

Marie Szpak Friston Resident

Thank you for the opportunity to speak this afternoon.

My name is Marie Szpak and I am a resident of Friston and a supporter of renewable technologies.

I would like to begin by reading an extract from a book by Clarissa Thomas,

“This book is a short illustrated history of the village close to the Alde Estuary in East Suffolk, known as Friston. It is a celebration – on the occasion of the Millennium – of life in the area from the earliest settlements, through occupation by the Romans, to invasion by the Frisians (from whence the village gets its name). Then on to the Middle Ages, when the wool trade brought prosperity, with much land in Friston being used as sheep walks, to the arrival of the postmill (the tallest in England) in 1812, and the development of an almost self-sufficient estate village in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries”.

The final chapter of the book: ‘At the Dawn of a New Century’ ends with the following words: “The future is impossible to predict over the long term. Somethings, however, remain constant and one of them is people. These are the individuals and groups who keep the community alive, preserve traditions, support institutions and each other and look forward to the future with new ideas, open minds, and an enthusiasm for what life and change will bring to the village of Friston in the twenty-first century”.

I moved into Friston in March 2017. Despite warnings from friends I bought a thatched Grade 2 Listed cottage - it is situated adjacent to the Grade 2* listed church, which I am told, was the earliest existing building in the village. The warnings were about:

- maintaining an old property and
- the dangers of a thatched roof!

But of course what I bought was a piece of history, the book I referred to earlier mentions that in 1674 there were 31 inhabited houses in the parish and that, although no detailed map exists, these were probably clustered around the church – one of these cottages is my home!

What is lovely about living in a village, especially if you have dogs, as I do, is that you do a lot of walking and people say ‘hello’.

When I moved here locals, having ascertained if I was a holidaymaker or not, would be ask where I lived – on responding I would be met with “Oh that’s Beryl’s house”.

Beryl died in 2003 and her ashes are buried just 50 metres from the house and garden in the churchyard, marked by a stone which says, and I quote: “She loved this place”.

Just over a year ago I was in my back garden when I saw two gentlemen looking towards me and pointing. We got chatting and they told me that they were born in one of the rooms in my house – they were in the churchyard visiting the grave of their grandparents, Bertie and Dolly Smith, who had also

lived in my house. I invited them in for a cup of tea and as we went on a tour of the house they told me stories of how each room used to look. A few months later they returned with copies of family photos mostly from the 1950s and 60's but some as far back as 1913 – more history to cherish!

I consider myself to be a guardian of my home, of Beryl's house, of Bertie and Dolly's house – a guardian of past generations going back to the 1600s and a guardian for future generations.

Guardians defend, protect and look after – that is why I, and indeed the villagers of Friston, are fighting the Applicant's proposals.

Our medieval village is under the threat of destruction. The Applicant: SPR and, of course, National Grid Ventures, are planning to do what nobody else has managed to do since the 1100s – destroy the village and one of its constants – the people.

I know you have heard from many others about the day-to-day threats we face if development consent is granted and I will recap some you of them if I have time at the end of my presentation.

Even though the Applicant has not had consent granted, the prospect of what may come to the village is sucking the very life out of villagers: they are depressed: worry and anxiety is evident.

The one thousand year history of our village could end here in the name of 'green energy' - concrete industrial structures, with maybe a life span of some 25 years which could, and should, be built elsewhere:

- not destroying a fragile coastline,
- not cutting down trees and hedgerows, threatening the destruction of wildlife
- not taking peoples' homes and gardens
- not on agricultural land on the edge of a village
- but on a brownfield site.

The spirit of Friston though lives on: the desire to protect our village, its heritage and its traditions is worth the fight.

On Sunday, as we do every year, villagers in Friston will gather around our Grade 2 Listed War Memorial in our tranquil graveyard,

- The Last Post will be played
- A 2 minutes silence will be held
- Reveille will be sounded
- The Act of Remembrance, when wreaths are placed at the foot of the memorial and the names of each villager who died defending their village and our country, will be read out
- Prayers for peace will be said and
- The National Anthem will be played.

This historic act, a mark of respect by current villagers, for past villagers, the circle of life, of history

“Some things remain constant and one of them is people”.

Let us hope that in years to come, if our community in Friston survives, they will not have to remember those people who fought to preserve our village

and its community in the twenty first century from a Spanish conglomerate which includes SPR.

I support and extend my thanks to SASES, SEAS, Friston Parish Council and all other individuals and organisations who are also fighting these proposals.

I urge you to recommend the rejection of consent for the EA1N and EA2 onshore application.

Thank You.

The issues:

- **Loss of peace and tranquility, public rights of way, fields and hedgerows – the habitats of birds and wildlife – so much a feature of rural living**
- **An increased risk of flooding in homes of the village**
- **An increased risk of pollution: in the air from diesel fumes and dust, noise from construction and operation phases**
- **A loss of the dark night skies –no light pollution here**
- **The loss of quiet single track lanes – where people feel safe to walk - there are no pavements;**
- **A loss of safety and security**
- **Depreciating house prices, the bullying threats of compulsory aquisition**
- **Increasing traffic but decreasing tourism.**
- **And, of course, the threat brought by the cumulative effect of other developments already in the public domain, which will be directed to this area if Development Consent for the onshore aspects of EA1N and EA2 are granted.**

