**“High Rutland Solar Farm (Morcott/Pilton/Wing) - The Top Ten arguments against the proposals     (February 2023)**

**1. Solar panels have very poor electrical generation efficiency when operated at UK latitudes and cloud cover - typically the efficiency of power generation from solar is that only 11% of potential capacity is realised in our locality. Even Bluestone only claim an efficiency of 22% which is a figure guaranteed to be biased in their favour! Thus, far from being a good source of renewable energy which will reduce the effects of climate change solar panels are not always the best solution, or even an acceptable solution for a number of reasons.**

**2. The Business Model for the proposed solar farms in Rutland (known as “Finance-Own-Operate”) is flawed, not transparent, and leaves the operator with low or non-existent margins with which to maintain, replace, or dismantle the equipment at the end of its viable life and return the land to agriculture. In addition, the business model for the sudden raft of proposed solar farms in Rutland is based on current inflated & unsustainable energy pricing which will reduce progressively once renewables become dominant in the UK.**

**3. The Carbon balance involved in the life cycle of a solar farm (manufacturing components, installation, operating, (short) component life (panels = 15 years max), dismantling, disposing, recycling of materials) is very poor and may generate more carbon than it saves because of the low efficiency of generation and short operating life.**

**4. Solar panels are now cheap to manufacture but are artificially so due to the use of Uyghur slave labour in China. Solar panels cannot be easily recycled and contain significant proportions of toxic chemicals including rare Earth metals which leach into the ground in landfill or cause premature deaths in the deprived peoples who are forced to extract the chemicals by dangerous methods.**

**5. Solar panels’ mode of distribution onshore should be mounted on existing domestic & industrial buildings. Solar “farms” should only be installed on truly brownfield sites for which there is no other viable use and where they do not industrialise an otherwise picturesque landscape. The area proposed for High Rutland solar farm is not brownfield land and is currently used for agricultural purposes.**

**6. Solar farms take up valuable agricultural land at a time when food security is important. It is claimed that it is possible to graze sheep under solar panels but, in the case of High Rutland solar farm, there is no guarantee that sheep will be allowed to graze as this is in the gift of Anglian Water.**

**7. Anglian Water appears to want to drive the achievement of reaching its sustainability goals at lowest cost rather than thinking of the disruption and lack of amenity caused to local communities by imposing a solar farm where it unnecessarily industrialises the landscape. If Anglian Water are so committed to net zero and sustainability you would have thought that they would want to set a precedent by first utilising their own buildings, (such as the treatment works at Morcott & Wing), or the grounds of its sites, to mount solar panels. Instead, it has chosen to become a partner in a proposal which will adversely affect and disrupt the lives of many of the residents on whose goodwill they depend.**

**8. The solar farm proposals in Rutland (High Rutland, Exton, Mallard Pass) are excessive and. If all of these were approved, and including those already approved (Seaton, Langham), they would cover some 2.5% of the land area of the county compared to national guidance of 0.3%. Rutland currently has no policies to govern this proposed expansion of solar panels covering its countryside.**

**9. “High Rutland” is a special place with a special landscape. It is where, in Rutland, the Lincolnshire Oolitic Limestone and its underlying Ironstone (which dip at some 5degrees to the east) are at their highest. It is an area of unique geology and geography which exhibits a unique combination of picturesque undulating countryside with high ridges and deep valleys compared to other areas of Rutland. It’s unique landscape is an asset which Rutland should jealously guard and not needlessly sacrifice to commercial greed or administrative incompetence. Rutland CC currently has no effective policies to control the establishment of solar farms. The development of all and any solar farms should be subject to a moratorium while Rutland CC develops and approves the necessary and appropriate policies.**

**10. Community benefit has been ignored to the benefit of profitability and personal as well as company gain. There are at least four parties all gaining significantly financially from these proposals: those providing the finance (Cazenove?), those owning the panels (Bluestone Energy), those owning the land (Gilmans), and the partners in the consortium (Anglian Water). Despite their financial gains which in some cases will amount to many Tens of £Millions the consortium has only offered £75,000 between the 3 parishes affected by their proposals. This is a derisory sum and should be treated with the contempt it deserves. The communities affected will have over 30 years of inconvenience and loss of amenity through the industrialisation of Rutland’s precious countryside and any sum offered as compensation needs to be many times larger than £75,000.**