

My name is Aleks Akopian from Malting Farm, an old farmhouse in the conservation area. I came here just over two years ago, a relative newcomer to Bentley.

I still remember my first visit like yesterday, coming off the motorway and the immediate change in atmosphere. Driving down Church Road we were struck by how pristine it was, completely free of industrial impact. I remember seeing the majestic Bentley Hall Barn and feeling like I had stepped back in time. The whole environment felt completely untouched since the 1600s.

To this day, I am still discovering new pathways, woodlands, and hidden corners of this place. What makes it so remarkable is that, although we sit between the A12, the A137 and even with the railway line, this land remains a silent oasis of untouched history. It is a miracle that it has survived this long.

We are not anti-solar and understand the need for renewable energy. But we also realize the difference between a carefully planned infrastructure project and a speculative gamble. To us, this project feels entirely like the latter.

The Appellant suggests they can hide this industrial plant behind hedges. But you cannot do this project without a permanent mark on a landscape that is this ancient. You cannot drive large construction vehicles down these narrow lanes for months on end, where cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians go to find a relaxed getaway from the busy roads of Suffolk.

As a community, we have been forced to raise funds and hire experts because we simply could not believe the complete lack of common sense. And common sense tells us that you do not try to build a massive power station before you know if you can get the electricity out.

We have learned that the Developer does not have a confirmed connection date until the 2030s. We have learned they do not even have permission from Network Rail to cross the railway line, a barrier that physically blocks them from the grid. We have learned that no geological survey has been conducted for potential drilling, and that the risks to our water supply have not been properly addressed. We have even learned that the developer has refused to find alternative, more suitable sites, for this project.

To us, this feels deeply unfair. Why are we being put through the stress, the cost, and the anxiety of a Public Inquiry for a project that is, quite literally, a 'bridge to nowhere'?

It feels to us that this site was not chosen because it is the right place for solar. It was chosen simply because it was an available place.

We ask you to refuse this appeal, not just because of the damage it will do to the history I fell in love with two years ago, but because it is a poorly conceived, speculative project that does not deserve to replace the fields we cherish.