

Scopwick and Kirkby Green

<http://parishes.lincolnshire.gov.uk/ScopwickandKirkbyGreen/>

The minutes of the Parish Meeting for Scopwick and Kirkby Green residents held on **Wednesday 22nd January 2025** at 7pm. The meeting was held in Scopwick Village Hall. These are notes of the meeting until approved as a true record.

Chairman of Scopwick and Kirkby Green Parish Council Cllr M Williams presided over the meeting, with Mr. Alan Aderson taking the minutes. Sixty-six members of the public were in attendance.

1. Welcome from the Chairman and opening comments.

Cllr Williams opened the meeting welcoming everyone, introduced himself as the Chair of the Parish Council, asked attendees to turn phones off or on silent and highlighted the emergency exits.

Cllr Williams explained that this meeting was an opportunity for residents to express their opinions on the plans that have been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate regarding the Springwell Solar Farm development and associated developments nearby in Navenby and Leadenham.

Cllr Williams advised attendees that all will be provided with the opportunity to express their opinions, but with a time limit of three minutes per person.

Background information was provided by Cllr Williams, who explained that the proposals for the Springwell Solar Farm spanned 4,200 acres of good agricultural land owned by Blankney Estates, which has been farmed for approximately 100 years.

A campaign group opposed to the solar farm development have received and researched a variety of concerns expressed by residents. It was suggested that London based consortiums and major energy companies have targeted Lincolnshire for these major developments. Cllr Williams reasoned that the substation proposed at Navenby is critical to the developments proposed for the area, which was overwhelmingly rejected by local residents and will be decided by NKDC.

Cllr Williams advised that the plans have been reduced in size by the developers since the initial consultations, however, the proposed development remains enormous. Cllr Williams confirmed that residents have been given only one month to respond to the Planning Inspectorate, with Springwell making hard copies of the application documents - almost 200 different documents, available for £5,000.00.

All residents can register an 'Interested Party on the Planning Inspectorates website: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN010149> and submit their own personal views, known as 'Relevant Representations' which will inform what will be considered by the Planning Inspectorate during the examination phase. The period residents can register to be an Interested Party and submit a Relevant Representation is between Wednesday 15th January and Monday 17th February 2025. This process and a summary of the impact was made available to attendees and will be included as an attachment to these minutes.

2. Public Forum:

Residents may ask questions or make comments that relate to the Springwell Solar farm and other solar, BESS and substation plans in the area.

Cllr Williams opened to floor to questions or comments in relation to the Springwell Solar farm and other solar, BESS and substation plans in the area, that would help inform the Parish Council's response to the Planning Inspectorate making a Relevant Representation as an Interested Party.

Resident 1 highlighted Lincolnshire's status as growers and suppliers of much of the nation's food, it is intrinsic to life in the County. The resident advised that Britain is currently over 60% self sufficient but with the population predicted to grow by 5 million in the next 10 years, coupled with massive developments on agricultural land, this figure will drop significantly.

Lincolnshire, according to the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership website: <https://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/priorities-and-plans/sectors/agri-food-sector/> states that the county is responsible for growing 30% of the nation's vegetables and producing 18% of the poultry, with a total agricultural output of over £2bn in 2019, representing 12% of England's total production. This strength in agriculture is replicated in food processing. In total the food chain provides 24% of jobs throughout Greater Lincolnshire (as compared with just 13% nationally) and 21% of its economic output (7% nationally).

It won't just be a loss of land, jobs in the county will be lost, the county's economy will also suffer.

Resident 2 moved to the area recently and expressed deep concerns about the countryside being overrun with solar farm developments and battery storage facilities. The resident expressed concerns about house prices falling as a result. The resident also expressed concern over the battery storage facilities safety referring to other facilities that are smaller than the ones proposed for Lincolnshire where they have caught fire and have been impossible to control.

Resident 3 also expressed concerns on food security and agricultural land being taken out of use. The resident suggested that imported forms would increase the nations carbon footprint.

The resident suggested that should be installed on south facing rooftops of homes, factories and other large buildings.

The resident expressed concerns that solar farm has the potential to negatively impact the biodiversity of the countryside, especially regarding the Lincolnshire aquifer and freshwater streams.

Resident 4 expressed concerns regarding job security and the skills learned in the farming industry that will be lost. The resident queried Blankney Estates decision to convert agricultural land into a large-scale solar farm, suggesting it would decimate the countryside. The resident expressed the potential negative impact on residents' mental health and wellbeing in seeing the countryside being replaced with solar panels.

The resident suggested that this solar farm will not alter climate change when other large nations continue to use fossil fuels. The resident suggested continuing with fossil fuels, until better alternatives are available rather than destroy the Lincolnshire countryside.

Resident 5 suggested that the proposals will require large scale machinery with over 600 workers and queried whether the infrastructure would be able to cope. The resident questioned whether

the development would impact the playing field. Cllr Willaims advised that there would be additional space in between the development and the playing field.

Resident 6 expressed concern on the visual impact of the solar farm on the local area, suggested that the development would take over 4 years to complete and that the development would lead to flooding in the area. The resident suggested that central Government were determined to build new homes and that solar panels should be installed on these rooftops rather than in the countryside.

The resident expressed concerns over the manufacturing process of the solar panels, suggesting that slave labour is involved and suggested that the solar panels currently produced would not be capable of creating electricity for more than 20 years.

Resident 7 expressed concern for the local environment and for the land at the end of the solar farm's lifecycle. The resident suggested the agricultural land would be useless and that the spent solar panels would be redundant. The resident queried whether it was possible to achieve the net zero carbon emissions target.

Resident 8 expressed concern over the location of the battery storage facility that would be sited on top of the Lincolnshire aquifer. The resident suggested that the battery storage facility would be vulnerable to thermal runaway and uncontrollable fires leading to pollution of the environment and contamination of the aquifer.

Cllr Willaims suggested that the majority of residents in North Kesteven were opposed to the proposals and that if NKDC's Planning Department rejected the Navenby Substation then it would have an immediate impact on the solar farm proposals.

Resident 9 suggested that solar panels do not produce much electricity in the winter months.

Resident 10 suggested that the power generated will be transported to power German industry and that central government wants to control the energy production, so no effort is made to install panels on rooftops. The resident also expressed concern regarding the disposal of the solar panels at the end of their lifecycle.

Cllr Williams advised that decommissioned solar panels are currently classified as toxic waste.

Resident 11 expressed concerns regarding the land under the solar panels and the potential issues that could lead to flooding.

3. Motions and Voting.

With no further questions or comments, Cllr Williams asked if a motion would like to be proposed.

Resident 6 moved that:

the residents of Scopwick and Kirkby Green instruct the Parish Council as a statutory consultee write to the Planning Inspectorate, on behalf of the parishioners objecting to the application to construct a solar facility comprising of ground mounted solar arrays together with battery storage, inverter cabins, fencing and CCTV cameras. The vast majority of resident wholeheartedly object to the Springwell Solar Farm and associated applications.

The Parish Council's comments must convey the resident's deep reservations and objections to the Planning Inspectorate, in addition the Parish Council's response should be shared with the District and County Councils, together with the Sleaford and North Hykeham constituency MP Dr. Caroline Johnson.

The motion was seconded by **resident 12** with 51 voting in support of the motion. There were no votes against the motion and 2 abstentions.

Cllr Williams urged attendees to register with the Planning Inspectorate and submit their objections.

Resident 13 queried whether a parish wide poll could be carried out, however Cllr Williams advised that the Planning Inspectorate have only provided until 17th February to register a response, which would not leave enough time.

Cllr Williams thanked all for attending and their support. With no further comments Cllr Williams closed the meeting at 8:03pm.

DRAFT

Signed:

Chair of the Council - Cllr Marc Williams

Signed:

Minute Taker - Mr. Alan Aderson

May 2025