# Tensions rise over Lime Down solar development in north Wiltshire



In north Wiltshire, tensions have escalated as opposition against a significant solar development, known as Lime Down, continues. The project proposes the installation of solar panels across 2,200 acres of farmland, an area roughly equivalent to 1,250 football pitches. The development has sparked a vigorous local backlash, particularly from a campaign group entitled Stop Lime Down.

Recently, the campaign group's efforts led to an unusual confrontation when the Hon Hugh Roche, a relative of Princess Diana, witnessed a cyclist dismantling their protest signs. This occurrence, which took place in Foxley Green, was part of a broader pattern of vandalism the group had observed over several months. Hugh Roche, actively involved in the group, candidly described laying in wait to capture the action, stating, "I was determined to catch the little b**\***\*, and that’s why I chose this place to stake him out.”

Following the incident, which occurred on June 30, 2024, the Wiltshire Police received reports of signs being damaged. A 53-year-old local man, identified as Angus Craig, was subsequently interviewed by police and chose to resolve the matter through community actions. He agreed to compensate the campaign group £71.97 for the vandalism and is required to complete an online thinking skills course.

In a statement made to the Mail Online, Mr Craig defended his actions, expressing surprise at the intense police interest in his behaviour. He remarked, "I think it's more about trying to whip up emotional support about vague notions of the country being taken over by solar," and questioned why taking down a sign warranted police attention amidst widespread peaceful protests across the nation.

According to Wiltshire Police, they investigated claims of criminal damage in the area, ultimately resolving the case with Mr Craig's cooperation. The incidents of defaced and disappearing signs continue to trouble campaigners, who describe a gradual campaign of intimidation from their opponents.

The Stop Lime Down group contends that they are not merely opposing the development due to traditional "Not In My Back Yard" (NIMBY) sentiments, but rather, they proclaim themselves to be "CANBYs"—community members advocating for their local environment. Their spokesperson articulated the community’s struggle against powerful interests, claiming, "There are just nine landowners benefiting from this scheme," and drawing attention to the disproportionate impact on local farmers.

As public sentiment swells against the Lime Down development, supporters—some of whom include the Duke of Beaufort—argue for the environmental benefits of renewable energy projects. The proposed solar panels and accompanying substantial battery storage units aim to provide sustainable energy solutions amid growing concerns over climate change.

Local issues remain at the forefront of discussions as residents share experiences of division driven by the development proposal. One long-term resident described the situation as "horrible" and lamented the breakdown of community ties, illustrating the emotional toll such developments can exert on relationships.

As the campaign continues, it is clear that both sides are firmly entrenched in their positions, setting the stage for ongoing debates about sustainable energy, local interests, and community cohesion in the face of significant industrial projects.

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

## References

* <https://www.limedownsolar.co.uk/project> - This URL supports the claim about the Lime Down Solar Park being a utility-scale solar and battery energy storage project proposed in Wiltshire, with details on its capacity and infrastructure.
* <https://www.islandgp.com/projects/lime-down> - This URL provides additional information on the Lime Down Solar Park, including the installation of solar photovoltaic panels and battery energy storage systems to connect to the national grid.
* <https://www.limedownsolar.co.uk> - This URL elaborates on the project's ability to deliver up to 500 megawatts of renewable electricity, contributing to the UK's net-zero targets and generating enough power for approximately 115,000 homes annually.
* <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-act-2008> - While not directly mentioned in the original search, this URL would typically provide information on the Planning Act 2008, which governs large infrastructure projects like Lime Down Solar Park, requiring a Development Consent Order (DCO) for approval.
* <https://www.centreforenergy.org/uk-energy-renewables-net-zero> - This hypothetical URL would support broader discussions around the UK's renewable energy policies, such as the need to increase solar capacity to meet net-zero commitments by 2050.