

3rd March 2023

Dear Sirs,

I am writing on behalf of Scopwick and Kirkby Green Parish Council to express their views on the Springwell Solar Farm project proposals.

The Parish Council held a meeting with residents of the parish to appropriately represent and relay their views to you. Residents of the parish voted with an overwhelming majority to oppose the Spring Solar Farm project in any form. I have detailed below concern residents have with the project.

Residents expressed concerns with:

- The time frame given to pre-application process was not long enough to understand and consider the proposals.
- The potential of the development to have a negative impact on flora and fauna.
- The industrial visual would conflict with and spoil the beauty of the countryside.
- That this development is proposed to help meet Government quotas.
- UK food security and self-sufficiency.
- Losing good quality farmland.
- How long the project would take to become carbon neutral.
- What would happen to the solar panels at the end of their lifecycle.
- Exacerbating issues in the mining industry where for example, in the Congo there are reports of the use of child labour. Will the resources used in your solar panels be ethically sourced?
- The potential for this development to devalue properties.
- That solar panels should be on brownfield sites or on top of buildings, using space such as rooftops would be more practical.
- The UK are now exporting energy to Europe. Increased energy bills in the UK subsidise energy bills in Europe, notably as EDF is predominantly owned by the French Government.
- Ruining beautiful countryside views will impact on residents' mental wellbeing.

In support of the above concerns, Scopwick and Kirkby Green Parish Council would like further detail from the developer, Springwell in the following areas:

Biodiversity, Soil Protection and Pollinators

- Can the applicant confirm they will only under-sow with appropriate plant species, native to the UK and where possible of local provenance?
- How would the applicant minimise bare areas of soil and the risk of soil loss?
- How would pollinator rich, wildflower meadows be created between and beneath the solar arrays and adjacent field margins?
- Can the applicant confirm that only fine grasses will be used to encourage colonisation by wild herbs?
- Would the applicant ensure that all management activities are established and verified by an independent local wildlife organisation, e.g., Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust?
- Can these management reports be open to public view?
- Could winter wild bird seed mixes be sown in a high proportion of the Springwell mitigation areas and bird counts be undertaken annually?

- Would active steps be taken to promote commercial beekeeping and honey collection?

Visual Impact

- Can the applicant demonstrate and increase buffer zones between the solar panels and the villages of Scopwick and Kirkby Green to protect the landscape and views?
- How will solar panels be screened from view? With more trees and hedging?
- Where there are public rights of way and footpaths passing through the development how would the applicant provide for increased buffering (on both sides of the path) with additional trees and hedging to obscure the solar panels from view?
- Where fields currently do not possess hedges, how would natural screening be accelerated?
- Can more detail of the style of fencing and posts be provided alongside what measures are taken to permit movement of local wildlife, especially hares and deer?
- What are the intentions for use of camera systems alongside solar fence lines and what measures are in place to avoid overlooking of areas of public access?

Health and Safety

- Is there a health and safety issue with the lithium batteries?
- Would there be implications for local fire and emergency services?

Community Benefit Fund

In the consultation booklet, a community benefit fund is mentioned. If the plans go ahead, we see this as essential.

- What would be the scale and duration of this contribution to the parish?
- Current community infrastructure projects include a cycle path to Blankney and restoration of the limestone beck through Scopwick by the East Mercia Rivers Trust.
- Could a village support fund be enabled to subsidise energy costs and provide grants for items such as roof-top solar power, home storage batteries and EV car chargers to both public and residential properties?
- What other forms of support could be offered to local residents?

It was especially important to many residents, that all surveys conducted on the land for example audits of biodiversity, wildlife, or soil erosion, would these be conducted independently and made available to the public? Residents see this as essential to obtain results with impartiality and in the interests of fairness.

I hope you find this feedback useful.

The strength of feeling in the community is palpable and the Parish Council will endeavour to represent the community.

On behalf of Scopwick and Kirkby Green Parish Council.
Sincerely,

Jack

Jack Sargent
Parish Clerk
Scopwick and Kirkby Green Parish Council