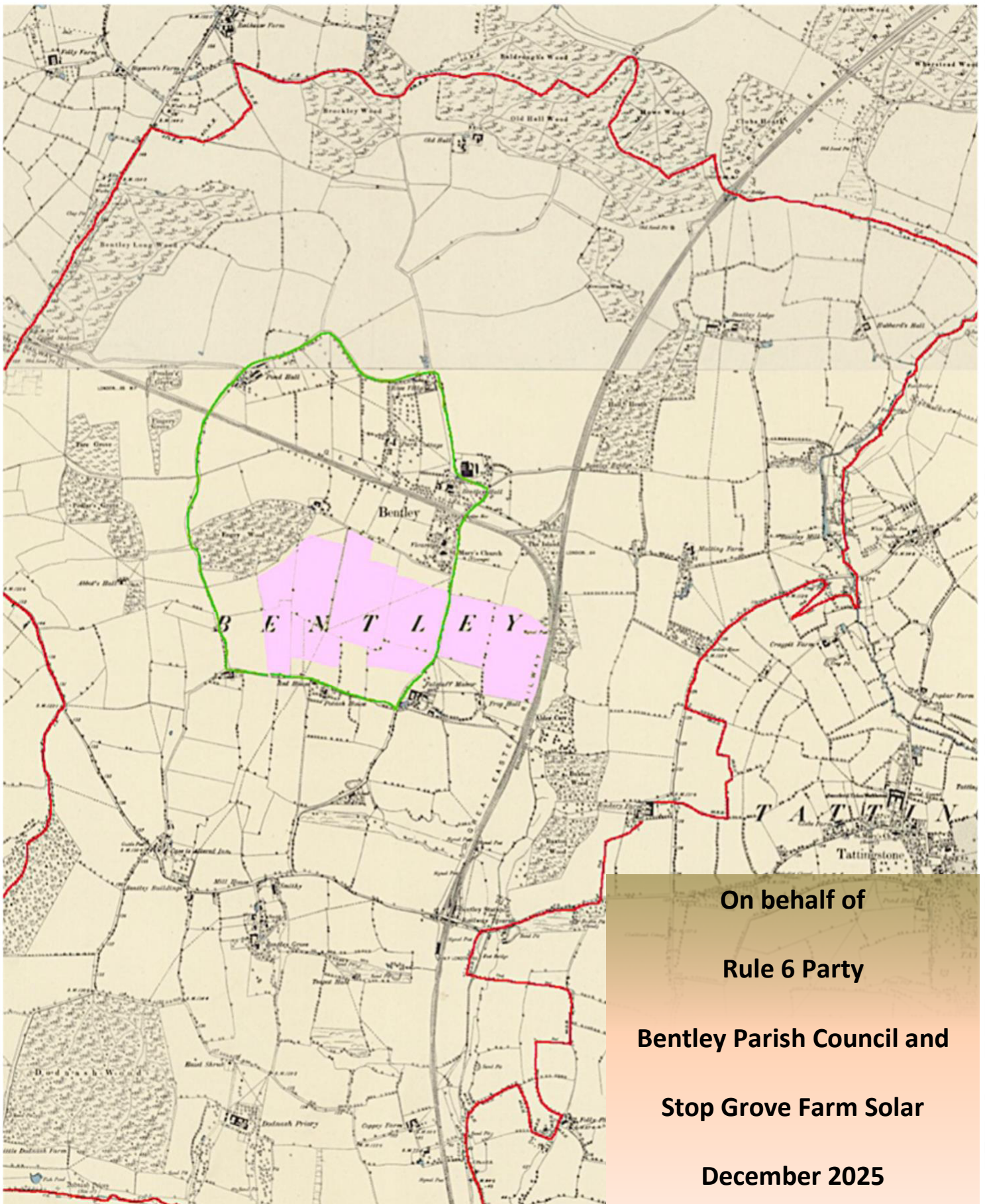


STATEMENT OF MANDY AND MARTIN ACKERS, GARDEN HOUSE

Grove Solar Farm, Bentley, Suffolk



Garden House
Main Road (A137)
Tattingstone
Suffolk
IP9 2LU

09th December 2025

Ref:- APP/D3505/W25/3370515

Planning Application Appeal for: -

Construction of Solar Farm Grove Farm, Including DNO substation, Customer substation and construction of two vehicular access roads Station Road, Bentley and Church Road, Tattingstone/Bentley.

My wife and I wish to make this statement objecting to the construction of a solar farm at Grove Farm, Bentley, Suffolk.

We moved to Garden House in 2015, with the intentions of starting a new life style. We had done our research and found an area which immediately borders a vast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covering from the Suffolk coast through to Dedham Vale, Essex. To the rear of our property is the most beautiful landscape backing onto the Bentley Parish, offering the charm of wonderful views of farmland, wooded areas, stunning buildings set in such incredible landscape all linked together by well-trodden public footpaths and small country lanes which have been recognised by the Local Highways under the Transport Act of 2000, as 'Quiet Lanes'. Church Road is classified as a Quiet Lane, classified as such to link local residents to, for example, the local shop or school, and connect lanes around a village centre or to a nearby village roads intended to pay special attention to the needs of walkers, cyclists, horse riders and the mobility impaired. They are designed to enable users to **enjoy** country lanes in greater safety and encourage car drivers to respect more vulnerable road users. All of this was researched by us enabling us to make an informed decision to purchase our property.

We have now lived at Garden House for 10 years enjoying all that the area has to offer, it has not let us down in anyway whatsoever.

We are fortunate enough that Garden House has a small amount of land to the rear backing onto Bentley Parish.

In 2021, we contacted the Caravan and Motorhome Club (CAMC), to see if our land was suitable to set up a five-van site known as a Certified Location governed by the CAMC. We knew we had a location of great interest to bring tourism into the parishes of Tattingstone and Bentley, there was so much interest in the immediate area for people wanting to stay.

We were hoping that the site would be successful enough that it could potentially be our main source of income. We knew we were in a fantastic location.

With the CAMC being in agreement, we invested a large amount of money and a great deal of time making a caravan site of high quality for guests to use as a base to enjoy their holidays. The setting is idyllic for our guests, who like ourselves enjoy the superb countryside in the immediate vicinity. They regularly enjoy using the footpaths and quiet lanes visiting the local villages, shops, nearby attractions and beyond bringing in tourism to the villages which in itself wealth to our community.

In 2022, we opened our caravan site.

Our site immediately became successful; guests were attracted not only to the site itself but also to the incredible location it is sited within. Our guests were enjoying the great beauty of what Tattingstone and Bentley has to offer.

Our site became so successful that for our first year we won the award of being: -

The Best Newcomer Caravan Site in the country, an Award-Winning site.

All of this is based on, peace and tranquillity, access to local places of interest and beauty of surroundings and scenery.

The following years, our caravan site went from strength to strength being short listed in: -

2023, 2024 and 2025 as, The Best Caravan Site in the country. This we are immensely proud of, knowing that our guests are not only enjoying our site but the immediate surroundings and the beauty it has to offer.

However, it all changed, we received the devastating news that, all that we had invested and loved was likely to come crashing down. The vast Grove Farm Solar Development was going to change the lives of so many of those who live in and around Tattingstone and Bentley. Grove Farm had applied to install a solar farm of extreme proportions. This massive development was going to close us down. The Grove Farm development would be imposed onto the historic landscape which Bentley had stood for, for hundreds of years. The Applicant wants an industrial solar plant in an area which has recently been awarded (and correctly so, in our view) Conservation Area status. Grove Farm will undoubtedly be an eyesore in this beautiful landscape, with food production ceasing on this highly graded land. Not only will there be a megastructure of unsightly solar panels but two power substations of large proportions, one sited within 400 meters to the rear of our caravan site. The construction of this megastructure has been estimated to take between 8 and 18 months. The intrusion for all will be to what we consider will be an unacceptable level. Pile driving for the panel framework, industrial movers for destroying the land to make roadways, many large goods vehicles coming and going, with plans for them to use the designated Quiet Lanes which are not suitable for this type of use by any stretch of the imagination. We were being told this is only temporary, no it is not. What will be left is a complete eyesore, our heritage landscape destroyed for the rest of our lifetimes. The power substation will generate great noise, this has been acknowledged by the developers themselves by the admittance there is a need for the placement of 3-sided noise reducing panels, NB reducing noise, not eliminating. The noise will still escape and intrude for ourselves across our caravan site, to our home and beyond.

All of the above would seriously damage the attractiveness of our caravan site. Fewer guests would wish to take their well-earned holidays on our site. Unspoilt rural landscape would be destroyed, massive unacceptable visual and noise intrusion would replace it.

We believe the viability of our site would be threatened because of these proposals. It is evident that Grove Farm does not care about the parishioners lives and in our case our livelihood, our main source of income.

We feel we need to object to this massive error of judgment that the farming family behind this vast solar project have made, which will fundamentally change our landscape and the lives of so many in our community.

Collectively, many Members of the community have got together and have expressed their dismay at the unacceptable proposal at Grove Farm.

It was on the 05th February 2025, Babergh District Council correctly refused the application of a solar farm Ref DC/23/05656 for the very reasons stated. What a huge relief for all of the community, our countryside for which we love so much would remain unchanged, safe in the knowledge that it will remain unchanged and loved for future generations. we could continue living our lives knowing all is well.

Thinking that our caravan site was safe from closure, my wife has given up her job so she could concentrate full time on our caravan site. I too have drastically reduced my working hours to concentrate on the caravan site which is now our main source of income.

Now we have an appeal to contend with, which we fear will destroy our conservation area and replace it with an unfitting and unwanted megastructure, devastating a community which has chosen to live their lives here, because of the beauty which it offers.

We genuinely fear that Grove Farm Solar will close our caravan site, an award-winning site which brings in wealth and interest to our community. My wife and I will suffer a huge financial loss. Grove Farm will seriously damage the viability of our business and we will need to find employment elsewhere.

Attached to this statement, I have included a small collection of quotations from recent reviews of our site. These quotations I believe are worthy of reading to highlight just how successful our site is and the fact our guests love what Tattingstone and Bentley stand for, countryside at its finest. The reviews demonstrate the high rating of our site and equally important, its immediate surroundings. The headings of the reviews speak for themselves; - Stunning Site, Beautiful scenery, Top Quality CL in Suffolk, Fantastic Hidden Retreat, One of the Best CL's We've Stayed At, and the list goes on. These reviews come from the CAMC website, many other reviews may be read on other caravan/motorhome websites like: - searchforsites.co.uk, UK Campsite and Google.

We therefore strongly object to the appeal and request that it be dismissed.

Signed: Martin & Mandy Ackers

GK

Reviewed: 12/10/2025 11:43

“A great place to relax and recharge your batteries”.

Liz Ireland

Reviewed: 08/10/2025 17:13

“We love the summer house, it's so relaxing to sit in and forget about the world”.

Chris & Carolyn Karunaratna

Reviewed: 22/05/2025 08:49

“Beautiful scenery all around and lots of room to wander and explore”.

hard tent on wheels

Reviewed: 21/10/2024 16:48

“The walks from site are plentiful”.

“It is a really relaxed and peaceful site”.

ClubMemberB511DD1FFD

Reviewed: 20/07/2024 20:05

“There are also some lovely walks from site. We have already booked to return next year (can't wait)”.