

Dear Parish Chairman / Parish Clerks,

On behalf of Thoroton residents I would greatly appreciate you facilitating the distribution of the following information to all residents residing within your parishes.

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Dear Residents,

My purpose in writing to you today is to provide an update on the proposed Solar Industrial Estate which is to be located between the Conservation villages of Thoroton and Hawksworth.

Time Line.

In December 2022 the energy company RES submitted a planning application to Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC) for the Thoroton Hawksworth Solar Industrial Estate.

In March 2023 the planning application was refused by RBC.

In September 2023 an appeal against the RBC planning refusal was submitted by RES.

The National Planning Inspectorate formally started the appeal process on the 11th March 2024.

The Appeal Public Inquiry has been set for the 11th June 2024.

A Thoroton residents Village Meeting was held in January 2023 in order to discuss the planning application. The meeting was attended by approximately eighty five percent of village residents and all residents in attendance voted their objection to the planning application. Hawksworth residents also held a village meeting in order to discuss the planning application and this also resulted in an overwhelming vote against the planning application. Furthermore, there was an overwhelming objection to the RES planning application on the RBC Planning website by those residents residing in villages surrounding the villages of Thoroton and Hawksworth.

The role of Rushcliffe Borough Council Planning.

RBC in their formal refusal letter to RES when turning down the planning application did so on the grounds of:

1. Adverse impact on landscape character and visual amenity,
2. Heritage- the proposed development does not contribute to the preservation or enhancement of the setting of the Hawksworth & Thoroton Conservation Area's.

Correspondence has been received from RBC Planning that they will be defending their refusal decision and have appointed a Barrister and an expert planning witness at their expense. What is important to note is that RBC will only be defending the planning refusal on the two points identified in their planning refusal letter and consequently, the fighting of this planning application on other grounds will be purely the responsibility of Thoroton and Hawksworth residents.

At the outset of the RES planning application an action group was established by Thoroton

and Hawksworth resident in order to fight the proposal. It was immediately identified that in order to successfully challenge statements and evidence made by RES in their planning application documents we needed to employ quality legal representation and quality expert witnesses. The RES planning application includes a number of statements that the action group believe to be misleading and factually incorrect, such as statements made concerning soil quality, flooding assessments, noise issues and transportation issues etc.

In order to be represented at the Public Inquiry residents have to adopt what is known as Rule 6. Rule 6 when applied for allows residents to be treated exactly the same as RBC & RES in the appeal process. Residents will have the same rights and responsibilities to follow process. It allows us to identify and engage witnesses and allows us to sit round the table with the Planning Inspector when conditions are imposed. Both Thoroton and Hawksworth residents at their respective Parish Meetings voted to adopt Rule 6 if this was thought appropriate. In adopting Rule 6 status we will have the opportunity to challenge RES statements by employing expert witnesses. Funding is required for Advocates leading us through the expert witness and legal proceedings.

The deadline for our Statement of Case is the 15th April 2024 and we need to obtain funds in order to employ legal advice and expert witnesses as soon as possible.

I would like to point out that the proposed Solar Industrial Estate is not just a concern for the residents of both Thoroton and Hawksworth, it is also a concern for residents in the surrounding villages. The siting of a Solar Industrial Estate involving the erecting of thousands of solar panels in excess of two metres in height together with power plant over 233 acres of quality arable farmland will destroy not only the landscape but also the setting of two Nottinghamshire Conservation villages. The citing of this Solar Industrial Estate is not short term, it is proposed that it has a 40 year lifespan and I would suggest that the land will never be returned to farming.

Clearly, if this planning application was to be upheld it would not only drastically affect the lives of the residents of Thoroton and Hawksworth but also those residents of surrounding villages who enjoy walking, cycling, horse riding and bird watching in what has been officially recognised as the South Nottinghamshire Farmlands Character Area.

It should also be noted that there will be massive transportation issue surrounding the building of the Solar Industrial Estate. The proposed planning route for the 40 heavily laden Lorries travelling to the proposed site per day will be along the A52 onto the old A46, travelling through Car Colston Village towards the Scarrington junction before turning left towards Hawksworth and then turning right towards Thoroton. The already appalling roads will become even worse and disintegrate. The roads will be impassable when approaching a lorry.

In order to pursue our fight against the RES planning application we require urgent funding. The professional help required will allow Landscape and planning experts who are skilled in appeal cases to present our case in the best possible way. We are currently raising as much as we can from our two small villages. We would appreciate any help you can give us. All donations will be gratefully received and residents are able to donate money by two means:

Barclays Bank.

Account name - Thoroton Parish Meeting.

Sort code - 20-63-28

Account # 10493961

OR

Go Fund Me <https://www.gofundme.com/stop-solar-estate-at-hawksworth-thoroton>

Thank you for all your assistance in this matter.

Kind regards,

Colin Warburton.

Chair, Thoroton Parish Meeting.