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The Planning Inspectorate

COMMENTS ON CASE (Online Version)

Please note that comments about this case need to be made within the timetable. This can be found in the notification letter sent by the local planning authority or the start date letter. Comments submitted after the deadline may be considered invalid and returned to sender.

Appeal Reference: APP/Y3940/W/25/3376878

DETAILS OF THE CASE

Appeal Reference	APP/Y3940/W/25/3376878
Appeal By	MR ANTHONY BRINDLE
Site Address	Land South of Potterne Park Farm Nr Potterne Devizes Wiltshire SN10 5QT

SENDER DETAILS

Name	MRS TRACEY WELLINGHAM
Address	[redacted]

ABOUT YOUR COMMENTS

In what capacity do you wish to make representations on this case?

- ☐ Appellant
- ☐ Agent
- ☑ Interested Party / Person
- ☐ Land Owner
- ☐ Rule 6 (6)

What kind of representation are you making?

- ☐ Final Comments
- ☐ Proof of Evidence
- ☐ Statement
- ☐ Statement of Common Ground
- ☑ Interested Party/Person Correspondence
- ☐ Other

YOUR COMMENTS ON THE CASE

I write further to my original objection and subsequent representation regarding this appeal. I fully support the detailed representations already submitted by the Potterne Solar Action Group and local Parish Councils and having reviewed the Appellant's Statement of Case alongside this independent expert evidence, my objection is strengthened considerably.
This appeal is not simply about renewable energy in principle. I am a firm supporter of green energy and have installed solar panels on my own property to that end. It is about whether this specific site, in this specific valley, is an appropriate and deliverable location for industrial-scale solar infrastructure. The evidence clearly demonstrates that it is not.

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1. Grid Connection: Benefits Delayed Until at Least 2037
The most significant new and material fact is this:
The project has been assigned a grid connection date of November 2037.
This date arises from the National Energy System Operator's (NESO) reformed connection process and the need for major infrastructure reinforcement at Melksham Grid Supply Point. The Appellant's scheme relies entirely on this infrastructure.
Meaningful export of electricity therefore cannot realistically occur until at least 2037, if at all.
Planning decisions are normally taken within a 3–5 year delivery horizon. Approving development dependent on infrastructure potentially over 11 years away would:
• Create prolonged land blight.
• Sterilise productive agricultural land.
• Lock this valley into uncertainty for more than a decade.

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2. Landscape Harm and Permanence
The site lies within the sensitive Stert Valley landscape, beneath an escarpment opposite One Tree Hill and close to the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.
Wiltshire Council refused the scheme applying similar reasoning to the Blount's Court solar refusal — recognising both affect the same wider valley landscape. I urge you to do the same.
The Appellant's landscape assessment:
• Omits key viewpoints,
• Lacks verified visual montages,
• Fails to properly assess amenity impact,
The proposal would industrialise 200+ acres of open countryside.
This is a generational change in land use.

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3. Public Rights of Way – Severe and Unprecedented Impact
The proposal affects approximately 3km of public footpaths and bridleways directly connected to the site — the most severe impact on rights of way associated with any solar proposal considered by Wiltshire Council to date.
These are historic routes linking north and south across the valley away from the A360. They are highly valued for myself, my family and local residents for:
• Tranquillity,
• Open views,
• Remoteness,
• Physical and mental wellbeing.
The introduction of fencing, panels and infrastructure would materially alter their character and deter use — particularly equestrian use.

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4. Agricultural Land and Economic Harm
The land is productive agricultural land that would be removed from meaningful use for decades. With grid connection not viable until at least 2037, the proposal risks prolonged land sterilisation and uncertainty, harming local agricultural businesses and the wider rural economy.
It should be taken into consideration that this land:
• Has been actively and productively farmed for generations.
• Has recorded strong yields.

• Was surveyed during unusually wet conditions.
• Contains drainage infrastructure likely to be damaged permanently.
With grid connection not viable until at least 2037:
• The land would be sterilised.
• Agricultural investment would cease.
• Contractors, supply chains and rural businesses would suffer.
• Economic stagnation and uncertainty would persist for over a decade.
These harms are immediate and enduring.

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5. Access and Safety
As a resident of Potterne Wick who uses the lanes and roads around the site daily, I cannot understand how a Construction Traffic Management Plan that is "unrealistic, unworkable and unenforceable" could be considered as a safe option for all users?
Please consider the impact of:
• Narrow rural lanes,
• Constrained alignment and visibility,
• A hazardous bend onto the A360,
• Shared residential access,
• Use of public rights of way.

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6. Reliability of the Appellant's Evidence
Right from the start of this project, the Appellant has not been truthful or transparent with their information and documentation. They tried to hide this project from local residents, lied about notifying residents by letter (we never received one), copied construction and traffic documentation from unrelated solar schemes, and submitted incorrect information repeatedly over five consultation rounds across two years.
This is not minor oversight — it indicates systemic reliance on generic assumptions rather than site-specific analysis.
Where evidence is unreliable like this, surely reduced weight must be attached to its conclusions?

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7. Conclusion
Planning decisions must be grounded in reality. Approving this appeal would authorise immediate and lasting damage to the Stert Valley for benefits that may not materialise for over a decade — or ever.
The proposal conflicts with the development plan and does not constitute sustainable development.
The appeal should be dismissed.
Yours faithfully,
Tracey Wellingham
Resident of Potterne Wick