

**Potterne Solar Action Group - Response to revised information  
submitted October 21<sup>st</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> 2024 to application PL/2023/10332  
Potterne Park Solar**

Dear Mr James, case officer

Firstly, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the revised documents submitted by the applicant.

Further to my comment of 30<sup>th</sup> October (WC-24-10-315882), we do not feel that any of this new documentation makes any improvement of the case for approval of this solar farm application. We also believe that these late submissions are non-compliant with your process set out in April 2024 - when you gave explicit instructions to the applicant on responding to your questions. Deadlines have past and the applicant has not submitted one suite of documents as requested, so the application should be refused.

This blatant disregard for due process has also been pointed out by others and is typical of this applicant who has failed to adhere to due process throughout. It is our opinion that this tactic of late submission is designed to put hard working officers under pressure to close out open questions right up against deadlines and therefore bulldoze through acceptance. These new documents focus primarily on mitigation questions and are focused solely within the boundaries of the site. This pressurises officers to make conditional acceptance without re-examining the broader context and core arguments against the application.

Those core arguments have not been addressed by the applicant in any of the prolonged series of exchanges with your office. Our objections and those of the parish councils, and a number of experts, have been ignored by the applicant. Indeed, we set out in our comment WC-24-07-307439 in your last consultation round, explicitly where the applicant had failed to address your April questions, and indeed Potterne Parish Council in their latest submission have shown point by point where your questions have not been answered. None of these questions have been satisfactorily addressed in this round of documents either.

In the confusion of the back and forth of questions to the applicant and confused answers there is a real danger that the core arguments here are lost. This in our mind is a deliberate tactic to confuse and avoid. I therefore refer you back to the original objections set out by Potterne PC (WC-24-02-293920) and Easterton PC (WC-24-02-293859). These documents, along with many others, spell out not only why this application is non-compliant with Wiltshire Core Strategy and Planning Policies, but they also spell out the damage this proposal will do to the landscape, ecology and farmland in the entire area.

We seek your assurance that these core arguments, and the failure of the applicant to address the basics, are at the centre of your decision making and that they are not being overshadowed by more peripheral points of detail that have dominated the more recent exchanges.

For the avoidance of doubt, I have listed below in the addendum a sample of comments by councils and experts who have frankly dismissed this planning application out of hand on planning grounds. I will not re-state their arguments here to save you the reading time.

However, I will headline what is at stake here:

This is a beautiful valley which has been largely untouched since the railway passed through in the early 1900's. As such a delicate ecosystem has thrived here, including a number of red-listed and protected species – which we intend to protect. This huge, elevated site is visible from everywhere in the valley and is bigger than the village of Potterne itself – it is not a hidden project and cannot be screened. Potterne Park Farm has been farmed for years and produces above average yields – we need this farmland. The site has no safe access and is criss-crossed by 5 PRow's. This is a congested part of the national grid, and the applicant has provided no credible detail of the technical aspects of the plan. In addition, there has been no active engagement with the community and the application is riddled with errors and misleading information. Virtually none of the required studies have been completed satisfactorily – councils and experts have dismantled every single claim made in these reports.

You have given the applicant ample opportunity to get their act together and they have failed spectacularly. They are causing untold stress and wasting public resources by their lack of professionalism on this application. As I pointed out in our comment of 30<sup>th</sup> October (WC-24-10-315882), the applicant has no track record of actually building solar farms which is presumably why the design material is so slapdash and any agreements that the planning authority enter into as mitigations have no guarantee of being honoured.

We have over 1100 signatures on a petition (WC-24-02-293863) and now 385 objections on your planning portal. This application is against virtually every planning policy quoted and is absolutely rejected by the community.

We trust you will do the decent thing and put this application out of it's misery and reject it.

Steve Holt  
Potterne Solar Action Group

### **Addendum – Sample of Comments denouncing the planning application on planning grounds**

We fully endorse the following “comments” registered with your portal which provide a blow-by-blow dissection of the detail of the proposal – on planning grounds. This is just a sample of the many excellent and detailed comments on the portal that form the

overwhelming argument against this application. The following specifically reference planning policy and core strategy, and where the application fails to comply – we refer you to their substance.

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| Potterne Solar Action Group                  | WC-24-02-293862 (LVA Critique )<br>WC-24-02-294524<br>WC-24-07-307439<br>WC-24-10-315882                  |
| Potterne Parish Council                      | WC-24-02-293920<br>WC-24-07-307626<br>...and their rejection to this round of documents not yet submitted |
| Easterton Parish Council                     | WC-24-02-293859<br>WC-24-07-307489  |
| West Lavington Parish Council                | WC-24-02-293783   |
| Jo Darlington<br>Surveyor and EIA specialist | WC-24-02-293557<br>WC-24-07-307812<br>WC-24-11-318244   |
| J. Moss<br>Sustainable Development           | WC-24-02-293821<br>WC-24-07-307771<br>WC-24-12-319141   |
| Judy Boyt<br>Resident and Ecology enthusiast | WC-24-02-294157<br>WC-24-07-307664<br>WC-24-12-319137   |
| Gareth Harris - Ecologist                    | WC-24-02-293518   |
| Ashley Wilson – Solar expert                 | WC-24-01-291543   |
| Luke Wilson – Logistics Officer              | WC-24-08-308163   |
| Wiltshire Byways                             | WC-24-01-290322<br>WC-24-07-305903<br>WC-24-11-317404   |
| Graham Bennet BHS                            | WC-24-02-293962<br>WC-24-07-306138<br>WC-24-11-318602   |
| CPRE   | WC-24-02-294425<br>WC-24-08-308172  |