

With regard to the above application we urge the Council to oppose this proposal on the following grounds:

We live in Llanedi and have been active supporters of renewable energy since 1972. We have solar panels on our roof. However this 65ha application is immediately adjacent to the existing 28ha Clawdd Ddu solar farm and the already-approved 22ha Tycroes solar farm. These three sites together would form an almost continuous block of 115ha of panels.

Our concerns are that a monoculture of solar panels will cause problems for wildlife and a reduction of available food-production land when the country is already nowhere near self-sufficient in food – a serious problem in these uncertain times.

Large solar farms such as those that have been built in the last several years in Southern California and the desert Southwest can fool birds into changing flight direction, sometimes during migration, to approach them because they appear to be lakes from a distance. (From Environmental Science Magazine). Insufficient research has been done into the long-term effects of such large-scale projects.

Nature magazine Oct 2016 stated “We found temperatures over a PV plant were regularly 3–4 °C warmer than wildlands at night.” Other research has found the opposite effect but both found temperature anomalies relating to climate change. It would be better, therefore, to have smaller solar farms in a mosaic pattern, which can be assessed until more information is available. When conserving areas of land, it is important to look at larger landscapes to keep our habitat mosaics intact, especially in the face of global change. Shifting mosaic habitats keep our ecosystems resilient. Habitat mosaics are key to maintaining biodiversity and the ecosystem services we rely on.

The development is adjacent to a SSSI field. Dust from construction in the development is likely to adversely affect the SSSI field. This field has been traditionally farmed as hay meadow. In the UK 97% of hay meadows have been lost over the years, so this meadow is part of the 3% left.

The application claims that grazing with sheep will encourage flower-rich meadow. Richard Pryce, former President of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland, states, “These are incompatible concepts, as sheep completely denude land of botanical diversity”. Experiments near Craig-y-Nos showed that fencing areas off from sheep grazing produced a rapid increase in floral

diversity while diversity in the sheep grazed area remained low. Grazing with cattle under the solar panels would be more suitable.

If large-scale developments like this are permitted then this also sets a precedent of large-scale loss of wild and food-producing land, which may then be liable to being built on when the project ends.

Iolo Williams says Wales is currently in the midst of a catastrophic loss of its wildlife. He spoke to Wales Online about how our abuse of the natural world is ruining not just our countryside, but also our own well being.

(Feb 2021 Wales Online)

Sir David Attenborough says:

“The Anthropocene could be the moment we achieve a balance with the rest of the natural world and become stewards of our planet.

Doing so will require systemic shifts in how we produce food, create energy, manage our oceans and use materials," he said.

"But above all it will require a change in perspective. A change from viewing nature as something that's optional or 'nice to have' to the single greatest ally we have in restoring balance to our world."

David Attenborough September 2020

Biodiversity, Attenborough argues, is the answer to these problems. The significance of biodiversity in maintaining ecosystems both in our oceans and on land is not just so animals and plants can flourish, but so humanity can survive.

*WWF nature quotes from DA*

*"It's surely our responsibility to do everything within our power to create a planet that provides a home not just for us, but for all life on Earth."*

We therefore urge you to oppose this application.