

7th December 2021

I write to note my objection to the proposed solar farm as noted below. I am the owner of land and other property in close proximity to the proposed Brynrhyd solar farm.

Proposed Brynrhyd Solar Farm DNS/3260565

We write to object to the proposals by Brynrhyd Solar Farm Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Island Green Power Ltd, to build a 160 acre solar farm on good quality agricultural land in the village of Llanedi.

Cumulative Effect of a third solar farm

There has been a solar farm (Clawdd Ddu Solar Farm) in Llanedi for many years and its existence is not problematic. However, permission has recently been granted for a second solar farm (Ty Croes Solar Farm - DNS/3227364) which will border the existing Clawdd Ddu Solar Farm. The Brynrhyd Solar Farm would be the third solar farm in the area. We believe that the cumulative effect of a third solar farm in close proximity to two others would have a hugely detrimental effect on the villages of Llanedi and Garnswllt - on their residents, and on the environment. There is no shortage of former industrial land in East Carmarthenshire and there are already some good examples of where solar panels have been located on land that could not be used for agriculture or housing – for example on the former site of the Cynheidre colliery 3 & 4 shafts. This development would however be using good quality agricultural land that is currently used for milk and beef production.

Visual Impact

Firstly, there is the visual impact of the proposed development on the countryside. The new panels would be clearly visible from many properties in the village and from Ebenezer Road (B4279) which runs from Fforest through Llanedi to Tygroes. It would turn beautiful unspoilt countryside into a mass of glaring glass and would turn good agricultural land, currently farmed by local inhabitants, into an industrial site. The proposed solar farm would have an operational lifespan of 40 years, by which time the company behind the scheme might no longer be in existence leaving a hideous scar on the landscape for others to decommission. This part of West Wales is still dealing with effects of coal extraction and the public purse has to foot the bill of clearing waste created by coal production. It is very likely that history will repeat itself when the time comes to remove the photo-voltaic cells and their supports.

Impact on biodiversity

Secondly, contrary to the claims made by the developers, building a 160-acre solar farm will not enhance biodiversity in the area. There are many species including butterflies, bats, curlews and red kites which would have their natural habitat destroyed by this scheme.

Geese also use these fields to rest on their migratory journeys. The developers also claim that allowing sheep to graze within the solar farm is maintaining the agricultural use of the land, but that is hardly a justification for turning green fields into an expanse of glass. Sheep are not seen grazing in the existing Clawdd Ddu Solar Farm.

Impact on residents

Thirdly, there is the impact on several families whose homes would be almost surrounded by solar panels. There is already evidence that proximity to the existing solar farm has a negative impact on the value and saleability of property primarily on account of the noise produced by the solar farm. This scheme is far larger than the existing Clawdd Ddu Solar Farm and the soon to be built Tycroes Solar Farm and it will produce more noise and have a detrimental effect on more families in the area. For those living in nearby Garnswllt the glint and glare created by the development will not only be visually undesirable, but dangerous to the drivers of vehicles coming down Heol y Mynydd.

Economic benefits

Fourthly, it is clear from the proposals that the main beneficiaries of this scheme would be Island Green Power, a multinational developer of solar farms and the main landowners, namely Sir John Michael Dillwyn-Venables-Llewelyn of Llysdyman, Newbridge-On-Wye and David Richard Mount of Camberley, Surrey. On 29 May 2020 they granted an option for a lease to Brynrhyd Solar Farm Limited to access the land that they own at Brynrhyd. Venables-Llewelyn is also a director to the two major estates that own land locally – Penllergaer Investments Ltd and Parcmawr Investments Ltd and if this scheme is accepted, we would not be surprised if further applications were made at other locations in the vicinity. It is true that two local farmers – Brian Richards, the tenant farmer of Brynrhyd, and Gareth Jenkins of neighbouring Pentrehardd - have added some land that they both own, but the bulk of the land and therefore the financial benefit will go to Dillwyn-Venables-Llewelyn and Mount. Once again land in Wales will be exploited in order to provide energy and as happened in the case of coal, the economic benefit will not be felt locally. Local residents and their elected representatives firmly oppose this development and object to the fact that it is being imposed on the communities of Llanedi and Garnswllt by people who have no connection with the area and care even less about its wellbeing and the wellbeing of its residents. It is comparable with the flooding of Capel Celyn. Capel Celyn was a rural community to the north west of Bala in Gwynedd, Wales, in the Afon Tryweryn valley. The village and other parts of the valley were flooded in 1965 to create a reservoir, Llyn Celyn, in order to supply Liverpool and Wirral with water for industry.

Impact on tourism and leisure

Fifthly, there is the negative impact that this scheme will have on leisure activities and tourism in the area. People come to stay in Llanedi to enjoy the peace and quiet of the countryside and walk the public footpaths and roads around the village. No one is going to

want to go for a walk or cycle in the middle of several hundred acres of solar farms and those offering accommodation and hospitality to visitors will be adversely affected. The very fact that an existing footpath passes through this site.

Construction

Access to the proposed site is via two very narrow lanes. The disruption that will be caused by the high volume of HGVs that will need access will be considerable and the safety of those travelling along Heol Troeon Bach and Heol Ebeneser will be severely compromised. Considerable damage will certainly be caused to both roads, and it is likely that damage will also be caused to hedgerows, particularly along Heol Troeon Bach. The volume of construction traffic along with that of workers arriving at the site will also cause a dramatic increase in pollution in what is currently an unspoilt area.

Whilst wholly supportive of renewable energy generation, we believe that this scheme is far too big for the area, especially considering the existence of Clawdd Ddu Solar Farm and the Tycroes Solar Farm. The benefits that it will provide in terms of renewable energy generation are far outweighed by the many negative effects it will have on the environment, the residents of Llanedi and Garnswllt and the leisure and tourism sector in the area.

I sincerely hope that you will support my objections wholeheartedly and that Llanedi does not become an under-glass village.

Mark and Elizabeth Thomas