

HELEN GRANT MP



House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 7107

21st October 2015

Dear Marden Resident

Re: Solar Panel installations on agricultural land

In 2010 I made a pledge to the people of Maidstone & The Weald to do all I could to protect our precious countryside from inappropriate planning proposals. It was a promise I have kept and I am proud of my record, publicly opposing certain housing schemes and some commercial developments.

There are, of course, occasions when exceptional circumstances and economic arguments win the day, especially where contained development can preserve and create the jobs we need for the growth of the local economy. But there is one form of commercial green-field development that gives me great cause for concern and that is the placing of solar farms on Wealden agricultural land.

I am a supporter of renewable energy technologies and solar panels have their place, but not on the green fields of Kent. There are an estimated 250,000 acres of south facing roofs in the UK residential sector alone, not to mention a veritable sea of unused space on the roofs of commercial warehouses and other large buildings. In France they even use supermarket car parks; shade for cars and shoppers plus renewable energy from the panels – lovely solution.

An application has been made for 25 acres of panels and associated buildings at Widehurst Farm in Marden. 20,000 sheets of black glass in an area of great natural beauty, just by a well-trodden country footpath used by locals and ramblers a-plenty.

I am but one of Marden's residents, however, and it is your views that are paramount here. Overleaf is a short survey for completion and return to me in the freepost envelope enclosed, or email helen.grant.mp@parliament.uk and state your name and postcode on the email. I have randomly addressed this to one person from each household but by all means make copies for other family members. I will ensure that the results are duly conveyed to all relevant parties prior to a decision being taken.

I hope to hear from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Helen".

Member of Parliament for Maidstone & the Weald
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MP Outreach survey

**TAKE A MINUTE AND SHARE
YOUR VIEWS
WITH YOUR MP**

Do you feel that an application for a 25 acre solar farm on agricultural land at Widehurst Farm in Marden should be permitted?

Permitted Rejected Undecided

Please tell me your reasons;



A typical example of a solar installation on agricultural land – this one is at South Marston, Wilts.



The visual effect solar panels can have on countryside public footpaths



View of the existing site from the public footpath to the left of the proposed solar farm, looking south.



Satellite view of the location of the proposed panels at Widehurst Farm, Marden. Public footpaths shown in red.