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Dear Mr Armstrong

PLANNING APPLICATION : 22/00741/FP - SOLAR FARM BYGRAVE

I understand from our District Councillor that I should communicate with you directly with regard to highways issues to do with the above Planning Application.

Having read the latest June documents submitted by PACE I have the following comments to make:

1. Pace Transport Consultants APEX are based in Cardiff. As declared in correspondence and confirmed in the webinar 28th June only one visit was made. It is considered that for the amount of additional traffic along the proposed route, one visit is inadequate to form an opinion of the number and type and frequency of vehicles that generally use this route.

This is also borne out by email dated 2nd June from Harman Sond which states 'Taking the field out of farming where the proposed solar farm will go will mean less traffic associated with farming'. This statement is untrue in that the Land Owners do NOT use Ashwell Road - they traverse across the farm which is exactly what any proposed solar farm construction traffic should also use. There could be an adequate route from the Newnham Road through Fars commercial area with possibly the addition of a temporary road. This would not inconvenience traffic for Newnham, Baldock, Lower Bygrave, Upper Bygrave, Ashwell and villages north of Ashwell that use our road.

- 2 Was a weekday and weekend traffic survey undertaken also when the roads in Ashwell are shut and the traffic increases in our lane as demonstrated over the last few weeks
- 3 Apex proposal for redesigning Bygrave Road A507 Junction is totally inappropriate.

The islands and dropped kerbs were installed for a purpose. It was a dangerous junction to cross without. If the proposals were adopted with the islands being moved toward the eastern side and forward nearer to the junction this would create the following issues for pedestrians:

- a) Traffic coming from Ashwell direction can only just be seen in time on the eastern side as installed - this would exacerbate the problem as the junction is on a sharp bend
- b) Traffic entering the Bygrave Road would be encouraged to be faster because of the wider carriageway.
- c) There is no footpath along the eastern side of Bygrave Road so pedestrians are forced to cross at this junction.

To widen the junction as shown will reduce the footpath to an extent that would not be wide enough and make more dangerous even catastrophic for electric wheelchair users and pushchairs/pram users. The grass verge at present provides a buffer from traffic. This pavement is used daily by rail users as well as the general public.

- 4 At the commencement of the Ashwell Road there is a weight limit sign of 7.5 tonnes. This is there for a reason. At the webinar PACE stated that they were going to ignore this sign as Highways obviously were not bothered!! This is an infringement of the Road Traffic Act/Highway code and liable for prosecution
- 5 Our lane is predominately a track and a half wide down to one track. It has two right angle bends that cannot be seen around and is a challenging lane to drive. It is regularly used by pedestrians, cyclists, motor cyclists and horse riders as well as local people with young children. It is considered unsafe to add another 640 articulated lorries and low loader journeys plus 5000 additional car journeys

The Highway code states

give motorcyclists, cyclists and horse riders and horse drawn vehicles at least as much room as you would when overtaking a car (see Rules 211 to 215).

As a guide:

- leave at least 1.5 metres when overtaking cyclists at speeds of up to 30mph, and give them more space when overtaking at higher speeds
- pass horse riders and horse-drawn vehicles at speeds under 10 mph and allow at least 2 metres of space
- allow at least 2 metres of space and keep to a low speed when passing a pedestrian who is walking in the road (for example, where there is no pavement) Contents highwaycodeuk.co.uk 103 AAATHE
- take extra care and give more space when overtaking motorcyclists, cyclists, horse riders, horse drawn vehicles and pedestrians in bad weather (including high winds).

With the articulated lorries and lowloaders the above rules would not be able to be applied. Therefore there would be an infringement of the Road Traffic Act/Highway code and liable for prosecution.

We continually have accidents in this lane. Why do HCC / PACE not following the warnings that **local users** have given

- 6 What assurances have APEX given with regard to controlling speed limits. In the previous submission they quoted a number of limits that were not even incorrect.
- 7 Why have vehicle movements been used on other Solar Farm Applications by APEX? These have no bearing on our location - a pure smoke screen
- 8 Even if the entrance to the site is moved the lane is so narrow that the complete road will still need to be utilised

- 9 With the proposed vast amount of heavy traffic using the lane who will be responsible for repairs, potholes to the road, and repairs to the verges, cleaning out of kerbside drains from detritous from destroyed verges.
- 10 Holding areas are suggested. How are these going to work on the A507 without causing hold up of traffic. Drivers or banksmen with walkie talkies calling ahead to see if the road is clear is completely unmanageable. How are they supposed to see if anyone comes out of side turnings or from their drive along the route
- 10 Concern about glare from solar panels that are on a slope next to the lane
- 11 The average number of vehicles is misleading. Once construction is fully underway the number of vehicles per day must increase in volume
- 12 Cutting back overgrowth to the road is a concern. We have a heritage verge plus as a country lane we often see wild life within the banks. This needs to be carried out by with a mind to diversity in our area.
- 13 With the addition of the large heavy goods vehicles and 5000 additional car / van journeys, I am extremely concerned with regard to the additional air pollution.

I hope the above points will help you make the decision that this application is inappropriate for this location. I have mentioned that we have a number of young families that have joined our village recently and am fearful of any additional risk of accidents.

Yours sincerely

Philip Hills

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RoSPA Advanced Driver Gold / Advance Tutor

North Herts South Beds Group