

## Comments on a planning application for land North Of Manor Farm. Noke

Reference number 22/01682/F

### Submission from Noke Parish Meeting

Applicant Oxford New Energy Ltd  
Company number 13008779

Directors: Ken Pelton (Manor Farm landowner), Jonathan Thompson (Green Nation Ltd), Jeremy Thorp.

Our understanding is that Oxford New Energy Ltd listed as the applicant, incorporated 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022, is the financial vehicle for investment in the proposed Solar Farm. Planning documents submitted prepared by [Green Nation](#) and the planning consultancy [Pegasus Group](#)

#### Submission documents uploaded 15<sup>th</sup> July 2022:

1. Narrative response to planning application
2. Still photographs July 2022 of aspects of the site showing current crops (use of agricultural land) and views.
3. Mobile phone footage to show views experienced by a walker July 2022 (YouTube link)
4. Drone footage (summer 2015) showing relationship of proposed site to Noke village and use of agricultural land (YouTube link).
5. Drone footage (week beginning 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022) aerial views of proposed site and crops being grown (YouTube link)
6. Link to sales brochure PDF June 2018 prepared for Manor Farm showing aspects of the site and the Grade II listed building in situ.

#### Co-Chairs and correspondents:

David De Mestre  
Georgia Troth  
Joanna Matthews

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Noke has a formally constituted Parish Meeting in receipt of an annual precept from CDC. We are in the Launton and Otmoor wards of CDC and OCC. A village committee (currently of 10 residents including the landowner – applicant) undertakes the legal responsibilities of the Village Meeting and meets to discuss matters relating to the village including planning applications.

We have about 100 people on the electoral roll living in 59 households (a handful are currently vacant properties). We have 75 correspondents on the village email list who between them represent 57 of the 59 households.

Appendix 2 details the thorough Noke Parish Meeting (NPM) consultation process including distribution of survey for Noke residents (open for submissions 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> July).

#### Summary of overall responses to Noke village survey

The full (anonymised) survey response is available on request from NPM. In Appendix 1 we have included narrative responses from residents.

In the survey we asked:

- Have you had the opportunity to read the planning application?  
50 respondents said yes, and 3 respondents no.
- Is the size and location clear?  
39 people said it was ( 74% ) , with the balance saying somewhat.

Although the survey didn't ask how many people were able to read all the planning application, we do think that most people had an informed opinion because of various planning consultations undertaken.

There were individual 54 responses. Respondents could choose to respond anonymously or give their name. There were 34 named respondents and 20 anonymous respondents. Noke covers 5 different postcodes, we had responses from all postcodes and from 26 identifiable individual households out of 59 (there were more households responding in the anonymous respondents). The landowner as a resident of the village was one of the named respondents.

- Overall, are you in support of or against the proposed solar farm on land to the north Of Noke?

Response choices	No. of people	Approx. percent
Yes I completely support it	11	20%
No I do not support it even if changes were made	37	71%
I would support it if changes were made (option to say what)	4	8%
I have no opinion either way	1	

Over two thirds of respondents (53 people, 1 abstention) said they do not support this planning application.

### Noke Village Committee recommendation

The village committee (9 in total excluding the landowner applicant) between them considered the planning application, attended the pre-planning and planning consultation meetings and reviewed the results of the village survey

### Decision

Noke Parish Meeting is **objecting** to this planning application

To note, those who expressed a minority view made passionate arguments about the urgent need for energy from renewable sources and consideration for the next generation. The Noke Village committee are in agreement with this (as are the majority of residents opposed to the plan). Our principal argument is that all forms of renewable energy need to developed within a strategic local framework (not in the current piecemeal way) and not at the cost of productive farmland and an adverse impact on the green belt. Another aspect of our objection is the unknown impacts on local wildlife and existing biodiversity.

Please see our recommendations to CDC about development of renewable energy below on pp11,12.

## Key reasons for objecting to the application

We are honouring the views expressed by Noke residents in the village survey and have used the CDC policy on solar in the Local Plan, specifically policy ESD 5 to frame our objections. In addition we are raising concerns about the removal of land from farming.

We have reason to believe the proposed development will have an adverse impact on:-

- Landscape and biodiversity including designations, protected habitats and species, and Conservation Target Areas
- Visual impacts on local landscapes
- The historic environment including designated and non-designated assets and their settings
- The Green Belt, particularly visual impacts on openness
- Residential amenity.

We note that CDC have asked standard consultees to check any potential impacts on the final two points of ED5 S

- Aviation Activities
- Highways and Access Issues

We look forward to reading those responses.

Although we have individual expertise in the village on some technical aspects of the plans we are not in a position to comment on or rebut all aspects of the proposal. We know that CDC planning office will note the many comprehensive arguments put forward in opposition by other respondents including local farmers, and conservation bodies.

- County Cllr Calum Miller has made a formal report objecting to the plans to OCC Officers who are standard consultees.
- District Cllr Angus Patrick has made a submission objecting.
- Michael Tyce from Oxfordshire CPRE (Campaign for the Protection of Rural England), a standard consultee, went on a site walk w/b 4<sup>th</sup> July with one of our Co-Chairs. CPRE have submitted an objection to the plans.

## The proposed site in relationship to the landscape

We want to give the planning officers an idea of how we anticipate the site negatively impacting on the environment of Noke , Oddington and Islip.

This video link (published 2015) shows how Noke is situated in the landscape,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9KNaY5PFMk>

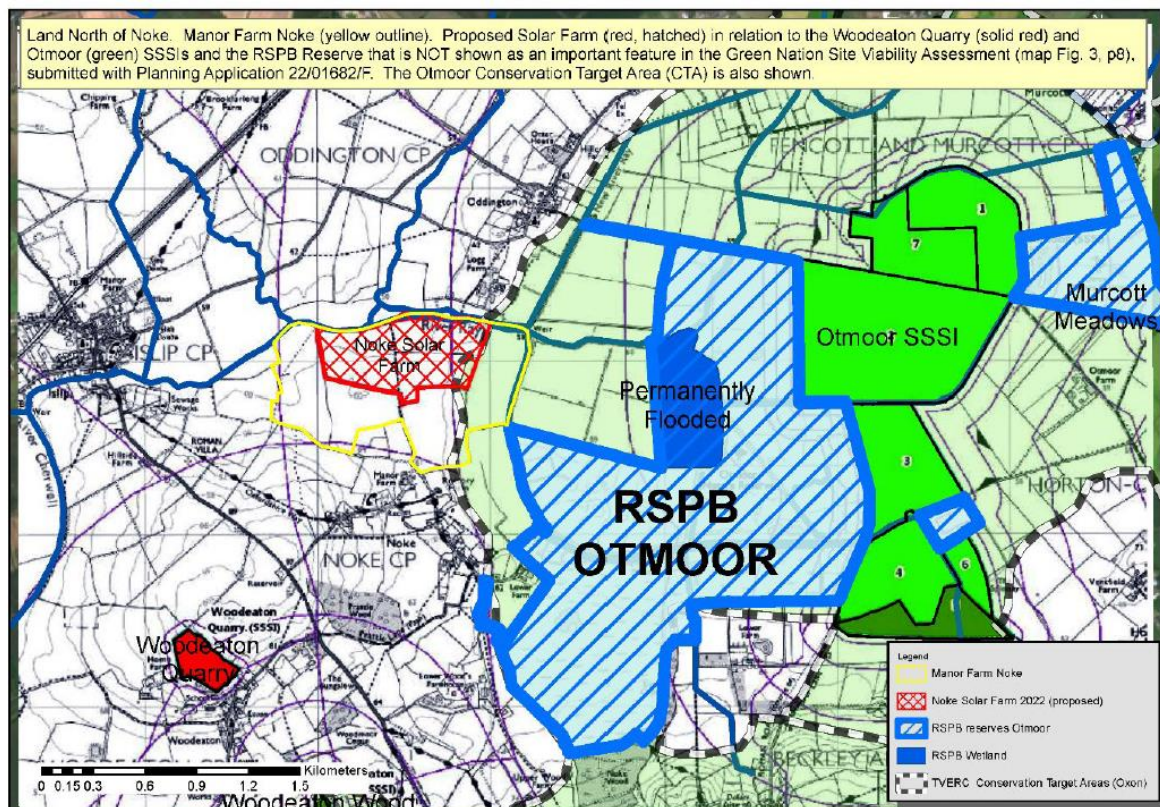
The footage from timestamp 0:16 to timestamp 0:23 clearly shows the proposed solar farm site in relation to the overall size of the village, and the land currently farmed, as does the panoramic sweep from 0:26 to 0:30. Please note the rest of this video refers to the sale of an unconnected property in Noke, The Manor.

The total area proposed to be covered in solar panels and associated fencing, screening and plant (area within the perimeter fence- Magenta perimeter line shown in Construction documents) is 77.42acres (31.33 hectares). The red line area submitted for the planning area includes all the

ecological areas and will be larger than the area stated above. As can be seen from the map below the proposed site is bigger than Noke and Oddington villages and a comparable size to Islip.

A key asset and amenity for residents of local parishes and visitors far and wide is the RSPB Otmoor Wetland Reserve which is located on our eastern boundary. This map shows the RSPB reserve in location to the proposed solar farm site and the Otmoor SSSI. This map is an annotated version of one included in the planning documents (Site Viability Assessment map) which only shows the SSSI. The black and white hatched line marks the border of the Otmoor Conservation Target Area which the proposed solar farm strays into.

The Woodeaton Quarry SSSI (shown in red) and the Woodeaton Wood SSSI (on the bottom edge) are also within proximity (1km-1.5km approximately).



### The local landscape and biodiversity

1. It is our view that the proposed biodiversity enhancements are both minimal and overstated. Local farmers and the RSPB have tried measures to bring back Turtle Dove populations and no efforts have succeeded to date. Additional wetland provision and biodiversity could be created without the solar farm and if the land earmarked for the new area of wetland is not productive, as stated, it could be donated now to the RSPB to manage as the applicant has indicated in the Site Viability Assessment.
2. The permissive footpath rerouting takes walkers close to areas earmarked to encourage bird use and opinion is that human traffic will prevent bird species from using them, therefore minimising their value.
3. The applicant states when referring to local wildlife populations "impacts to any off-site designated sites are highly unlikely due to distances and nature of the work". This is not a statement of fact but an opinion, for which no evidence is presented.



4. The proposals assume that the current practices are more harmful to the land than the solar farm would be. We do not think this is accurate and other local farmers refute this statement.
5. The site is next to a nationally important wetland habitat which has many native and migrant species (so could be argued to be internationally important.)
6. Wild native deer use the land. We are aware that deer numbers need to be managed but they are part of the ecology and we concerned how deer populations are impacted by solar panels such as these.
7. We are concerned about the proposed screening which consists of non-native evergreens in a mix with deciduous planting (presumably for speedier growth potential). Other local landowners take great care to plant native species.

### Visual impacts on local landscapes

1. We aware of the visual impact assessment in the planning application. We do not think the photographs included are a fair representation. We have uploaded a PDF of photographs taken w/b 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022.
2. We are concerned about views from the site for those walking the footpaths. We understand the planning office advised about key views e.g. of St Nicholas Church, Islip but at present there are panoramic views which is one of the principal attractions – wide, open, uninterrupted views. This link is to a video which shows ‘a walker’s view’ (taken w/b 4th July 2022) <https://youtu.be/SZ9O4wPhlpw>
3. According to the applicant the proposed planting will not be fully effective as screening for 10 years, so stock proof fencing will be very visible until then.
4. We note that the proposal has responded to concerns by widening the footpath to up to 50m in some places. This is of course welcome. However there will still be 2.8m high (approximately 9 feet) stock proof fencing and plant screening to interrupt views.
5. Visual impact from afar. This image shows the potential adverse impact on near and distant views across a landscape which is very rural. Even the railway, A34 and M40 create a minimal disturbance to these long-established views.



## The historic environment

Noke is a small historic hamlet on the edge of Otmoor (in the Domesday book), one of the original seven towns of Otmoor. It is connected by foot via The Oxfordshire Way to Islip and Beckley and on footpaths and bridleways to Oddington. The land to which this planning application applies is currently owned by Manor Farm, a Grade II listed building which has occupied the site since circa 1600. The image below shows the dwelling and two barns in the landscape, with farmed land beyond (the proposed solar farm would cover some of this site).



“Manor Farm as a whole extends to approximately 353 acres and comprises Manor Farmhouse, Noke Place a renovated barn, [...]Bradshaws, a 17th century stone barn [...]. The gardens and grounds at Manor Farm [...]provide a peaceful and attractive setting. The farmland at Manor Farm extends to approximately 339 acres of productive arable land with smaller areas of water meadows. [...] Noke is reached by a no-through road and comprises many attractive period houses and cottages, as well as a church. The Otmoor Nature Reserve is at the far end of the village which boasts a number of attractive walks and rides.” Extract from Savills and Carter Jonas sales brochure (June 2018)

[https://assets.savills.com/properties/GBOXRASUS180261/SUS180261\\_SUS18004046.PDF](https://assets.savills.com/properties/GBOXRASUS180261/SUS180261_SUS18004046.PDF)

1. We agree with CDC Conservation officer’s comments 1. “The significance of the area relates to the setting of these designated heritage assets. It is the area that served as agricultural land feeding the local people and then producing greater crop yields and feeding the country. It is this inter-relationship that gives the site it’s significance. “ and 2. “[However] the surrounding land, including this site, does help tell those assets story and help to explain the development of the villages and farms.” The historical Noke Parish Tithe Map (on OCC’s website) clearly shows the pattern of fields and paths replicated today.

2. We dispute the Conservation officer’s assessment that “The designated and non-designated heritage assets have mainly over the last 70 years lost this direct connection with the surrounding land” For residents and visiting walking the non-designated heritage asset from either Noke or Oddington (to or from Manor Farm buildings) - at walking speed, the connection between the original farm buildings and the farmland is very apparent.

3. Manor Farm was a farmhouse and farmed by its owners much more recently than this assessment suggests (we still remember the smell from the pigs!). The current owners still own the farmland and have made a commercial decision to have it farmed by neighbouring farmers in Oddington. The change in use of the barns to residential is relatively recent. It is not the only Grade II listed building close to the site. The proposed site runs from Noke to Oddington and will be close to and viewed from other Grade II listed buildings such as Logg Farm (who farm Manor Farm land) and St Andrew's Oddington.

4. Recently a dinosaur tooth was found on the land (verified by the Natural History museum). We note OCC's Archaeology submission that "the site is in an area of archaeological interest and potential"

### Impact on the Green Belt

1. It has been stated by the developers that this green belt site has been chosen as the only possible site in Cherwell because electricity network capacity is constrained with limited locations where a connection can be made, and Headington is the only sub-station with the headroom for a solar farm of this size. Our understanding is that if the array was smaller there are other more suitable sites without those capacity constraints. Equally as CDC has recognised the electrical infrastructure in the district has to improve to support ambitious carbon neutral targets, in which case there will be many more suitable sites not in the green belt opened up for solar farms.

2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states "When located in the Green Belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development. In such cases developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances if projects are to proceed." We do not consider this developer's reasoning about no other suitable sites in Cherwell for ground mounted solar sufficient justification for CDC to allow this development on green belt land. Nor do we consider their biodiversity proposals sufficient or proven to be successful to offset the effective industrialisation of such a large area of land.

#### Visual impacts on openness:

3. When walking on the footpath through the proposed site, even at its widest points, the 'openness' that now exists will not exist. The presence of security cameras at heights of 3.2m will also detract from what is now a completely rural walk. From existing viewpoints (of which there are many) we argue that the area will look industrialised.

4. If planning consent is given we would look for guarantees as part of consent to address concerns from residents about

- a. setting a precedent for further green belt development and once this level of industrialisation has been allowed return to green belt status is unlikely and,
- b. once permission has been given for access on to the land from upper Noke this could be applied for again for other developments on the land.

5. Again if planning consent is given we ask CDC to refer to the NPPF stated exceptions to green belt development which include "the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation." We think the site could include provision for cycle paths.

### Residential amenity

1. Loss of amenity to local and wider community – this area of land has always been walked by people, initially as routes between local communities but now as much needed leisure spaces and not just for the comparatively small number of residents of Noke and Oddington. During lockdown

when we were all at home to observe this we had many external visitors to the village and to the RSPB reserve. Due to its remote location the walks are generally free from noise pollution with good air quality and 360 uninterrupted views of diverse rural habitats. They promote health and wellbeing, a stated aim of CDC for its citizens.

2. Lack of community benefit (and no planning gain) – our assessment is that more would actually be lost as an amenity than stated gains in contribution to renewable energy in CDC. An equivalent amount of energy could be generated using roof mounted solar without the loss of productive farmland.
3. Although the plan for site access for construction is only temporary there is only one road in and out of Noke, and that is not wide. We are concerned that site traffic in Upper Noke will cause challenges to residents entering and leaving the village, local farmers with farm machinery, bin lorries and oil heating deliveries.

### Taking land out of agricultural use

1. The land is farmed at present. It has been farmed successfully for many years. This link is drone footage of the fields showing crops growing (taken w/b 11<sup>th</sup> July). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=atKd8X7VIGM>
2. The planning application shows a grading of the land from 3b to 5. However crops are grown successfully every year across most of the site. The CPRE submission quotes the current crops being grown, which include biomass.
3. We are concerned about the removal of viable land from farming, the impact on local farm economy if land taken out of farming and the negative impact on food security.
4. The applicant uses the term ‘intensive agricultural production practices’ placed in comparison to their proposed biodiversity initiatives, without evidence that the farmland has been significantly damaged from farming.
5. The plan indicates sheep could be grazed under and around the panels as a justification of continued agricultural use. It is not clear if this would be a planning condition. Local sheep farmers have thrown doubt on the viability of this plan on sheep welfare grounds.

### Other evidence for CDC to take into consideration

1. Possible impact on bird life on the land and neighbouring wetland reserve. As the RSPB state on their website – “One of the largest inland wetland complexes in the country, Otmoor is home to a huge amount of wildlife, rare species and impressive wildlife spectacles.” It is only one of two wetland sites in the whole of the south of England. We understand there is no definitive independent UK research on the impact of these types of solar array on bird life (and indeed other animals in the bird food chain) not just from the panels themselves but from the infrastructure. There is much research that has been carried out in the US.
2. Independent on assessment of recent and current productivity of the farmland aided by current and recent productivity figures from the landowner (not in the planning application). We have much anecdotal evidence to support the longevity of productive farming on land that ranges in formal classification.
3. For CDC planning officers to take a site walk accompanied by local residents to present if fairly as a landscape connected to its history as well as its value as a health and wellbeing amenity, both as a walked through landscape and as a view.



## Changes post initial 2021 consultation

This is a summary of the changes made (provided by Green Nation w/b 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022):

1. Solar farm size reduced to create a wide avenue along the public footpath, especially in Near Loggs Field
2. Permissive footpath agreed to provide a circular route from Oddington to the fields and back
3. Increased standoff from the River Ray
4. Additional bird surveys carried out in consultation with RSPB to ensure no adverse impact on the nearby reserve
5. Increased planting / screening surrounding the solar farm
6. Large wetland area at the north end of Horse Field
7. Island to the northwest of the site to be used for biodiversity
8. Large buffer zone south of Noke Field, including strip for Turtle Dove grazing

Neither Noke residents nor the village committee on their behalf were asked specifically to 'approve' these changes. We did not endorse the revised proposal which forms this formal planning application or comment on it to Green Nation before submission.

### *Commentary on above*

- The total reduction in size from the developer's consultation to this application is 17.9ac, (7.2ha). This is a reduction in the area covered by solar panels, not the whole site. Although in the application this is referred in field units; "the scheme was reduced to only two and half fields from the original five fields." The actual percentage reduction is from 95.3acres to 77.5 acres.
- It is unclear to us who will be responsible for maintaining the permissive footpath once the solar farm is in situ so that it can still be enjoyed by walkers.
- Beyond this initial survey work there is no indication of funding long term studies on the adverse impact on birds (on or off the RSPB reserve) and other wildlife.
- Part of the permissive footpath shares a boundary with a neighbouring sheep farmer. They have not been consulted about the impact of this on their livestock or fencing requirements to protect livestock.
- Despite efforts being made by others with specific planting we understand has been no return of Turtle Doves to the locality.

## Community Benefit

We acknowledge that there has been some response from the applicants to changes suggested to minimise impact and enhance community benefit (see list above).

However if the plan is approved by CDC we think that it is lacking in community benefits which could be incorporated in the construction and development of the site- planning gain. Suggestions made during the 2021 planning consultation included a cycle track between Noke and Islip which would have both safety and health benefits to Noke and Islip residents, and a circular cycle path on site which would improve health and well being alongside providing an additional leisure amenity.

We asked

- Do you think the proposed scheme includes a local community benefit(s)?

### Summary of responses

Yes	12 23%
No	26 49%
The community benefit is not clear	12 23%

The landowner has offered a donation to Noke community funds of £20,000 per annum for 20 years (but not index linked). The developer has supported this offer in writing. We know that this offer cannot be considered by Planning Officers in making their recommendation to the CDC planning committee. Oddington (arguable with households closer than Noke households to the site) have not been offered a donation to village funds.

We asked about the proposed donation in the survey and the responses were overwhelmingly negative.

### Planning conditions

Although we are objecting to the plan, we urge the planning officer to consult Noke residents in detail about planning conditions that must be in place if permission is granted. These include (but not an exclusive list) avoiding construction during key wildlife cycles, site traffic management, site traffic during agreed weekday hours, removal of temporary access track, nature of planting for screening, no further extensions to the site area, length of site (20 years), return to Green Belt, safe and effective removal of panels and guarantee of funding for site management (including the ecological measures and footpaths) and decommissioning should Oxford New Energy and associated companies change ownership or cease to exist.

### Noke and renewable energy developments

The survey asked residents about their views on ground and roof solar, as well as other potential renewable energy developments in and around Noke.

- What is your view on the need for alternative energy sources e.g. solar farms  
45 people said they support the need (83%), 2 didn't and the rest were neutral or did not respond.
- Do you agree with ground mounted solar farms in Oxfordshire?  
33 people said they agreed (60%), 12 said no and 5 were neutral.
- Do you agree with roof mounted solar?  
50 people said yes (93%) The balance of respondents were neutral.

Some residents raised concerns both about the source of the solar panels (not wanting a green initiative to cause environmental damage and risk human rights elsewhere in the world) and the eventual disposal of decommissioned panels, given evidence of poor recycling management resourced outside of the UK.

In narrative responses to the survey residents both for and against made a passionate argument for need for renewable energy sources such as solar farms in the context of the growing climate emergency. Anecdotally many Noke households are already using renewable energy sources such as ground source, air source and solar for heating as well as having well-insulated homes. We are aware that in saying we support alternative energy sources whilst fighting not to have it on this site

could be regarded as hypocritical but reviewing all the survey responses only a tiny minority could be read as 'NIMBYism'.

- Would you agree to other forms of renewable energy in Noke?  
35 people said maybe -depending what it was – this was the majority  
9 said yes with no caveats  
9 said no.

Noke is open to discussions with CDC about how we can contribute to increasing the percentage of renewable energy that the Council has to generate.

In addition some residents believe (as stated in survey responses) that this is not a 'green' initiative, an aspect that is made much of in the application; it is a way of maximising the value of the land (acknowledged as the landowners right) taking advantage of a lack of a district, county and national Government green energy strategy.

### Recommendations for CDC Officers and Councillors:

- CDC have a planned green energy strategy into which smaller brownfield solar farm sites can apply and be given permission strategically, in discussion with other Districts and the County. This will prevent the current opportunistic and random applications for solar farms springing up in many green belt sites throughout Oxfordshire.
- CDC have a planning policy that all new builds receive consent only if they have renewable energy power and heat either through roof mounted solar, air source, ground source or linked through community energy sources. This reflects ambitions stated in Policies ESD1-4 in the Local Plan.
- CDC as a matter or priority work with private contractors to ensure all new warehousing proposed as roof mounted solar (within site limitations), and provide incentives for retro fitting
- CDC review all solar farm applications within an overall strategy of food security considerations in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council. Food security appears to be missing in policy ESD 5.

### Cherwell District Council planning consultation process – some comments

#### Size and breadth of application

To note between them these companies prepared a total of 63 documents submitted as part of this planning proposal, some of the key documents ran to over 30 pages with the Landscape and Visual Assessment at 177pp, and the Archaeological report at 90pp. In response to survey several residents commented on the impossibility of reading and digesting a. the volume and b. the technical nature of many of the documents. We appreciate the applicants being thorough, however we had no prior sight of any of the formal planning documents. We are a committee of volunteers.

#### Consultees and timetable

Noke as a village was only notified of the application on Thursday 22nd June (our standard consultee notification was sent to an out-of-date address although we did notify CDC planning office we have a new village email). The closing date given was 8<sup>th</sup> July –leaving us 17 days to respond. We acknowledge that an email was sent to the landowner, copied to us, from the planning office encouraging responses by 14<sup>th</sup> July (an implicit extension).

We note that the following were on the neighbour list (Publicity sub-head of Planning Documents):

<b>Name of property</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Tythefield Manor Farm Noke OX3 9TU	
The Lesters Manor Farm Noke OX3 9TU	No longer exists. Original name for what is now Tythe Field.
Logg Farm Main Street Oddington OX5 2QU	Land farmed includes land in the planning application.
St Giles Church Noke OX3 9TU	
Logg Mead House Main Street Oddington OX5 2QU	
Bradshaws Noke OX3 9TU	A barn on the Manor Farm property, currently owned by landowner, an applicant. It is not a household.
Noke Place Noke OX3 9TU	Vacant, rented out by the landowner, an applicant

Other Noke residents whose property backs on to the land over which the proposed construction track runs or are located close to the proposed site entrance are not on the neighbour list nor are neighbouring landowners of Hill End Farm whose land borders the proposed re-routing of the permissive path. We acknowledge that public notices were posted around the site.

We note that the RSPB who own and manage the neighbouring wetland reserve were not on the standard consultee list. We notified their local officer who we understand has contacted CDC. It is unclear at the point of writing this submission whether the RSPB formally approve the ecological plans laid out in the application.

## Appendix 1

NPM survey of Noke residents.

The final question on the survey asked

- is there any other comment you want to make about the solar farm application and/or consultation process to the Noke village committee?

### Comments for the planning application

1. There are very few locations in Oxfordshire that are “suitable” for solar farms, and we have a moral obligation to do our bit. As I’m unable to provide better ideas, I’m reluctantly in favour, but would love to hear from the NIMBYs what better ideas they have instead!

2. I think it is worrying to hear about hyperbole from people who are simply inherently against. For example saying the noise will affect the birds with no evidence. The noise is less than the B4027, and that has no impact. Saying the walkway is like an urban tunnel when in fact it is broader but similar to the RSPB screening. We should stick to facts.

3. No - other than I think it is so important to support renewable energy and help support the next generation in creating a sustainable world in the best way we can.

4. I'm impatient to get it up and running. The Arctic is melting as we sit here and ponder and discuss. Of course I'd prefer it not to be by my back door and I know there are other possible sites... but I truly hope they also produce energy as soon as possible.



**Comments against the planning application**

1. I cannot see that this application is anything more than profiteering by the landowner especially when considering the potential harm that is undoubtedly going to impact the local nature reserve and the complete destruction of an area of outstanding natural beauty which for the last 80 years has been used to grow arable crops.
2. This would be a disaster if planning was granted and would have ignored the strong feelings and objections from the Noke and surrounding communities, bird lovers and green belt conservation. Sustainability is not just about energy but also green spaces and wildlife. I would also like to see an extensive bird life study conducted and up front and public comments from the RSBC. I was also disturbed to hear of Cranes breeding locally and the likely negative impact the solar farms are expected to have. I also believe that the current turtle dove population is nil, and the proposal is extremely unlikely to improve this position. The land has extensively and successfully been used for agricultural farmland harvests over the 14 years I have been a Noke resident, and I believe some is grade 3a land - amending this to solar industrial use would be disgraceful, disrespectful to the community and shameful on the bird wildlife. I use the public walking paths frequently and often sight deer grazing and passing through the area being considered for the solar panels - I would expect any solar panels installed are likely to negatively impact the deer local habitat and feeding and roaming areas.
3. In its initial leaflet, Green Nation claimed that this was the only suitable site in CDC. We now learn that it only chose this site after the landowner approached them. There must be many other suitable sites in CDC, not in the Green Belt nor in visually attractive areas such as this one, criss-crossed by footpaths, and with rich wildlife. For example, here are many huge warehouse complexes and long stretches by the A34. We do realise that Green Nation might then need to dig more into its profits to connect to the grid.
4. It will negatively affect migrating birds as they will think it is water. We do not know how they will respond to the noise generated by the solar panels. The views from the Oxfordshire Way will be ruined with this solar farm. Our footpath through the land will be ruined with high hedges and no views.
5. Only to reiterate our sheer objection to this proposal.
6. Inappropriate development on green belt land sets a dangerous precedent.
7. The time allowed for public comments seems remarkably and unfairly short, given the significance of this proposal.
8. I don't believe the solar farm application should be approved
9. I'd like to make just two points. While solar farms benefit from economies of scale compared to roof-mounted solar panels on domestic and commercial buildings, only about 3.3% of the UK housing stock currently has solar panels. It is absurd to carpet the green belt with solar

farms when there is so much developed land which has not yet been exploited. Solar farms have relatively low energy density compared to fossil fuel or nuclear power generation. A typical solar farm produces 10W/m<sup>2</sup> compared to 1000W/m<sup>2</sup> for a nuclear power plant. They do not represent good use of land, though solar is significantly better than wind in this regard.

10. The factors listed above (different aspects of the proposal), which have not been adequately addressed by the application, amount to an unacceptable adverse impact, when considered individually and cumulatively.

11. From what I can see it does not have local support and so would continue to have a detrimental impact on relationships

12. I would like to express my concern about the prospect that the solar farm could be extended in future and to ask what measures could be introduced to ensure that no extension could be made.

13. Inappropriate development in a small rural village. these type of infrastructure are most suitable for locations completely away from residential areas for example close to motorway boundaries.

14. If CDC accepts the application they will be damaging Otmoor, the environmental jewel in their crown. Given house and warehouse building on green field sites already agreed, this is a step too far.

15. Size, scale and location - close to a community and RSPB reserve and not appropriate to the rural setting.

16. It is a commercial rather than altruistic venture that would desecrate an area of stunning Green Belt and it must not be allowed to go ahead and set a precedent for other projects

17. The proposed access road across fields on the way in to Noke would be across the same field that was proposed as a potential site for a housing development. If allowed once, even as temporary access, it would be harder to defend future attempts to put a permanent road. We are at risk of this being the start of a creeping development.

18. We are against it for being built on good agricultural greenbelt land and think it is unnecessary when planning policy should aim to incorporate it into new builds. Gravely concerned the access road will lead to further development at the top of Noke where the current owner tried to develop into residential several years ago.

## Appendix 2

### Noke Parish Meeting (NPM) consultation process

- Green Nation Ltd circulated a printed colour leaflet to Noke households in early summer 2021 announcing their proposal.

- Online meeting for all residents attended by Jonathan Thompson and the landowner early summer 2021.
- Post meeting a summary of village views (largely against the proposal) was sent to Green Nation.
- Early September Green Nation invited back to present their revisions. Accompanied residents on a site walk to explain the new proposal in situ.
- September 2021 Request for a large-scale site map which we could display publicly. This was not forthcoming.
- No further correspondence between Green Nation and NPM September 2021 to mid-June 2022
- 23<sup>rd</sup> June Co-Chairs contacted all 60 households either by email, hand delivered notes or text messages to alert them:
  - a. To the planning application now under formal consultation
  - b. To the date of a village meeting to hear from the applicants and discuss the application
  - c. To a survey (to canvas opinion and to ascertain views for and against the application).
- Village meeting 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022 - applicants presented and took questions.
- County Councillor Calum Miller and two District Councillors (Gemma Coton and Angus Patrick) attended. Cllr Miller has since made a formal submission to OCC Officers who are standard consultees. Cllr Angus Patrick has made a submission as a standard consultee.
- Michael Tyce from Oxfordshire CPRE (Campaign for the Protection of Rural England), a standard consultee, attended the meeting and went on a site walk with one of our Co-Chairs. CPRE have also sent in a formal submission.
- Green Nation provided a response to (most) comments and questions raised which was circulated to all residents w/b 11<sup>th</sup> July.
- Village survey distributed 8<sup>th</sup> July, closed for comments Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> July.
- Residents submitted individual responses to the planning portal during July.

End of submission.