

Barking Parish Council wish to strongly object to the National Grid East Anglia GREEN proposals to install electricity pylons throughout the village of Barking.

## **Barking Parish Council Meeting 9<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

Barking Parish Council held a meeting to let the public and residents express their views about the project. Seventy-five people attended and three others unable to attend sent their views. It was unanimously agreed that Barking Parish Council would strongly object to the pylons on Environmental and Historical grounds. This decision follows similar objections by other Parish Councils, District Councils and County Councils affected by the proposed route of pylons.

It was also unanimously agreed that National Grid should have the cables routed either via the sea route or underground. The countryside is enjoyed by residents and visitors alike and should be protected for future generations; concerns about loss of endangered species including grass snakes, skylarks, yellowhammers and bee orchids; request for a transparent analysis of options; concerns about health risks from living near cables were expressed— just because there is no firm evidence ‘why does nobody want to live near a pylon’?

Other concerns include: Loss of high quality arable farm land, maintenance of pylons and amount of high winds causing damage; disruption to roads and farmland caused by access to pylons for both their construction and repairs; the hazards to helicopters flying from RAF Wattisham (Army Air Corps base); that the costings and rationale behind the choice of route suggested in the interactive map are specious and that the real cost (when amortised over 40 or 60 years) of the undersea option has nothing like as serious an impact on electricity bills as suggested by National Grid.

## **Objections for Environmental Reasons**

The area of installation on your map marked in purple almost exactly matches the area designated by Mid Suffolk District Council as a Special Landscape Area. See the attached map. I quote Mid Suffolk’s Structure Plan Policy as it covers this proposed route comprehensively and shows it to be totally unacceptable.

### Mid Suffolk Structure Plan Policy

CL1 The landscape quality and character of the countryside will be protected for its own sake. Proposals for development in the countryside should be sited and designed to have minimum adverse effect on the appearance of the landscape and should seek to positively contribute to its diverse character through tree planting and creation of hedgerows, deciduous woodlands and other wildlife habitats.

CL2 2.4.6 – ‘The County Structure Plan recognises that although in certain areas the landscapes of Mid Suffolk has a special quality, it does not attract national recognition in terms of National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (ANOB) status. These undesignated areas are particularly vulnerable to change. Mid Suffolk’s Structure Plan therefore seeks to protect additional areas of landscape by designating Special Landscape Areas (SLA’s). ‘

CL” 2.4.7 – ‘The criteria for Special Landscape Areas selection need to be kept under regular review. Traditional features, such as a pattern of small fields formed by hedges, ditches and ponds and intersperse with ancient woodland, give many parts of the District’s landscape an interest and variety that is worthy of conserving in its own right. It gives diversity of habitat that is essential for wildlife. Where these features combine with an interesting topography or as part of a river valley, they create a special quality of landscape in direct contrast to the more intensively farmed areas

where hedgerows and trees have been removed and the countryside has become featureless. Attention needs to be given to these areas through the control of development and countryside management.

CL 2.4.8 – They are worthy of special designation and using the Countryside Commissions recommended approach to landscape assessment, it is proposed they should become SLA's (Landscape Assessment – A Countryside Commission Approach, 1987)

CL2 2.4.9 – Wherever possible the District Planning Authority expects major utility installations, particularly power lines, to be located away from Special Landscape Areas because of their visual intrusion. Any proposals put forward by the utility companies eg. Gas, water and electricity suppliers, will need to demonstrate that more environmentally acceptable sites, routes or systems are not available. The feasibility of undergrounding power lines should be assessed taking a balanced view of the archaeological and ecological impact of undergrounding.

CL3 – Major Utility Installations and Power Lines in the Countryside

New major installations for utilities and power lines exceeding 33KV should be carefully sited to ensure minimal intrusion in the landscape. The feasibility of undergrounding electricity lines will be regarded as a material consideration.

Major woodlands, whether ancient or otherwise, are relatively few in the Plan area. The most significant woodlands are identified in the map shown. These woodlands make a significant contribution to the appearance and character of the landscape and will be safeguarded. Their contribution as wildlife habitats is also recognised.

## Objections on Historical Grounds

Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses when dealing with planning applications. Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the assets conservation; the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.

Barking has 25 listed buildings and the map of their location shows that they are very close and often included in the area of pylons. Some are just meters away so the visual intrusion will be overwhelming with a 50m high pylon so close. [Listed Buildings in Barking, Mid Suffolk, Suffolk](#)

|| Ashburnham Farmhouse, || Barn, 40 Metres North West of Overhall Farmhouse, || Bonneywood Farmhouse, || Browns Farmhouse, Bungeons Farmhouse, | Church of St Mary|| College Grove Farmhouse, || Fairfax House, || Former Stable Range 30 Metres West of Moat Farmhouse, || Home Farmhouse, || Lower Farmhouse, || Moat Farmhouse, || Mulletts Farmhouse, || Newton Cottages, || Overhall Farmhouse,|| Rectory Farmhouse, || The Fox Inn, || The Grange, || The Old Rectory, || The Old School House, || Timberleys, || Top Farmhouse, || Tye Farmhouse and || Walnut Tree Cottage

## Setting of listed buildings

[Fairfax House](#) has a unique and significant historic interest by its association with an historical figure. Fairfax House was originally known as Spalding House but was renamed after Reverend John Fairfax, the Rector of Needham Market who lived there until ejected in 1662 and imprisoned for his religious convictions. He was a cousin of General Fairfax who played a key role in the siege of Colchester.

Oliver Cromwell visited and stayed at the house. The land rises up to the front door of Fairfax House, and photographic evidence from the first floor of the adjoining property indicates that expansive views across the countryside and of the church are possible from within the listed building. The views are of attractive rolling landscape and incorporate the Grade I listed Church of St Mary approximately 500 – 600 metres away. The historical association of the house with a religious figure highlights the important significance of the church view to the setting and significance of Fairfax House. Large electricity pylons in the view would create significant harm to the historical association of the buildings.

The Old Rectory and St Mary's Church, Barking Both The Old Rectory and St Mary's Church are also important heritage assets,

**St Mary's Church** It is believed that Saxon villagers worshiped God from this site over a 1,000 years ago and there has been a Church on this site ever since. The original Church, probably of a wooden structure, was replaced in 1250 by a flint and rubble building, part of which still stands today. From 1350, there were two extensions to the Church. The square tower is the most prominent feature but as impressive, is its nave and chancel which was restored in 1905.

**The Old Rectory** Stands immediately adjacent to the Church, is the former Rectory a Grade II Listed elegant Georgian house. With a substantial southern façade, attractive curved main rooms and an octagonal hall, the property, which was built in 1819, has a distinctive character with these features being rare when compared to many Georgian buildings of a similar vintage. The house was built by an Ipswich architect who reportedly also built other substantial properties of a similar design in Norfolk, in the style of buildings designed by Sir John Soane including Shotesham Park. The gardens and grounds of the Old Rectory are intrinsically linked to the Church and include fine veteran trees including 3 fine Cedars of Lebanon which were believed to have been planted from seeds in the early 18th Century, a landmark in the local area. Within the Old Rectory boundary is a further historic feature believed to date from the 18th Century, which was originally constructed as a reservoir to Barking Hall. These two heritage assets have a setting which is cherished and appreciated by all who visit, particularly by the large number of local residents both in Needham market and Barking who use the footpaths to and from the site.

## **Ancient History in Barking**

An electromagnetic survey of The Tye in 2018 revealed a strong possibility of roundhouses in an enclosure. To the side there are the remains of a Roman Road. As you can see from this image any adjacent pylons will cause intrusive interruption of the ancient area.

## DSM lidar image of the Tye



Special Landscape Area map for Barking

[https://localplan.midsuffolk.gov.uk/images/locators/inset\\_006.jpg](https://localplan.midsuffolk.gov.uk/images/locators/inset_006.jpg)

