles and other solutions which are readily available. How will the panels be disposed of in an ethical way that is sympathetic to the environment once they reach end of life? Will EDF confirm there will be no impact on flora and fauna in the area and that the land will be safely returned to its original state once the solar farm reaches the end of life. What guarantee has EDF given that the Sellindge substation is capable of ingesting the electricity generated and in a safe way? Why remove farmland from use when the need for UK food production is paramount? Surely there are better more suitable sites along the edge of railway lines and major roads?

Sara Emmerson  
29/9/22

E EVANS Comment left on 20/9/2022 Stance Object  
Your ref: 22/0068/AS // East Stour Solar Farm

I wish to register my objection to the above planning application. I fully endorse the comments and objections set out in the Church Lane residents' group letter from Jonathan Tennant -- and reiterate that that the scheme, as, is should be rejected on these grounds:

#### Site selection

The applicant has provided scant evidence to show they have rigorously examined other potential sites for the development. There is other land closer to the converter station, between the A20 and the motorway -- owned by the same landowner -- that would be less prominent and better suited. Yet there is no evidence of EdF giving it any consideration.

#### Detrimental Change to the landscape

In its pre-application advice, the council stated that the proposal would be compliant -- "provided that it can be demonstrated that it would not have a detrimental impact on the rural setting of the site."

As submitted, the proposal fails to meet this requirement.

Much of the site is located away some considerable distance from the converter station, where the railway line and sub-station are invisible, and where the impact of the proposal will inevitably be of high significance.

Bested Hill is a prominent landmark in the local landscape and acts as a buffer between the industrial setting of the motorway and the converter station and the village of Aldington and its rural surroundings.

The topography of the proposed site makes the proposed solar farm far more prominent in the landscape than the existing and far smaller existing solar array on Church Lane.

Being at the top of Bested Hill, the proposed development would be visible from the Aldington Conservation Area, the Pilgrims Way, as well as many local footpaths. It lies close to the Romney March Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

If approved, this disproportionately large development would cause serious harm to this landscape, in contravention of policy ENV3a in Ashford Borough Council's local plan. This damage would likely be permanent -- for reasons set out below.

#### Screening

In mitigation, the applicant has proposed to screen the site by planting new hedgerows. This is welcome -- though the proposals are inadequate. The screening will take time to grow and so won't be effective for a large part of the power station's proposed lifespan.

During the winter months, it will provide little at all. There is also no obligation on the applicant to maintain it.

Should councilors decide to approve the proposal, I would ask at minimum for two conditions to be imposed.

Firstly, that electricity generation should not start until all the screening on the plan is planted to the satisfaction of the council.

Second, that continued operation of the array is conditional the applicant complying with an agreed plan to manage and maintain the screening. As Tennant's letter notes, screening was promised when the previous solar farm on Church Lane was built -- but has not been maintained in accordance with the plan. I observe that the two sites share a common landowner.

#### Damage to the setting of Backhouse Wood

The proposal would have a serious adverse affect on the setting of this ancient woodland and wildlife asset. Today, it sits prominently on a hillside amid open fields. The cumulative affect of this application and the proposed Stone Street Green solar power station would leave it near-surrounded in an alien industrial landscape.

The proposal would also damage wildlife corridors -- in particular for the deer that roam the wood and development site.

The damage to Backhouse Wood would outweigh any purported biodiversity gains from the solar power plant. Any such gains would be incidental to the proposal and therefore cannot be used as a justification for it.



## Reversibility

Despite early assurances by the applicant, there is a strong risk that the site will not be put back to agricultural use after 40 years. The applicant has gone silent on this. One can only assume that they no longer intend this to be a temporary development – as they promised in their consultation – but a permanent development. That opens up the possibility of the site being classed as brownfield and being developed in future for housing.

Should councilors decide to approve the project, I would ask at minimum for a condition to be imposed requiring the applicant to dismantle the array and restore the land to its previous agricultural use after the promised 40-year life span of the project.

Such reinstatement would be a costly exercise, and there is a risk that the applicant may be unwilling to meet the financial cost. I would ask for councilors to impose a further condition requiring that the removal of all equipment is costed, and the money put into a bond so the council can ensure the land is reinstated after the planning consent expires. Without such a conditional, it will be impossible to enforce the removal of the equipment.

## Visibility and Glint

The setting and curtilage of Hogben Farm House, Barn, and Dairy – all three grade II listed buildings – would be harmed. My property lies next to the site, in the lee of the hill. Given the rise of the hill, I will be looking out at a rake of solar panels from my house, particularly in the winter months when there are no leaves on the trees.

The applicant has failed to provide any reassurance my enjoyment of my property – in particular the rooms that face north -- will not be affected by glint or reflections from the solar panels.

## Risk of flooding

Water from the South side of Bested Hill drains through my land – through a drain into a pond directly adjacent to the Grade II-listed Hogben Farm House.

The field has been ploughed regularly, and this helps let rainwater soak down through the surface and help manage the flow. This flooding mitigation will be lost if the field is covered in panels. The soil around the solar panels is likely to be compacted as it is used for maintenance access -- or by sheep grazing -- and is less likely to soak up water. The panels will deviate heavy downpours and result in a greater risk of flooding to my property.

## Damage to public rights of way

Footpath AE457 skirts around the outside of Backhouse woodland. The setting and public enjoyment of this path would be negatively impacted by the proposal. Instead of looking out over open landscape, the footpath would be enclosed by large, solid structures out of proportion with the local landscape.

In their application, the applicant includes a map showing a second footpath crossing the site on a north-south axis. The same path also appears on the 1885, 1914, 1937, 1956 and 1962 Ordnance Survey Maps.

The proposed development would block that footpath: The applicant proposes to encircle the site with a fence.

Though it isn't included in Kent County Council's Definitive List, the second footpath is extant. The burden lies on the applicant to prove that this right of way has been extinguished or moved. They have failed to do this. Unless the applicant can do so, the planning authority is obligated to reject the application.

## Proposed battery

I note the proposed battery does not form part of this application.

One can surmise that this is to avoid breaching the 50MW limit before developers have to seek a costly Development Consent Order. Given the proposed solar farm and battery could, in theory, feed more than 50MW into the grid simultaneously, councilors should impose a condition limiting the combined capacity of the two projects to 50MW. At no time should the battery and solar arrays feed more than 50MW into the grid.

If they are capable of doing so, or being operated in such a way, councilors should reject the application and guide the applicant to the Development Consent Order process.

Yours sincerely,  
Edward Evans

BETH FOTHERINGHAM Comment left on 04/10/2022 Stance Object

I object to the proposed solar farm. I fully endorse the comments submitted by Jonathan Tenant and Alison Baldwin in their correspondence on behalf of the Church Lane residents group on 26th July which provides a comprehensive response outlining the reasons to object.

MR P FOTHERINGHAM Comment left on 05/9/2022 Stance Object

Dear Sir/Madam

I have tried to make a comment through your planning portal without success and understand that by emailing you at this address my comment will be considered.

I OBJECT to the application.

I fully endorse and support the comment submitted by Mr Jonathon Tennant and Mrs Alison Baldwin in their correspondence on behalf of the Church Lane Group on the 26th July which provides a comprehensive response outlining the reasons for objection.

I do not object in principle to the need to move towards the use of solar in dealing with our future energy needs and as you can see from the comments on the 26th July, we have tried to engage with EDF to change their plans to allow the build but taking into consideration the impact on the environment, the historical assets of the Lane and the local community including the specific need of those blighted by living so close to the development. Whilst EDF have shown some willingness to listen, their amendments do not go far enough.

The southern line of the plans needs to be pushed north over the ridge so that the valley is kept clear of the blight of the sea of solar panels.

The impact on the local environment has not been fully considered and further screening is required.

The plans for build are not complete and having suffered the build of the other smaller solar park where promises were not kept about impact on residents and still to this day are not being managed effectively then we require a detailed plans for before, during and after build where individuals and companies are held to account.

I understand that the compensation to the local community is much lower than similar builds nationally and also needs to address the immediate area proximate to the build and not fully in the village 1.5 miles away.

The lane should be fully closed for the build and frankly a permanent closure to most traffic other than farming should be considered and would mitigate some of the impact longer term.

With regards to the application, I OBJECT.

Please confirm receipt of this comment.

Thank you.

Paul Fotheringham  
Forehead  
Church Lane  
Aldington  
Kent  
TN25 7EH



PAUL FOTHERINGHAM

Comment left on  
19/2/2024

Stance

Object

I OBJECT to this application. I was extremely disappointed to read the update on this scheme from the developer. Whilst there is a small reference to 'consulting' with local residents, it provides no detail/response/comments to specific and very serious concerns raised by residents. Very many people have spent considerable time reviewing documentation and attending local meetings with a view to providing feedback to the developers and also the local authority and it appears that our greatest fear that there is a lack of concern or care about local residents and this development will be pushed through no matter what. I would have expected a document summarising the concerns of local residents and other consulters and then an explanation as to how they are mitigated or dealt with. Instead, absolutely nothing. The developer has not addressed the serious concerns about the disruption throughout the development. We had similar reassurances about the lane not being used for access as we did on the last smaller development and if I were a betting man, we will see inappropriate vehicles clogging up and damaging the lane during this development. We have been promised on multiple occasions for the putting right of damaged verges from the original solar park development and the more recent work at the convertor station. A walk/drive down the lane from the A20 end demonstrates a lack of care from developers and a lack of interest from the local authority/highways to make the developers put right the damage caused. How will this be different with this development? We will also have to deal with the multiple lorry movements a day as we enter and exit the lane as local residents. The road will be a mess and if you haven't got a 4x4 vehicle you will struggle to safely travel along the lane. What is the mitigation to wider traffic issues, just last week the M20 was closed and the lane was used as a cut through. In another lane an HGV tried to travel on a lane and 'fell off' the side causing huge damage, there was a complete lack of management by the local authority, highway authority and local police. With the imposition of new border arrangements in October of this year, we will see more chaos on the roads around the A20, thereby Church Lane. The ONLY way to mitigate this is to close the lane to all traffic other than farm traffic. I believe that this should be a permanent road closure. I note no change to the southern boundary of the solar park meaning that panels will be on the southern side of Basted Hill meaning the park will be in clear view to residents and other recreational users of the 'valley' which includes a conservation area. Verbally the developers spoke very positively at a meeting about changing this but haven't. This is significantly impacting on the character of this area including heritage assets. The plans for screening on the lane are poor, only double hedging of 3 metres minimum height, and the planting of suitable trees will be suitable to screen the park but also offer mitigation to the environmental impact. The local authority should be satisfied that the developers have fully consulted with local residents, this means demonstrating that they have fully considered the views, addressing concerns and providing mitigation to the points raised. Whilst clearly they will not agree with some of what is said, they must show the points raised have been fully considered. There is no evidence that this is the case. I OBJECT to this application.

THEO FOTHERINGHAM Comment left on 04/10/2022 Stance Object

I object to the proposed solar farm. I fully endorse the comments submitted by Jonathan Tenant and Alison Baldwin in their correspondence on behalf of the Church Lane residents group on 26th July which provides a comprehensive response outlining the reasons to object.

I object to this application on the following grounds:

1. The undulating site, but particularly Bested Hill, is not suitable for a solar 'farm', because of the significantly negative visual impact (loss of several horizons) caused by up to 3m-high panels being sited across the crests of the hills (see Visualisations in the Environmental Statements). This is important, as the site lies in close proximity to a Conservation Area and Grade 1 and II listed and other historical assets; in addition, it forms part of the setting of the Kent Downs AONB, as seen from Aldington village and the Aldington Ridgeline.

In support of my objection on this ground, I cite Guidance dated 18 June 2015 from the Dept for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt to help local councils in developing policies for renewable and low carbon energy, which states that 'The deployment of large-scale solar farms can have a negative impact on the rural environment, particularly in undulating landscapes' and that 'great care should be taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of proposals on views important to their setting. As the significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence, but also from its setting, careful consideration should be given to the impact of large scale solar farms on such assets. Depending on their scale, design and prominence, a large scale solar farm within the setting of a heritage asset may cause substantial harm to the significance of the asset'.

Furthermore, the proposal is contrary to Policy ENV3b of Ashford Borough Council's Local Plan 2030, which states that 'All proposals within or affecting the setting of AONBs will also only be permitted under the following circumstances: • The location, form, scale, materials and design would conserve and where appropriate enhance or restore the character of the landscape. • The development would enhance the special qualities, distinctive character and tranquility of the AONB. • The development has regard to the relevant AONB management plan and any associated guidance. • The development demonstrates particular regard to those characteristics outlined in Policy ENV3a, proportionate to the high landscape significance of the AONB.'

It is also contrary to Policy ENV10 a) of Ashford Borough Council's Local Plan 2030, which states that 'Planning applications for proposals to generate energy from renewable and low carbon sources will be permitted provided that: a) The development, either individually or cumulatively does not result in significant adverse impacts on the landscape, natural assets or historic assets, having special regard to nationally recognised designations and their setting, such as AONBs, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.'

2. Good grade agricultural land (some of the site is stated to be Grade 3a) should not be given over to solar 'farms' when the UK is trying to enhance its food security, and industrial sites (e.g. all the despatch silos alongside motorways; the local Inland Border Facility at Sevington), as well as public and residential properties are available and more suitable for this purpose.

In support of my objection on this ground, I cite Guidance dated 18 June 2015 from the Dept for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Govt to help local councils in developing policies for renewable and low carbon energy, which states that 'Particular factors a local planning authority will need to consider include: encouraging the effective use of land by focussing large scale solar farms on previously developed and non agricultural land.'

3. This application amounts to a complete industrialisation, transformation and blighting of a valued rural setting that is crossed by and close to numerous public rights of way (PRoWs). The application states that no PRoWs will be moved or cancelled, but that is not the point: walkers will no longer want to walk through or near such an industrial landscape. Given the proposed height of the panels, any walkers who do use the footpaths near or across the solar 'farm' will find themselves looking not at, but underneath, a dense sea of adjacent panels.

The proposal is contrary to Policy ENV5 of Ashford Borough Council's Local Plan 2030, which states that 'All development in the rural areas of the Borough shall protect and, where possible, enhance the following features: a) Ancient woodland and semi-natural woodland; b) River corridors and tributaries; c) Rural lanes which have a landscape, nature conservation or historic importance; d) Public rights of way; and, e) Other local historic or landscape features that help to distinguish the character of the local area.'

4. The Visualisations imply that it will take some 10 years out of the 40-year lifespan of the solar 'farm' for the screening to have a real effect in mitigating the visual impacts in some locations, so even in these parts of the site residents and visitors will suffer from the visual impact for 25% of its life. Furthermore, in the case of Bested Hill, for example, the screening is designed to hide the tall solar panels, which themselves sit astride the crest of the hill, so the screening will utterly alter the present rural view. And yet, from more distant elevated viewpoints (such as PRoW AE475), the screening will have little or no effect in mitigating the visual impact of the solar 'farm'. This would mean complete loss of visual amenity for two generations. Furthermore, even if the solar 'farm' equipment is completely removed in 40 years' time, the lost natural landscape will have been long



forgotten and the site in its then blighted state would likely be regarded as 'brownfield', already industrialised, and thus ripe for development that would not be permitted under the present Local Plan as it would be contrary to Policy HOU5 as being well outside the village confines.

In support of my objection, I would highlight that:

- the solar panels will crest Bested Hill, which sits more than 20m higher than the East Stour river valley and high above neighbouring Backhouse Wood. They will be seen prominently from the open countryside in the Aldington area;
- the Visualisations provided consider the views of the solar 'farm' as seen from PRoW 474, which runs between Church Lane and Goldwell Lane, but they do not take account of the views from PRoW AE475, which runs almost parallel, but on higher ground and, importantly, much closer to the site of the 'farm'. The visual impact from PRoW AE475 will be much greater than that depicted;
- the Design and Access statement makes no mention of consideration having been given in the application to the visual and other impacts on the nearby Conservation Area or listed and other historical assets, or on the setting of the neighbouring Kent Downs AONB;
- throughout the application, there are a number of fatuous 'greenwashing' statements about the improvement of habitats, the planting of wildflowers under and around the panels and the grazing of sheep, whereas the reality will be that only mountain sheep would be able to survive on the slim pickings that the shade cast by up to 3m-high solar panels will provide – and wouldn't they eat any wild flowers that manage to survive the dense shade?!;
- it is stated in the application that the agricultural value of the land will be enhanced from lying fallow for 40 years, but no evidence has been submitted to support this statement in the context of land lying in dense shade for 40 years, with directed rainfall run-off from the panels;
- I am not clear from the application how many containers are envisaged, but the Visualisations indicate that they will be large and close together. This is completely inappropriate in this rural setting.
- the field edges along the southern border of the most northerly section of the solar 'farm' are renowned for their orchids. These orchids must be protected during construction and operation of the 'farm', if consent is given.

In summary, everything that is wrong with solar 'farms' in general, and with this particular application (including, but not exclusively, that solar 'farms' are hugely inefficient; proximity to sub-stations [for Aldington, read: converter station] leads to clustering and cumulative effect; the countryside becomes industrialised; there is loss of good agricultural land; land becomes degraded by shadow and rainwater run-off, while biodiversity is damaged, rather than enhanced; and plentiful brownfield and industrial sites are available for panels) is summed up in the statements and arguments contained within the document, *The Problem with Solar Farms*, produced by CPRE Herts – <https://www.cpreherts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/30/2021/10/The-Problem-with-Solar-Farms.pdf> – and I cite this document in its entirety as part of my strong objection to the application. Finally, I should like to comment that Ashford Borough Council's move to a new planning portal, which suffered from numerous teething problems in its early weeks of operation, has not aided accessibility and the democratic process regarding this major application, which should be of interest to many people. First, the Council has stopped notifying interested residents of 'Applications near Me', so I learnt about it by word of mouth; second, I could not find any reference on the portal to a date by which comments should be made on this application, until I looked at the press notice, which gave the date of 22 August; third, in attempting to view the documents and make a comment shortly around this date, I found that all the important documents were in zipped files, which I could not unzip and access without purchasing commercial software. I have since heard that the deadline for comments has been extended to 19 September, although I can still find no reference to such a date on the portal. In a further attempt to view the documents, I was pleased to find that currently (17 September), the documents have now been unzipped and made generally accessible online. I do wonder, however, how many other residents of Aldington may have been deterred by finding the key documents inaccessible and have thus not entered comments on this application when they otherwise might have done. Has this been a truly democratic process?

CLAIRE GIBBS Comment left on 28/9/2022 Stance Object

I strongly oppose the application for the installation of a solar farm in Church Lane, Aldington. I am a resident of Church Lane.

The proposed site has always been agricultural land, for it suddenly to be declared as poor land is convenient for the application. We need to reduce our dependency on imported food and so the loss of more agricultural land is concerning. The scheme would be far better placed on brown field sites rather than losing more farm land. With other proposed developments such as Otterpool Garden Town and the second solar proposal in the area there will be a huge impact to the area should they all go ahead. It will result in the area no longer being agricultural countryside. Despite surveys and studies which will no doubt suggest to the contrary, the development will have an impact on wildlife habitats.

The lane has a long history being the site of the church and the original village, with many listed properties and the site of the archbishops palace. When carrying out work on our own property we have had to adhere to conditions due to the history of the area, being in a conservation area and the archaeology of the area and so all of the same conditions should apply to the solar application to ensure that the history of the area is not affected or lost by the development.

The site can be seen from some distance and no matter how it is masked it will still have a hugely detrimental affect on the feel and visual impact of the area.

I strongly hope that the application is refused but should it go ahead despite so much protest then guarantees must be in place that the land is returned to agricultural use after the lifetime of the solar farm.

Further, if the development goes ahead then it must be managed and constructed in a better fashion than the previous solar development and the works at the converter station which have both negatively impacted the residents of the lane. We still have ruts running along the lane due to the impact of heavy vehicles using the lane that is not large enough to handle such vehicles but which regularly use the lane during the construction phases.

I agree with all of the arguments put forward by the Church Lane residents group.

MR MICHAEL GIBBS Comment left on 13/9/2022 Stance Object

I strongly object to the proposed solar farm. I agree with the comments made by the church Lane residents group. The proposal uses up prime agricultural land that as a resident of Aldington for 46 years has always seen crops grown in them. The views from around the church, footpaths and the top of the Lane looking out to the downs past bested hill will be changed forever, considering this is in a conservation area and contains many listed buildings along with archeological interests I do not believe this is acceptable.

The previous solar farm when constructed, made our lives a misery with lorry drivers ignoring road signs that were placed at the church end of the Lane explaining that there was no access to the site. When they realised they couldn't get under the bridge at the converter station they proceeded to reverse the entire length of the Lane destroying verges and damaging property.

I do not object to solar panels but I believe there are many better sites to site them either roofs of industrial buildings, motorway embankments or fields that are laid to permanent pasture that cannot be used for crops.

Another concern is what will happen when the panels become unviable to maintain? Will they sit there indefinitely? Will the landowner be expected to remove them and reinstate the land? What conditions will be applied so that we don't end up with an area of land that will be left to ruin until a developer comes along and offers to remove the panels as long as they get planning for housing?

R & M GIBBS Comment left on 07/10/2022 Stance Object  
From: Rod and Margaret Gibbs  
Sent: 27 September 2022 16:47  
To: Alex Stafford <alex.stafford@ashford.gov.uk>  
Subject: EDF plans for Church Aldington.

[CYBER SECURITY WARNING] This email is from an external source - be careful of attachments and links. Please remember your Cyber Security training and report suspicious emails.

Dear Alex,

We write to air our views and complaints of the proposed Solar farm of Church Lane, Aldington, we have sent emails and letters regarding this project some time ago and was disappointed when we realised that our correspondence had not been listed. However, we wish to make our views on this horrendous plan plain, as follows:-

- 1) The access to the site is virtually impossible with goods being delivered from the main A20, the small bridge (which goes over the stream) we believe couldn't possibly take the weight of lorries and construction materials, neither could this without difficulty get under the railway bridge. Also, the road from the Aldington side of Church is far too narrow, we experienced horrendous problems when the original stage of the solar was built.
- 2).Why take more of our precious land which has been farmed for food since time began, to erect some monstrous objects, which have proven to be not as efficient as first thought. we need every scrap of land available to grow food especially since Brexit, Now the Ukraine war.
- 3)We live in Church Lane and have done for the past 30 years and are very aware of the flooding that occurs every year throughout the winter. The fields that now have solar panels on are extremely wet and boggy which will of course be made much worse if more are added ( not any good for grazing sheep). There are also other wildlife living in this area, Are they not to be considered?
- 4)Tell us, is it impossible to use land either sides of railway embankments or motorways and indeed industrial units, perhaps the houses being built at the rate of knots could also have them on rooves as an additional planning project. If our first idea is feasible the maintenance wouldn't be a problem as these areas have to be maintained throughout the year anyway.

Please consider our points made, as we are passionate in conserving our beautiful countryside, we feel very privileged in being able to enjoy this part of our lovely country and wish our children and grandchildren to do so.

Rodney & Margaret Gibbs. TN25 7EG



MR & MRS GIBBS Comment left on 07/10/2022 Stance Object

From: Rod and Margaret Gibbs  
Sent: 29 September 2022 10:27  
To:  
Subject: EDF plans for Church Lane, Aldington.

[CYBER SECURITY WARNING] This email is from an external source - be careful of attachments and links. Please remember your Cyber Security training and report suspicious emails.

Dear Alex,

Further to my recent email, signed by myself and my wife, I would like to add to my questions on solar panels, how are the panels when needing to be removed from sites, going to be disposed of, as I believe that the material's they are made of will not be recyclable as there are going to be a very large amount of them, what is the proposal of dealing with this, and indeed there will also be the question as to how it's going to be possible to reinstate farmland to it's original state, the cost will I'm sure be astronomical the contamination of these areas is going to be a huge problem hopefully not insurmountable. I am, and will always be totally against solar panels which threaten our lively hood and the beauty of our country.

Yours faithfully,  
Rodney Gibbs, TN25 7EG

JOHN GOODMAN Comment left on 05/10/2022 Stance Object

I would like to register my strong objection to this application, for the same reasons so eloquently expounded by Norman Corfield in his comments of September 18th.

It makes no sense to cover large swathes of productive land with unsightly rows of solar panels when the contribution they make to our overall power generation is so small, and when we are already losing so much of our Kent countryside to saturated housing developments.

BERNADETTE AND STEPHEN GREGORY Comment left on 07/11/2022 Stance Object

We object on the following basis. Solar panels should not be placed on agricultural land they should be placed on the many large industrial buildings and alongside motorway embankments. The battery storage although part of a separate planning application will be an eyesore amongst the solar panels. The narrow lanes are unsuitable for the increase in heavy traffic associated with this construction project. The vagueness of the end of life part of the plan is unacceptable, as the reality of turning the fields back into agricultural land would be costly and how would the panels be disposed of as they are not recyclable. The degeneration of agricultural land is not acceptable. We need to be increasing our capacity to grow our own food and limit our reliability on other countries in these times of uncertainty. We strongly object to this proposal.

SARAH HARTLES Comment left on 08/11/2022 Stance Object

I object to this appliance on the grounds of its sheer size and scale. It will be a blight on the landscape and the many long reaching views towards the Wye Crown from this part of the Borough. I fully support the views of the Church Lane Residents Group and believe that there is inadequate long term planning for these sites to give the community comfort that any permission granted won't be subsequently abused or extended.

LISA HONEYBALL Comment left on 07/11/2022 Stance Object

I object to the planning for this solar project as it is currently presented. Serious consideration needs to be given to public footpath access and particularly the view as stated by Alison Baldwin.



ALISON LUNN Comment left on 26/9/2022 Stance Object

I wish to object to the inappropriate use of agricultural land that erecting solar panels would create. If the development of this agricultural land goes ahead it will be rendered useless for growing food and the amount of hardcore to create a base for the panels will be difficult to remove in 30 years, consequently rendering a vast area of land used for growing crops as brown field. Who is responsible for removing the panels and hardcore to return the land to its original state? There are better places suited to siting solar panels. The visual impact is hugely detrimental to the area. The beautiful countryside and tiny lanes surrounding the villages are most definitely not enhanced by solar panels, which are extremely difficult to camouflage especially on hillsides, however much hedging is planted. The high metal fences to keep people out are certainly not hidden by hedging on an existing, smaller, solar farm in the area. I believe we still need agricultural land for food.

SIMON LUNN Comment left on 26/9/2022 Stance Object

I strongly object to the proposed solar power station on Church Lane for the following reasons

1. The visual impact of the proposed development will forever change the rural nature of the Parish of Aldington.
2. The proposed development will further extend the industrialisation associated with the Sellindge sub-station south of the railway, to the detriment of the parishioners of Aldington and beyond.
3. Solar panels should be located on the thousands of km2 of south facing industrial rooves ,not on agricultural land that should be used to meet our food requirements as stated by our new Prime Minister.

DAVID GOW & ANGELA MACINTYRE Comment left on 06/9/2022 Stance Object

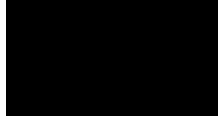
Hi,

Regarding my last email to you I just wanted to add that Angela MacIntyre and I are 100% supportive of everything contained in the Letter of Objections submitted on behalf of the Church Lane group dated 26th July 2002.

We rely on, and thank you for all your help and support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

David Gow & Angela MacIntyre



From: David Gow  
Sent: 16 August 2022 10:25

Dear Mr Stafford,

My partner, Angela MacIntyre, and I who live at the Oak House in Church Lane, Aldington are appalled at the prospect of you building a solar farm next to Church Lane, Aldington.

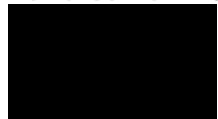
There are a number of old and listed houses in Church Lane with the old church at the top of the hill. A solar farm would destroy the lane – obviously.

There are many other sites nearby which have been already spoilt by building and development where this solar farm could be re located. I would like you therefore to reconsider a new location. I do not think this would be difficult and would save a very pretty and historic part of the Kent countryside.

I am sure, Mr Stafford, we, the residents of Church Lane, can rely on you to resolve this for us.

Yours sincerely,

David Gow & Angela MacIntyre



JAMES MANN Comment left on 19/9/2022 Stance Object

I strongly object to the East Stour Solar farm proposal.

It is in a totally inappropriate place. Solar farms should not be built on arable agricultural land. The area between the railway and the M20 and A20 is adjacent to the converter station and would not violate the loss of landscape and view issues raised by residents.

The proposal ignores the National Planning policy Framework which states explicitly that such schemes should not impact on views important to their setting. The south face of Bested Hill would project a large area of PV glare up to houses around the church.

The residents of Aldington face a nightmare if this scheme goes ahead, so setting a precedent for others worse and even larger. 700 acres of metal and glass is contemplated, we are told. And the narrow road and low / old bridges pose huge problems for the contractors.

C MARTYN Comment left on 05/9/2022 Stance Object

Dear Sirs

Planning Application 22/00668/AS

I strongly OBJECT to this application as the project fails to comply with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, specifically, the requirement to "take great care to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of the proposals on views important to their setting".

The project as proposed will cause substantial harm to the pre-plague settlement – which is the original village of Aldington.

This heritage asset comprises the 10th Century Grade 1 listed Church of St Martin, the remains of the ancient and Grade 2\* listed 14th Century Archbishop's Palace, and its immediate estate estimated at 1000 acres including Deer Park and fishponds purchased by Henry VIII in 1540. Furthermore, Church Lane comprises 15 Listed Buildings (some residential some agricultural) many dating from the 16th and 17th Centuries.

The proximity of this large-scale solar farm (together with the cumulative effect of adding this to the existing Sellindge Solar Farm - also on Church Lane) located within the setting of this historic heritage asset will cause substantial harm. Furthermore, it will adversely affect the enjoyment of these heritage assets when viewed by members of the public walking on roads and footpaths in the vicinity – particularly on the high ground to the east and west of the Church.

Yours sincerely



ANDREW MCCOMBE Comment left on 07/11/2022 Stance Object

I object to the proposed solar farm. I fully endorse the comments submitted by Jonathan Tenant and Alison Baldwin in their correspondence on behalf of the Church Lane residents group on 26th July which provides a comprehensive response outlining the reasons to object.

CHRISTINA METCALFE Comment left on 08/9/2022 Stance Object

I am totally perplexed at the complications in commenting on the EDF application in Church Lane Aldington!

As a resident of this village for nearly fifty years I am very concerned at the scale of this - and other solar 'farm' applications.

In endorsing the objections of the Church Lane Group I agree with them that changes must be made and renewables encouraged. But with massive care and consideration to the local environment,

My chief concerns here are

- 1) The Bested Hill footprint is totally unacceptable in this beautiful area.
- 2) Guarantees of proper shielding with hedges and trees that ARE THEN MAINTAINED in the years to come must be in place. Continuing biodiversity is an imperative.
- 3) That proper planning in the construction of the solar farm must be in place with a traffic plan to be the least disruptive to those living in Church Lane.

I believe the Church Lane Group have submitted much more detailed objections - I trust careful consideration will be given to them.



Francoise Montford  
Strawberry Hill  
Knoll Hill  
Aldington  
Kent TN25 7BZ  
01233 721718

11th August 2022

Planning Dept

16 AUG 2022

Dear Sir / Madam.

Planning Application 22/00668 EDF Solar Panels.

Personally I prefer windmills which are quicker and cheaper to install and fields can still be used to grow crops if placed on land. In years to come solar panels will need to be dismantled and disposed of at what cost to the environment. The place for solar panels is on public buildings, agriculture buildings and houses. All already built houses should have been installed with solar panels. The Council must lobby the new Government on this. EDF proposal is smaller than originally proposed and as far as view not such an eyesore as the Evolution Power one which would ruin our village eradicating it with an industrial development taking up agriculture land for both crop and grazing even new land which we now desperately need for growing food.

Our MP Damian Collins has been for a while lobbying the previous government and no doubt will carry on doing so for a small reactor to be

Installed at Dungeness. Because of the infrastructure already there it would not take away any land so precious for crops, grey and new build. It would also bring a lot of work and industry, attract qualified work not interfering with the lives of local residents whilst installing the panel and taking away important land as aforementioned. This is what I prefer. and the council must contact the MP for an update if they have not done so already.

yours sincerely



PS companies should not put plans applications in when it is a holiday period in particular when it is so important to the village

ANNE O'DRISCOLL Comment left on 18/9/2022 Stance Object

I strongly object to this proposed solar development and endorse the extensive, carefully considered objections made by Jonathon Tennant and Alison Baldwin of the Church Lane group. There are obviously far better sites for solar panels than good agricultural land. Food security must come first.



MATTHEW O'DRISCOLL Comment left on 18/9/2022 Stance Object

I object to this planning application.

As well as being totally in agreement with all the points made on behalf of the Church Lane Group by Jonathan Tennant and Alison Baldwin, who appear to have been far more thorough in their work on this application than EDF, I object on the following grounds:

While PV will have to play a large part in future energy provision, it is not necessary to cover good agricultural land with solar panels particularly at a time when food security has become a serious issue.

There is no evidence that land used for PV will ever be returned to agricultural use after the proposed 20 year minimum life, by which time, if present rate of improvement is maintained, the panels will likely be inefficient and out of date. The disposal of these panels has not been addressed in the application

EDF do not appear to have considered alternative more suitable sites to the north of the M20  
The siting of the panels as proposed will have an adverse affect on the conservation area centred on Aldington Church.

The application itself contains a number of unsubstantiated statements presented as fact and should be refused for that reason alone

SCOTT PARKS Comment left on 15/11/2022 Stance Object

I strongly object to this proposal. The scale and location of the proposed generation plant is completely inappropriate for this rural location. Solar panel installations are an inefficient use for land and would have a negative effect on local views, enjoyment of the countryside and the general wellbeing of local residents. The construction of such a facility would also lead to increased pollution and contamination (in construction, in operation and in replacement etc). The increased traffic on this country lane would increase the risk of accidents significantly. The site would increase light and noise pollution (in construction but also in use) and have a detrimental effect on local ecology. This is a wholly inappropriate development for a green field site and should be located on a brown field site, accordingly. I am also concerned that this development would be decommissioned before the life span, due to technology improving and the value of this land being much higher for residential use, once the designation has been amended to allow a development such as this.

JAMES REID Comment left on 20/9/2022 Stance Object

As the owner of Backhouse Wood I have very strong objection to the proposed solar farm for reasons very well expressed by The Church Lane residents group and in the extensive letter by Mr Edward Evans.

Whilst I will not reiterate these objections here I fully endorse them. in addition, as Backhouse Wood is an ancient Wood which we are restoring to native woodland rather than plantations of poplar and various conifer species. Since we bought the wood in 2000 we have vastly increased the number of butterflies, moths and birds ( both songbirds and raptors) that now enjoy the various different habitats in the wood.

The wood is designated an SNCI and is in a prominent position within the Aldington area. As there is another solar farm application in preparation for the neighbouring land, the wood will be largely surrounded by solar panels to the considerable detriment of the visual aspect.

i reiterate my strong objections to the proposed plan

CHARLES RODGERS

Comment left on  
01/2/2024

Stance

Object

I Object to the proposal as I believe this to be a money-making exercise for a few, and no benefit to the community as a whole. Greenfield sites and agricultural land should be protected to feed the nation, there are plenty of other sites that could be used for this purpose i.e. the lorry facility in Ashford that is not used to its full extent. This village has parts that are very old and it would be a shame to destroy the heritage.

HARLES RODGERS Comment left on 08/9/2022 Stance Object

Dear planning dept.

I am amazed that this is the only way I can make a comment on the proposal 22/00668/AS but I comment as follows:-

The proposal on agricultural land is totally out of order as the land could be used for crops that at the moment are much more important.

I do not believe that the land will be refreshed after the solar panel life and I believe that any solar panel increase should be on 'Brown Field'

sites such as warehouses, new build houses etc., I therefore object totally to this proposal.

Yours faithfully

Charles Rodgers, 1 Forge Hill, Aldington, TN25 7DT.

E ROSE Comment left on 08/9/2022 Stance Object

The planning portal is currently not operational which prevents important objections to the application as above.

As a local resident of Aldington (TN257DQ) I wish to object in the strongest terms to the plan for the solar panels across the landscape and subsequent ruination of Aldington as a rural area. The proposed compromise as set down by Mr Tennant of the Church Lane Group is proportionate.

My objections and comments are as follows

1. The extent of the panel footprint on Bested Hill is unacceptable and the boundary should be redrawn. Greater detail and further particulars regarding access during construction must be provided through a revised TMP
  2. There must be greater transparency about battery storage for this scheme and cumulative effects of the two schemes considered. The culminative impact upon tourism to the area, wildlife, morale of the village with the loss of its rural surroundings and the impact on property values since few people will want to live in an area where the view is solar panels..
  3. There needs to be clarity on the CBS and how this is to be handled to the benefit of Aldington as currently there is none known which makes sense or gives value to the loss of agricultural land and rural life.
  4. Mitigation is key and there must be further mitigation in the form of plantings, including mitigation for footpath AE 459. Landscaping plans must be part of the planning application showing the detail of exactly what will be planted (and where) together with the management and maintenance regime and replanting obligations where required
  5. Biodiversity/habitat survey work is key and I ask that EDF commission an independent assessment of this area and through construction and beyond over a period of years to record the impact on wildlife and to appraise the extent (if any) of net biodiversity gain (promised) and for the results to be publicly available
  6. Details of all additional infrastructure (particularly site cabinets), including location and colour, to be installed on the land
  7. More detail of the type of panel proposed including (including the carbon footprint assessment) and a site-specific assessment of local job creation during the various phases of the scheme. It is known that solar panels run at 10 to 25 percent less efficient on warm, dry days reaching 90 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. Has this assessment been carried out in light of a future where global warming is impacting,
  - 8 It is important to know the enforcement provisions available to the public if the detailed management, maintenance, and survey arrangements we seek are not adhered to and how ABC would handle all concerns raised by the public of which there will be many.
- . Kindly confirm my comments have been received.

Elaine Rose

ELAINE ROSE Comment left on 09/11/2022 Stance Object

I object to the application. Putting solar panels on farmland in 2022 is fundamentally wrong. The government had indicated that they should be erected on brown field sites and motorway edges. Once we have lost our green spaces they will never return. Ashford has already lost its rural spaces to an alarming degree. Retaining the outlying villages with their fields is crucial. There is already too much destruction, on a large scale, of our farmland which we need for crops to feed us all.



ANNA ROSS Comment left on 09/9/2022 Stance Object

I strongly object to this proposal and effectively destruction of an agricultural land. As much as we are facing energy crisis, food shortage (or increases of cost of imports) is equally a real threat and farmers should be encourage to produce food rather than waste fertile land that will be never returned to agriculture (as most of solar "farms" require some sort of "conditioning" of the soil so it can provide stable base for the structures) due to degradation of its physical quality.

Solar panels have their place but this should be on industrial type sites, new builds and through grants for retro fitting on existing residential properties so we can all contribute to production of our energy. Whilst it's cheaper to convert green piece of land to a solar factory, it should not be all about cost, with a total disregard to damage caused by them to the environment and also - damage to local rural communities.

The size of the proposed development is completely inappropriate for the area and, if allowed, is likely to cause long lasting damage to our beautiful countryside and affect lives of local residents.

SAVE ALDINGTON GROUP LIMITED Comment left on 07/11/2022 Stance Object

To

The Secretary of State

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

2 Marsham Street

London SW1P 4DF

and

The Planning Inspectorate

Temple Quay House

2 The Square

Bristol BS1 6PN

Dear Secretary of State

APPLICATION TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

TO CALL IN EDF's PLANNING APPLICATION UNDER

SECTION 77(1) OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990.

Save Aldington Group Limited hereby applies to the Secretary of State for a direction that EDF's planning application made to Ashford Borough Council, the planning Authority, reference number 22/00668/AS dated 14th April 2022 be called in for his determination pursuant to Section 77(1) Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Grounds for Application

1. EDF's application for planning permission for a large scale generating station in Aldington, Kent raises issues of national significance.
2. EDF's proposal, if correctly assessed, by itself, and or in conjunction with
  - a. The existing solar generating station in Church Lane, Aldington; and or
  - b. The proposal by Evolution Power Ltd to construct a generating station with a generation capacity of up to 99.9 MW in Aldington, KentShould be classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project under Sections 14(1)(a) and 15(1) & (2)(c) of the Planning Act 2008.
3. EDF's application for planning permission for a generating station raises issues which must be considered against a backdrop of the existing generating station in Church Lane, Aldington and together with the proposed application by Evolution Power for a Development Consent Order under the Planning Act 2008 for a generating station on adjacent land.
4. Both EDF's application for planning permission and Evolution Power's application for a Development Consent Order will raise the same or similar issues both for and against.
5. Although the two applications are made by different companies, if constructed, they together with the existing generating station, would form a continuous development of generating stations on adjacent land.
6. If permitted, both schemes would be constructed on land currently used for agriculture.

Existing Solar Generating Station

7. The existing solar generating station is immediately to the south of the Sellindge Converter Station and on the east side of Church Lane Aldington. The importance of the existing generating station in Church Lane, Aldington cannot be overlooked.
8. The existing solar generating station as constructed occupies an area of 18 hectares or 44.6 acres and is immediately adjacent to the site proposed by EDF. Together the existing generation station and that proposed by EDF would occupy an area of 121.9 hectares or 301.3 acres and would have a generating capacity in excess of 50 MW.
9. Although the existing generating station and that proposed by EDF are owned by different companies, the proposal by EDF is in land use terms an extension of the existing use. The existing generating station is immediately adjacent to that proposed by EDF both to the west

and the south. To the west the existing and the proposed are separated only by the width of Church Lane and to the south all that separates the two is a hedge.

10. When considering Sections 14 and 15 of the Planning Act 2008 it is necessary to determine whether EDF's proposal is in land use terms an extension of an existing generating station. If the answer to that question is yes; then EDF's proposal is a "Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project" within the meaning of the Planning Act 2008.

#### EDF's Application

11. It is understood that EDF's application is for: The Installation of a solar farm (sic) with a generating capacity of up to 49.9 MW comprising: ground mounted solar panels; access tracks; inverter/transformers; substation; storage, spare parts and welfare cabins; underground cables and conduits; perimeter fence; CCTV equipment; temporary construction compounds; and associated infrastructure and planting scheme, on land south of the M20 motorway, Church Lane, Aldington, Kent.
12. It would appear that EDF have deliberately limited the proposed generating capacity to 49.9 MW, thus falling 0.1 MW below the statutory level for being classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project under Sections 14(1)(a) and 15(1) & (2)(c) of the Planning Act 2008.
13. EDF's design generation capacity is such that it circumvents the requirements of the Planning Act 2008 by only 0.2%.
14. The total site area is 103.9 hectares or 256.7 acres. Similar size sites elsewhere have a generating capacity much greater than the 49.9 MW proposed by EDF. If well designed the EDF site should generate in excess of 50 MW. The fact that EDF claim that the site will only generate up to 49.9 MW raises a very serious question regarding its credibility.
15. If the land were to be used to its full potential, then the generating capacity would far exceed 50 MW and the proposal would fall to be determined under the Planning Act 2008.
16. Further, it should be noted that EDF's application makes it clear at paragraph DA.43 of its design and access statement that: "This solar array has been proposed to provide up to 49.9MW (3 S.F.) at the point of connection.", which is not the same thing as the actual generation capacity and therefore the generation capacity may well be 50 MW

#### Evolution Power's proposal

17. A larger scheme on land surrounding much of the village of Aldington to the north and west and known by that developer as Stonestreet Green Solar. This scheme is correctly classified by the developer as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project.
18. Although Evolution Power has not yet made a formal application for a Development Consent Order, it is currently undertaking statutory consultations and has indicated that it will make its application for a DCO in the Spring 2023
19. Evolution Power's proposal is designed to generate up to 99.9MW.

#### Combined Environmental Impact

20. The combined proposed generating capacity of both schemes is up to 149.80 MW, significantly above the statutory level for determination under the Planning Act 2008.
21. While the existing generation station was approved by the Planning Authority and the effects of that generating station must have been considered as acceptable, the effects on the environment of the existing generation station cannot be overlooked when considering the combined and cumulative effect of the two other proposals.
22. These two industrial proposals, correctly defined as generating stations, (not farms) if permitted, together with the existing solar industrial site in Church Lane, would result in very significant cumulative environmental impacts on the small village of Aldington.

23. The two sites are on adjacent land and although they might be viewed by the developers as totally separate projects, if constructed they could only be viewed in land use terms and visually on the ground as one huge generating station, including the existing generating station.
24. It should be noted that both developers intend to connect their generating stations to the Sellindge Converter Station in Church Lane
25. At present the two applications for development, which are proposed to be constructed on land adjacent to each other, are being pursued through different legal processes, with different bodies making the determinations without reference to the other scheme.
26. EDF's application makes no reference to the combined and or cumulative environmental impacts of all three schemes.
27. Likewise, Evolution Power's statutory consultation documents make no reference to the combined and or cumulative environmental impacts of all three schemes.
28. The main issues concerning both applications, both for and against each scheme, will be the same or similar and therefore there is considerable merit and logic in both applications being heard and determined by the same body, i.e. by a Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State and not by Ashford Borough Council
29. This application to the Secretary of State should not be read by Ashford Borough Council as a reflection upon the Council's ability to deal with the EDF's application in the correct manner.

Yours faithfully

John A King  
Director  
SAVE ALDINGTON GROUP LIMITED

CHARLES SELL

Comment left on  
02/2/2024

Stance

Object

I agree with the recent vote in the House of Commons that food security is important and that solar panels should be placed on rooftops rather than on agricultural land. I also note that the government is concerned about the number of such applications being submitted with the main advantage being proximity to a connection to the national grid. This proposed solar factory would destroy the landscape of a large area such as the view from the North Downs as well as that from Aldington and surrounding villages. It is in the valley of the East Stour river where, as recent wet weather has shown, the flood defence scheme leads to flooding of the surrounding area in order to protect Ashford and Canterbury. Access to the grid is on the opposite bank of the East Stour. The claims that land under solar panels can be farmed is clearly shown to be untrue by inspection of the existing solar factory on the land to the north-west corner of Church Lane. The roof tops of the nearby retail outlets, factories and border facility should be used in place of agricultural land. Canopies over the vast lorry park at the border facility and others in the area could also be used, as is common practice in French supermarket car parks. With rumours of WW 111 circulating, we need to be able to feed our population ourselves and not rely on food imports from across the world.

CHARLES SELL Comment left on 12/8/2022 Stance Object

I strongly object to placing solar panels on agricultural land. Britain produces less than half of the food it needs and the invasion of Ukraine has shown how Russia is using food as a weapon. Taking agricultural land out of production therefore weakens our position and is a threat to national security. If we must have solar panels, they should be placed on the roofs of warehouses, retail outlets, blocks of flats, car parks, motorway embankments, lorry parks and inland border facilities. I realise that it is cheaper to put the panels on agricultural land but, whilst the alternative sites are free of panels, taking farmland out of production is putting commercial greed in front of national security.

I am also concerned about the huge environmental problem that solar panels will create since they are not recyclable and end up in landfill. It is estimated that there will be 80,000,000 tonnes of them in landfill by 2050 at the present rate of construction.

Mr Ian and Mrs Janice Strachan  
Bested House, Church Lane  
Aldington  
Kent TN25 7EL

Head of Development Management and Strategic Sites  
Planning and Development Unit  
Ashford Borough Council  
Civic Centre, Tannery Lane  
Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL

10<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

**Application Number: 22/00668/AS**  
**EDF Renewables – East Stour Solar Farm**

Our home is at the centre of the proposed development and we are by far the most affected household in respect of this proposed development.

We already have one solar farm between our house and the East Stour River and the proposed development would leave us completely surrounded by solar farms. The proposal would cover the land immediately in front of our house and to the other side – parallel to the existing solar farm, continuing behind the areas of woodland immediately to the back of our property.

We are generally in favour of renewable energy developments and are most definitely not NIMBY's, since we already have one solar farm effectively in our backyard. We are concerned about the vast swathes of land they take up, some of it on land that could grow crops, food security is important as is the eventual disposal of the panels given that they contain toxins and not great for the environment. We would by far prefer tidal and nuclear power.

We do wish to ensure that, given our close proximity to the development, that EDF and the council ensure that any impact on our lives and is kept to an absolute minimum, and that there is zero financial impact.

The impact of the development upon the value of our house, is of significant concern, should we choose to move in the future, particularly if the trees and bushes planted are not fully grown, would anyone in fact wish to purchase a house in the middle of what looks industrial. Any prospective purchaser would certainly expect the value to be reduced. We are aware that EDF Renewables is offering funds (bribes) to the local community, despite the fact that Aldington is a long way from the site and the local community will suffer little, if any inconvenience, certainly in comparison to ourselves. We should be compensated for any losses.

EDF have told us that there would be no compensation payable to ourselves, despite the fact that we will be so significantly impacted, which we feel is grossly unfair. **Compensation has been given to proprietaries affected by other renewable projects, such as wind farms.** Potentially we could lose tens of thousands of pounds on the value of our property. We have spent huge sums improving our house. We therefore very strongly object to the proposal, unless EDF Renewables offer compensation for the expected loss in value of our property, which was bought as our dream house in quiet, relatively unspoilt, countryside. We did offer that they purchase the house if they were confident that the value would not drop. Why should we lose money over this development?

We had planned to add a balcony on our flat roof, to enjoy the views of the countryside, which would now be pointless, as the views would be of a solar panels. This would have been an excellent selling point for the house and was one of the reasons we chose to move here. We regularly watch the bats in summer from the balcony/flat roof at present. Sit up there with a glass of wine. We have put all additional improvements on hold until we see what is going to happen.

For this reason if the permission is granted, we obviously hope it will not go ahead but suspect it will be granted. We would ask that the planting scheme is designed in such a way as to minimise the impact on our views and that more mature and/or fast growing trees/bushes are planted, ideally pot grown to help them establish more quickly in the poor soil.

The issue of disruption during the construction process, should planning permission be granted, is also of serious concern, including noise, dust, preventing us from enjoying our garden as well as impacting our ability to access the roads. We have already had dust and noise from the converter station repairs for a considerable time, then have it all again is just not on. We are entitled to have enjoyment of our own property.

We understand that some local residents have asked that Church Lane be closed between the development and the junction with Roman Road. This is something that we object to in the strongest terms, as it is both unnecessary and could leave us completely stranded. This is because since we moved here in 2018, there have been several occasions, when Church Lane has flooded between the railway bridge and the Converter Station, rendering the lane completely impassable. On one occasion in February 2020 one of our cars became stuck in the flood water, which resulted in the engine blowing up and a significant loss when the car was scrapped.

Another point on flooding. The field that adjoins our property regularly floods particularly in the corner nearest our house, at times very close to overflowing onto our garden. The solar panels in that field will most likely mean that the field will not drain properly, our garden often get water logged in all areas, the hill drains into our garden. We hope that this will not get any worse and expect proper drainage to be put in.

We therefore must insist that Church Lane remain entirely accessible to ourselves. Our understanding for having the road closure, is to prevent HGV's accessing the site from Roman Road, disrupting residents at the Roman Road end of Church Lane. However, EDF Renewables have advised that any HGV's will stop at a site between the railway bridge and the A20 and offload there materials, which will then be transhipped using smaller vehicles to the construction site/. This would not result in any significant construction traffic travelling along Church Lane between Roman Road and the proposed construction site. Is this still the case? They also advised it may be necessary to close the road very briefly at the river end of Church lane when they lay a cable. We ask that this time is a bare minimum, our journey times increase significantly if we have to go the long way up Church lane on to Roman Road. Adding journey time will also impact on 90 year old father living with us with sever dementia, the shorter the journey to his twice weekly trip to the dementia unit in Lyminge.

If the local residents are concerned about HGV's accidentally taking the wrong route, this can be avoided using signage and a height restriction barrier at the junction between Church Lane and Roman Road.

In addition, EDF Renewables advised that they may require Church Lane between our house and the A20 to be closed on some days, leaving us completely trapped. This is completely unacceptable and, even if Church Lane were kept open, we would ask that the road between our house and the A20 be kept open at all times, except under exceptional circumstances.

[REDACTED]



We would also ask that Church Lane be kept clean during any proposed construction work, as we have suffered both a punctured tyre and cracked windscreen, which we suspect resulted from the current work at the Converter Station. This is in addition to the dust and mud which we are currently experiencing, which we would expect to be much worse should the EDF development go ahead and which is currently requiring us to clean our windows more frequently, despite the fact that the current work is much further away and on a smaller scale. We would also be concerned if the development is going to include overnight/early morning work, which would keep us, including our elderly father/father-in-law awake.

We object to the fact that from our understanding, sites nearer to the motorway have not been properly evaluated. There are far better locations for the installation of solar panels that will have less impact on people's lives. We understand that proximity to the converter station was something EDF are keen on, it is easier for them with some of the infrastructure already installed. The village of Aldington will not be the idyllic countryside area to live in with acres and acres of solar panels.

### **Should the scheme go-ahead**

**Our biggest concerns are, (we have to look after our own interest in this respect):**

- **We are not financially disadvantaged in anyway and ask that we are compensated for any losses, should the value of our house be impacted or that it affects a sale (buyers off by panels in close proximity). We will get valuations and advice on this and also for any inconvenience caused.**
- **Impact to our lives is minimised, we should have access to both Roman Road and the A20**
- **Noise, dust minimised, my husband and I both have asthma and dust affect our health. My Father has a heart condition along with dementia, so his breathing is not great. He gets distressed at anything other than the norm.**
- **Planting is optimised and as fast growing as possible to shield us from the solar panels.**
- **Sufficient drainage is put in to ensure our garden is not flooded.**
- **If the scheme goes ahead and I suspect the decision has been made in principal, then it happens as quickly. We would rather it started now and is completed as soon as possible so that we can move on with our lives without it hanging over us.**
- **We are kept informed of progress, road closures, excessive noise, warnings of unusual activity etc. so I can best manage the impact on my father and us all.**

I would like to point out that EDF have been very good thus far in consulting and listening to our concerns, they have visited us at our home twice to talk through proposals.

Yours faithfully

Janice and Ian Strachan



PAULA WAGSTAFF Comment left on 13/10/2022 Stance Object

I register my objection to the proposed solar farm and fully support the comments submitted by Alison Baldwin and Jonathan Tenant.

STEPHEN WAGSTAFF Comment left on 13/10/2022 Stance Object

I object to the proposed solar farm. I fully endorse the comments submitted by Jonathan Tenant and Alison Baldwin in their correspondence on behalf of the Church Lane residents group on 26th July which provides a comprehensive response outlining the reasons to object.

JEAN WESTBY Comment left on 03/10/2022 Stance Object

I strongly object to this development. Aldington is a pleasant rural village surrounded by beautiful, undulating countryside and farmland, abundant with wildlife. That is the main reason we came to live here. My family and I have enjoyed walking the many paths in the area and believe that this solar development together with other planned solar developments threaten to industrialise the area of the East Stour valley. It is no consolation to be told that rights of way will be retained as no-one will want to walk through fields of solar panels or hemmed in between hedges and fences. It is fanciful to believe that nature will flourish beneath these ground-shading monstrosities. People are constantly encouraged to engage with nature and enjoy the benefits of being in the countryside for their health and well-being. The Prime Minister has emphasised that agricultural land should not be used for solar farms but for producing food which we will increasingly need. Given the vast tract of land that has been impacted by the development of the Border Facility and the adjacent development of huge industrial warehouses to the west at Ashford and the proposed Otterpool Garden Town development to the East at Sellindge, the countryside and farmland in between should be kept as a green lung to the benefit of the people who live in and visit the area. Why should priority be given to foreign owned companies who are only interested in their own commercial gain? We are not against solar power per se but it should be put on the roofs of industrial and residential buildings at the time of construction and on existing brown-field sites. Future generations will not thank us for destroying the existing countryside for what is essentially a short-term revenue-generating scheme for companies interested in profit and not the welfare of society. No authoritative cost-benefit analysis could support this proposal.

JEAN & DAVID WESTBY

Comment left on  
27/2/2024

Stance

Object

We strongly object to this project. Aldington is a pleasant rural village surrounded by beautiful, undulating countryside and farmland, abundant with wildlife. That is the main reason we came to live here. This project along with other proposed solar projects threatens to industrialise the area of the Little Stour valley. There are footpaths which will be affected by this proposal. It is no consolation to be told that rights of way will be retained as no-one will want to walk through fields of solar panels or be hemmed in between hedges and fences and it is fanciful to believe that nature will flourish beneath these ground-shading monstrosities. People are constantly encouraged to engage with nature and enjoy the benefits of being in the countryside for their health and well-being. We strongly believe that agricultural land should not be used for solar farms but for producing food which we will increasingly need. Priority should not be given to foreign-owned companies only interested in their own commercial gain. We are not against solar power per se, we recognise that solar power needs to be part of the plan to achieve net zero carbon emissions but it should be confined to the roofs of industrial and residential buildings at the time of their construction, on existing brownfield sites or to rural areas where it would have less visible impact. Future generations will not thank us for destroying the existing countryside for an energy generating scheme which puts profit before the welfare of the community. Signed: Jean Westby, David Westby

KAREN WRIGHT Comment left on 28/10/2022 Stance Object

I object to this proposal, not only will it impact on the surrounding villages including people's enjoyment of the landscape and their wellbeing but also on animals and nature. It significantly impacts on public footpath AE459. Further, solar panels cannot be recycled and are made from materials that are not green as is proposed, for example the release of soil-carried pathogens causing increases in air particulate matter which then contaminates water supplies.