

My name is Claire Wild, I have lived in [REDACTED] since 1989 and in the locality all my life.

I thank you all for taking the time to read my personal statement.

I wish to convey to you all my disappointment in the way in which many aspects of this application have been dealt with.

The initial scoping exercise, prior to the original planning application being submitted, was carried out in late 2021, early 2022. Natural England are statutory consultees, they raised concerns very early on in the process, saying the scoping exercise was flawed, as referred to in Shropshire Council's ecology report 2.6.

Natural England stated on the 18th of January 2022

“Based on the materials supplied with the consultation, there is potential likely significant effects to the statutorily designated sites and further assessment is required “

As far as I am aware no further assessments were carried out, this was brought to the attention of the original planning officer and referred to in letters of objection to the original application.

English Heritage were not consulted on the impact on the original Cantlop bridge, designed by Thomas Telford and built as we understand as a later example of the same style to the Ironbridge in Telford which has World Heritage status, so not an insignificant bridge. It sits in a valley 100 metres from the proposed site and is clearly visible from the site and vice versa yet the appellant in his site visit itinerary asked only for a drive by. This perhaps speaks volumes about their interpretation of the importance of heritage. The bridge is a very popular stop off for motorists, cyclists and walkers and is a well-used picnic area. Fortunately, the inspector picked up the issue of the many heritage assets in the area and the rule 6 party have submitted a sympathetic assessment of both the heritage assets and their importance to the public realm.

It should also be noted that on the site visit yesterday (4<sup>th</sup> March) all the parties looked at the various viewpoints, in particular Viewpoint 18. In July 2023, some two months after the planning application was refused, a Forestry Commission felling license was implemented and over 50% of the trees on the southwestern edge of the site were felled. Viewpoint 18, in Econergy's evidence, from 2022, bears no resemblance to the landscape as it is now. I would have expected the montage to have been updated as the loss of trees is significant. Disappointing but not surprising.

The landowner's family estate is well documented and over the years the estate has done many good deeds, and the family was woven into the fabric of the community. It was therefore very surprising that when econergy decided to consult with the local community, the landowner's son in law, who incidentally had lived in the village of Berrington until just before the application was submitted, instructed a Communication's Company to send out the letters inviting the residents of Berrington

and Cantlop to a meeting. Numerous residents didn't get a letter, and many letters were incorrectly addressed. Given the family connection and the importance of the community engagement surely a brisk walk around the villages would have been better unless of course the appellant didn't want to engage with the residents?

We had one community meeting where numerous promises were made by econergy but unfortunately, they were not actioned, including community benefit which whilst not a material planning consideration, speaks volumes as to the lack of respect shown to the communities of Berrington and Cantlop by the appellant.

Communities take lifetimes to develop and whatever the outcome, the spirit amongst these communities is very strong but the order has changed forever.

The application appears to have been in progress since 2021. Therefore, it would surely follow that any applicant with a knowledge of the ecological and environmental issues and impacts in the area, who's family are keen game shooters, would have reasonably been expected to commission a base line study for birds and protected species. Again, there is disappointment over the lack of evidence, especially in relation to the Skylarks. Surveys were not conducted on the mitigation land even though 6 Skylarks were seen. Quite how you can make assumptions about a red species bird is beyond comprehension. The Pheasants on the commercial shoot however enjoy a cosseted existence, at least for a few months of their short lives. Frankly disappointing but we are not surprised.

This application is for 40 years, yet it's described as temporary. The landscape management plan suggested by the appellant talks about management of the trees for 5 years, that to me is very temporary. It appears there is little appetite for any meaningful mitigation. I am sure we have all seen the impact of the lack of proper management on tree planting schemes all over the country. Again, disappointing.

You will have also seen the letter from Balfour's, the Landowner's agent saying that the application site land has poor quality yields. This is disappointing on many levels but mainly because it gives no evidence about said yields and the facts are that the landowner invested in a reservoir for this land. Why do that if the yields are poor?

We see in correspondence that, only in the last week, the appellant has asked Shropshire Council for permission to put the connection cable in its verge. Previously the land had been incorrectly marked as in the appellants ownership. Disappointing again, however it is not surprising as there appears to be gaps and omissions in many of the appellants documents.

Disappointing that after over 2 years these errors keep coming to light. Disappointing, but again not unexpected. My question however is how heavily can you rely on what's in front of you?

I hope on the site visit that you saw the width and the state of Cliff Hollow, Sandy Bank to the locals. The lane absolutely should be closed, and a turning circle put by the reservoir. This was asked for under conditions by the rule 6 party but dismissed by the appellant.

Apart from it all being very disappointing, there is a theme here which is to commit only to the basic, cheapest options at every turn with blatant disregard for the communities. The landowner, a Baronet & Knight of the Realm, is sending a very clear message to these communities but, in my view, not the right one.

Yes, we do have a climate emergency, however, in this country, we also have food insecurity. Therefore, in our view, allowing Solar on grade 1 agricultural land is foolhardy. The visual impact of this proposal on the surrounding communities is horrendous, and ignoring ecological and environmental issues is frankly beyond my comprehension.

I thank you for your time and urge you to dismiss this appeal.

