# Residents of Norfolk village fear safety risks from UK’s largest battery storage plan



Residents of Rushall, a village near Diss in Norfolk, are expressing profound anxiety over plans for one of the UK's largest battery storage sites. Spearheaded by Elmya Energy, the proposal involves housing batteries in over 1,000 containers on farmland near the village. As the announcement of the Dodd's Wood project unfolds, local villagers are reportedly losing sleep due to concerns about safety and potential hazards associated with the facility.

Parish councillor Lisa Buck articulated the fears shared by many in the community, highlighting the "high risk" of fire incidents at such installations. Battery energy storage systems (BESS), which are designed to store excess energy from renewable sources like wind and solar, use lithium-ion batteries—components that have been associated with fire risks when overheating occurs. Past incidents, including a fire at a smaller BESS site in Liverpool in 2020 that demanded 59 hours of fire-fighting, have amplified these worries. Similarly, a blaze at a massive site in California was allowed to burn out on the advice of fire experts.

Buck stated that since details of the project emerged last month, locals have been "terrified," and the uncertainty surrounding the development has not only disrupted their peace but also raised significant safety concerns. Fellow villager Nigel Webber shared his desire to support renewable energy projects but was alarmed by the implications of having such a facility in a remote area, questioning how emergency services would respond effectively to any incidents. He remarked, “We're talking about one of the most dangerous, volatile, reactive elements on the planet.”

In contrast to the villagers’ concerns, Elmya Energy has defended the project, claiming it would store enough power to supply 60,000 homes for up to three days, thereby making a "significant contribution to energy security." The facility's planned capacity of 900MW and its placement in 1,035 large containers would make it substantially larger than existing battery storage sites, such as the Drax facility in Yorkshire.

James Innes, the development director for Elmya, has reassured the community by stating that safety remains the company’s "paramount" priority. He indicated that they would adhere to guidelines from the National Fire Chiefs Council and have been actively collecting feedback from the local population, which encompasses around 1,140 homes. This participatory approach aims to refine the project design before the company submits its planning application.

The intersection of renewable energy expansion and community safety concerns encapsulates a growing dilemma faced across the UK, as increased investments in solar and wind energy demand greater capacity for energy storage. As projects like Elmya's come to light, it is vital to balance the need for sustainable energy solutions with the necessity of ensuring public safety and securing community support.

Residents await further developments with trepidation, hoping that their voices will be heard in the planning and implementation processes that could reshape their village’s future.

### Reference Map

* Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gk8zxg20yo)
* Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gk8zxg20yo)
* Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gk8zxg20yo)
* Paragraph 4: [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gk8zxg20yo)
* Paragraph 5: [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gk8zxg20yo)
* Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gk8zxg20yo)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gk8zxg20yo> - Please view link - unable to able to access data