

Mr Hamish Eccles

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05/03/2024

Reference planning appeal APP/L3245/W/23/3332543

Dear Sir.

Thank you for allowing me to address the parties assembled here for this inquiry. As a Cantlop resident directly impacted by the proposed solar farm site, I am speaking as a member of a community united against this proposal. I believe this site is an unsuitable **location** for a solar farm, undermining our commitment to preserving our natural heritage and environment. I'm proud that our community have worked together to demonstrate our strong objection to the appeal.

Reflecting on my personal journey, when my family had the fortune of moving to this rural location over five years ago, we specifically chose our property for its uninterrupted vistas of open countryside. We live on the [Redacted] in an elevated position, the expanse of view stretching over the Cound Brook valley towards Berrington and extending to the grandeur of the Wrekin was a significant factor in our decision. Indeed, these views are shared by everyone who drives, walks, cycles, or rides a horse along this road.

As owners of a young Labrador dog, we fully embrace our environment, averaging 6 miles of walks daily via roads, paths, and bridleways around the appeal site. Our walks frequent Cantlop Bridge, a popular pause for walkers and cyclists, and often via Cantlop Mill as this provides a perfect circuit for walks before work in the morning. Our routes mostly feature panoramic vistas towards and through the appeal site. My photo collection captures the ever-shifting scenery across seasons, this statement includes two such photos taken only this Sunday morning, precious sights at risk with the proposed solar arrays.

It is essential to recognise the decision made by a committee of our elected officials, individuals who serve our interests and safeguard our local environment. Their refusal to grant planning permission was not arbitrary but grounded in an intimate understanding of what our community stands for—respect for the land quality that sustains us, along with the ecological and visual impact. The committee's decision, a testament to democratic process, should not be overturned lightly.

Our stance is not one of opposition to green energy. On the contrary, we concur with the appellant that there is a need to nurture sustainable energy sources. However, the pursuit of such noble objectives must not override the significance of appropriate siting.

We are acutely aware that the core motive driving the appellant is profit generation for its shareholders—a reality of business that cannot be ignored. Yet, had the appellant exercised greater foresight and selected a more suitable location initially, this enquiry would have been unnecessary. Instead of debating, they could be celebrating, with the landowner and shareholders already benefiting from the fruits of responsible energy production.

Our community already hosts three solar farms in proximity, which faced minimal opposition, owing to their judicious site selection and sound planning. From Shrewsbury Road and other viewpoints in the area, one can glimpse the existing solar site at Boreton, where only a sliver of glass panels breaks into view—hardly an intrusion. This is evidence of our community's willingness to support renewable energy developments that demonstrate sensitivity and respect for the landscape.

The appellant selected a site located on the side of a valley, surrounded by many residents, and highly visible from several frequently used footpaths and roads. The landowner possesses extensive tracts of land within the

area, among them several sites that would be eminently more suitable for a solar farm, locations that would harmoniously integrate with their surroundings and likely attract scant objection.

The appellant may argue that there is substantial local community backing for the project. However, whilst I respect their opinions, the support gathered from individuals of Cross Houses, who are not directly adversely affected by the proposal, should be given little weight in this appeal compared to those directly affected in Cantlop and Berrington.

In conclusion, it is not a lack of support for renewable energy that brings us here—it is the conviction that with thoughtful planning and considerate **location** choices, we can achieve a balance that benefits all.

I advocate for an approach that holds green energy and community values in equal esteem, ensuring a legacy of which we can all be proud.



Hamish Eccles

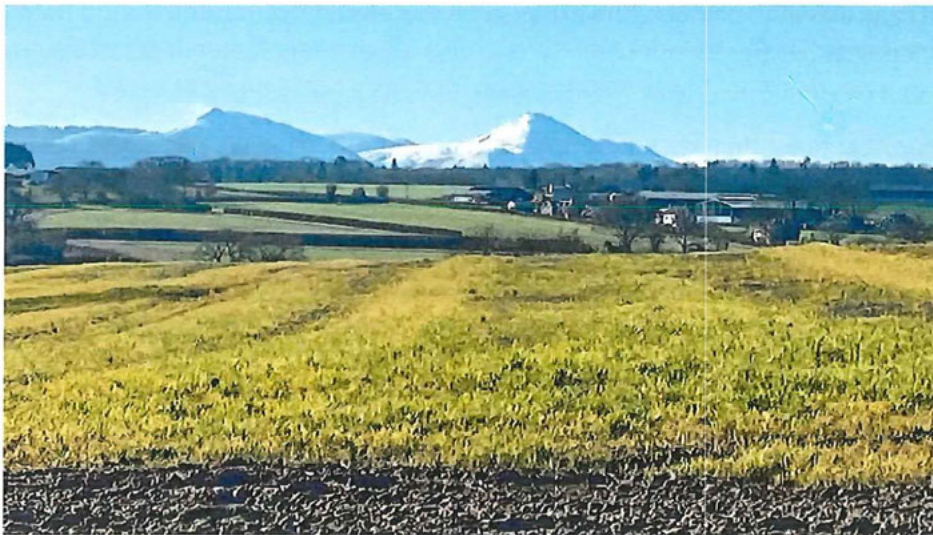


Figure 1 – View South from road west of Berrington towards Cantlop Cross and the Stretton hills (3/3/2024)



Figure 2 - View North from the PROW at Cantlop towards the road west of Berrington (3/3/2024)