

From: Gillian Jarvis [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 October 2023 12:51
To: Andrew.Rutter@suffolk.gov.uk; SCC Planning Mailbox
Subject: Objection to Acorn's Anaerobic Digester at Spring Grove Farm, Withersfield. Ref SCC/0045/23SE

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Dear Mr Rutter,

As a resident of the Arboretum Estate in Withersfield, I strongly object to Acorn's proposal for an anaerobic digester plant on the following grounds;

Severe impact on Highways safety

* Acorn propose 5600 farm traffic vehicle movements which is far too many for such a small village. This poses a huge safety risk to drivers and pedestrians given the narrow roads and lack of footpaths in the area. The A1307 is a hazardous road at the best of times, this will cause absolute chaos on our main route to Cambridge with the onslaught of slurry and debris not only the farm traffic vehicles will leave behind, but also the 3500+ HGV's will spread on their way to trucking the energy produced to Milton Keynes.

* Residents of the Arboretum already struggle to turn out of the estate onto 3 Counties Way, with the HGV's from the proposed site having to use the gateway roundabout to turn back to the A1307 this will become almost impossible with the amount of traffic that will be queuing to get to the roundabout and will become highly dangerous.

* The planning application alludes to 2 site entrances but is unclear as to where the second will be. If this is planned to be in the village (next to the local pub as linked to the Thurlow Estate's recent application), this is not safe and needs to be investigated further with the highest importance. Accidents will be inevitable should this go ahead.

Environmental issues

* The recent days have seen heavy rainfall resulting in flooding of the proposed site and the A1307 directly adjacent. Acorn originally declared the site as not being a flood risk, but this is now contradicted in their application where it shows it is a flood risk (which it quite clearly is). With Withersfield village flooding regularly, any silage leaks (or worse - chemical leaks) from the site will cause pollution to nearby streams and potentially local water supply. Acorn cannot guarantee that this won't happen.

* As the site is unprecedented in size, there is a real risk of particulates affecting air quality in the local area (the soon to be 300 homes on the Arboretum will be affected plus many businesses). It is my belief that the planning officer has a duty of care to investigate this.

* This is a risk to food security in our local area. Rishi Sunak has recently declared a cap on solar farms being developed on agricultural land currently in use, why should this be any different? The site is grade 2 agricultural land which is currently in use.

* I am confused by Acorn's proposed 'pipeline' as the plans are unclear. Will this be underground? If so, breakages / leaks are inevitable. There is no mention of how they will manage / control / avoid this. Why are we risking more pollution? The plant will generate enough when in use (more pollution than green energy!).

Safety to surrounding areas

- * I'm sure you have seen reports on the recent explosion of an AD plant in Oxford. This alone should stop Acorn's plans from being considered, especially being so close to residential areas and businesses including a children's nursery. The idea of this happening is terrifying.
- * If an explosion were to happen, what can Acorn do to stop the impact on air pollution and gas clouds? Short answer - absolutely nothing! Will Acorn compensate local residents if homes are damaged? I highly doubt any compensation would be enough and we will all be paying premium rates of home insurance should this go ahead due to the severe risks.
- * There have been 3 severe fires recorded at AD plants between 2010 - 2018. This is a real risk and again, absolutely terrifying for those of us living so close.
- * Acorn have stated the site will be monitored at all times, not from the site itself, but from overseas. How does that help those living & working close by in an emergency? This is just not sufficient for Europe's proposed largest AD plant.

Acorn's incompetence

- * Acorn's plans are not clear at all. In fact, many of the planning application documents have been cut and pasted from an application in Oxfordshire, with the road names and other information not being corrected.
- * Acorn have declined to attend local meetings organised by the parish council to discuss the plans with members of the PC, local residents and councillors, and instead have told residents to attend a further presentation they will give at the village hall on the 1st November. This is 6 days after the public objection deadline.... I think this is completely disrespectful to not give residents a chance to ask questions before being able to object.
- * Acorn claimed to have undertaken a new survey for the area prior to submitting their application, however it was found that they had lied and submitted this with a false name. The survey was never completed. This begs the question as to what else have they not completed or fabricated?

Impact on local communities

- * Odour - Acorn have repeatedly said the site will not smell. This is untrue. A visit to the small AD plant in Chatteris, Cambridgeshire gives an idea to the rotting veg odour that will be strongly smelt within a mile of the site (a year round smell, according to local residents). For my family, this means not being able to open any windows in our home for the foreseeable future and having to drive my 2 young children out of the area to be able to breathe in fresh air - surely a basic human right?! Jaynic (land owners and builders of the Epicentre) have recently undertaken their own odour survey and have found Acorn's promises to be completely false. This site WILL SMELL.
- * Noise and light - with the site running 24/7, the impact on local residents will be substantial given the amount of HGV's being used. The electrical humming noise will also be constant.
- * Businesses - it has been reported that companies are already looking to leave the newly built Epicentre due to Acorn's proposal. There are also 2 pubs and children's nursery extremely close to the site. How are they supposed to survive this? Each of these businesses are far more valuable to the local area than Acorn's AD plant would be and should therefore be prioritised. My child attends the nursery and we had planned for our next child (due in March) to also attend, however if Acorn's plans are approved we will be forced to look elsewhere. How many other families will have to do the same?
- * Acorn claim to be creating up to 15 jobs for the local area, however, only up to 5 of these will actually be onsite. 5 more jobs available for local residents is good, but how many others will be lost when local businesses fail due to the presence of the proposed plant? This will be detrimental to the growth of the existing and surrounding areas.

Location

In summary to my points, this is the wrong location for this proposed Anaerobic Digestion plant. This area was supposed to be, and currently is the gateway to Haverhill which surely the AD plant goes completely against. It does not give anything to the local area, especially given the energy it does create will be trucked to Milton Keynes. Local residents and business will be paying a huge price and will see no benefit. Spring Grove Farm is not designated for industrial use and this is too big to be classed as an agricultural plant.

When reviewing the application, please please bear in mind the negative impact this will have on the 100's of nearby residents (some of who, including myself and my young family, live within 500 metres of the site). Please stand with us and do not let this happen.

Many thanks,
Gillian Jarvis

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