

Comment by Nick Timothy MP on planning application ref: DC/25/1027/FUL

Planning application — proposed hybrid renewable energy scheme for the construction and operation of a solar farm and battery energy storage system, with associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure.

Land North of Wales End Road, Wales End Road, Cavendish, Suffolk

1. I am opposed to ground-mounted solar panels being built on farmland. It is bad energy policy, because Britain is the worst country in the world for solar. It is bad agricultural policy, because we should not sacrifice our best land. And it is bad for local people. This is because it will permanently alter — for the worse — our beautiful countryside while leading to higher energy bills. For this application, I note the following heads of objection in particular:

Good farmland is being built on

2. This application would mean building on agricultural land. I strongly oppose this.

Problems with construction accessway

3. The construction accessway, along the high street and up Peacocks Road past the primary school, the Five Bells Pub and St Mary the Virgin Church is not at all suitable. Peacocks Road can already be dangerous, with drivers sometimes refusing to give way on a single-track road. Vehicles going to and from such a building site need the benefit of a proper road. This is crucial so residents and the environment are not unduly disturbed by the large volume of lorries serving the site. There is also risk for pedestrians near the school and the possibility of jams when there is a high amount of school traffic. Traffic approaching the site will go by many residential properties, including listed buildings. I am also concerned about the safety of horses and riders using the bridleway from Cavendish towards Wales End Farm.

Potential harmful impact on local businesses

4. The Construction Traffic Management Plan (document **#2310-0614/CTMP/O1**, dated May 2025) includes a traffic management plan, with stop / go signs, parking restrictions and suspensions, and engineering works to facilitate site access. With regard specifically to paragraphs 5.20 and 5.21 of this document, I am concerned about the impact this will have on the Five Bells pub. The ability for customers to access parking on Peacocks Road is very important for this business. The knock-on effect this may have on deliveries — with lorries potentially forced to stop in the road — would also be disruptive for the community.

Impact on quality of life in Cavendish and the surrounding area

5. Approving this application would mean more traffic along the A1092 down an already well-used High Street. The concentrated use of this thoroughfare by heavy goods vehicles places pressure on the community — increasing danger to pedestrians and other road users.

Threat to the local environment

6. The building of a 50-acre solar farm would ruin the use and enjoyment of the natural environment by visitors and residents. The site is next to ancient woodland, and the natural habitat for animals and plant life will be negatively affected. As the parish council says, this is '*characterised by its remoteness and tranquillity*' and '*the site lies between Northey Wood and Easty Wood which are Sites of Special Scientific Interest and are important habitats for wildlife and for botany, whilst the verges along the rural sections of Peacocks Road are also important for their wildflowers*'.

Flooding risk

7. Properties along the A1092 and on surrounding roads are subject to a flooding problem due to run-off. I have spoken to residents in Cavendish who have had to put sandbags outside their homes to deal with this danger. This application — if approved — risks making the problem worse. I note Suffolk County Council's holding objection, dated 14 August 2025, as the Lead Local Flood Authority.

Other considerations

8. There is already a significant solar farm at nearby Pentlow (Essex). This was completed in 2024. I strongly object to the fact that our area is being deluged with these applications. The existence of a solar farm nearby should add weight to the case for rejection of this proposal.

Insufficient consultation

9. The consultation process reportedly did not take adequate measures to faithfully canvass local opinion on this application. Many residents feel there has not been sufficient chance to consider these proposals.

Conclusion

10. I oppose this application as it will negatively affect this small yet settled community — with a strong local identity. The disruption that would result is not merited by the building of a solar farm on agricultural land. Such a policy is not in the local or national interest.

22 September 2025