

# Griff Rhys Jones joins celebrity campaign against offshore wind turbines onshore blight

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The comedian and actor Griff Rhys Jones has joined a campaign to stop more than 100 coastal villages being blighted by pylons, substations and cables connected to offshore wind farms.

In a letter to *The Times*, he and other actors and artists with homes in Suffolk say that the “piecemeal approach” to green energy infrastructure would result in the “destruction of ancient woodland [and] rare heathland habitats” in Suffolk and Norfolk.

Instead, they support attempts to force developers to agree that any new offshore wind farms should be linked to the grid at sea to spare their villages and surrounding areas.

Thousands of giant turbines are due to be built in the North Sea over the next decade, each with a separate connection to the National Grid, requiring more than 100 miles of trenches and dozens of substations.

Ofgem, the energy regulator, is considering an alternative that would place substations on platforms in the sea and connect them via undersea cables. However, the campaigners say that such proposals have been repeatedly delayed, putting at risk 1,700 hectares of countryside.

The classical music TV presenter Sir Humphrey Burton, the poet Lavinia Greenlaw and the painter Maggi Hambling have joined the campaign. Friston in Suffolk and Necton in Norfolk are among the worst affected villages, with plans for several large substations at each. Snape in Suffolk could be blighted by an extra 1,000 lorries a day.

Fiona Gilmore, of the campaign group Suffolk Energy Action Solutions, who lives in Snape, said Britain should follow Denmark and the Netherlands by having grid connections offshore. This would cost about £5 billion, she added, but be cheaper in the long run.

The campaigners have the support of Thérèse Coffey, the work and pensions secretary who is the MP for Suffolk Coastal.

Scottish Power said it supported an offshore grid, but added: “Given the urgent need to provide large quantities of clean, green power to power our homes and businesses and decarbonise our economy, it is not feasible to pause projects while this lengthy process is undertaken.”