

# GREAT CASTERTON PARISH COUNCIL

## MALLARD PASS ZOOM MEETING 24TH MAY 2022

I attended this meeting which aimed to give a preview of the Stage 2 Consultation which commences this Thursday. There were 23 other participants from interested Parish Councils..

The briefing was conducted by two smooth talking PR executives hired by the Developers. They explained that their vision was to support the urgent need to decarbonise the UK's electricity system and to enhance the local environment. They were aiming to give more detailed environmental proposals, to consult with local planners with new design and mitigation proposals.

Their new proposals included:

Widening some roads to assist the construction phase, this included A1 junctions and the Great Casterton - Ryhall road.

Reducing the site area by 100 hectares to 906 hectares of which 463 hectares would be arrays. The best agricultural land would be excluded.

More visual screening by the use of new hedges and small plantations of trees.

All this will be included in the Report which will be published on 26th May.

What they did not reveal was where the transformers were going, nor the type of solar panels to be used or where they would come from. They evaded the question about Chinese manufacture. They said that no decision had been made about batteries, but that they would be needed.

They rambled on about ecological corridors, more footpaths and public rights of way, and more habitats for animals.

In questions they were asked the benefits to the villages affected by the solar farm. Their reply was that renewable energy was needed for climate change and there was a government need to fund the right sites and because of the sub station this was one of the right ones. Brownfield sites further away were not suitable as they have no sub station.

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The tone of the meeting was they they were trying to convince people of the need to renewable electricity and that this was a good site to put in a solar farm. The benefits to the local population and the countryside was nil.

My view is that this will need careful handling both by the Parish Councils and more importantly by the Rutland and Lincolnshire planners. Footpaths, bridleways and ecological matters were side issues. The key point to be argued is why Essendine, why Rutland. This will need to embrace technical issues, government policy and suggest alternatives.

Mark Bush

25th May 2022