

GOLD RUSH IN THE WILD WEST

(Letter to North Devon Journal & North Devon Gazette 21.5.25)

Dear Sirs

Following on from the recent appalling decision by NDC planning committee to approve the White Cross onshore cable route application I'm writing to express my dismay, anger and frustration at this result.

Our online petition objecting to this project has in excess of 3800 signatures and the planning portal objections number 1865.
(Supporters just 40)

As our MP Ian Roome said in his statement to us just last year before he got elected, this proposal is the biggest threat to Saunton since the D-Day landings.

Neither I nor any of the members of Save Our Sands can grasp why so many immaterial considerations were brought into discussion at the meeting two weeks ago. Talk of supply chain benefits, major economic uplift for the region, and vast numbers of jobs were all quoted. When in fact the meeting should've been entirely about just the cable route nothing more nothing less.

Similarly it was incredibly uncomfortable to watch the two councillors who dared to speak out and challenge the application
(Simon Maddocks and Glyn Lane) being berated by planning manager Tracey Blackmore and also disallowed from putting forward a deferral of the application.

This meeting was meant to be democracy in action, however it felt anything but.

More like a tick box exercise for a firm hellbent on exploiting our local area for their own commercial gain.

Save Our Sands is now affiliated with Save Our Bays - a campaign group in Cornwall, who have been successful in their campaign to fight commercial exploitation of their bays from seaweed farming.

There is a growing trend of exploitation of the South West and it's coast for commercial gain/ exploitation from emerging tech whilst disregarding local communities.

Despite the committee's decision, local people and businesses will continue to object to the deeply flawed White Cross onshore cable route.

And also to the way in which the committee meeting was conducted especially in regards to those democratically elected councillors who dared to speak up for their constituents, and were effectively silenced by an unelected official.

This is not democracy as we know it or want it to be.
We are not NIMBYs - far from it

We know we need to decarbonise - but not at any cost.

We want the whole of the South West and its coastal communities to have a fair voice in the discussion around how and where all the uses of its vast natural wealth, which are currently in planning stage (eg the larger Celtic Sea projects behind Whitecross) take place. Because currently there is a bidding war going on and the market is being given free rein while communities are being ridden over roughshod. It's the Wild West and prospectors abound - there's a gold rush on.

But it's not right. There are existing livelihoods and businesses who haven't been properly consulted here in North Devon, and if we don't object to this treatment it will get doled out again and again.

We deserve better. We demand better.

Save Our Sands now has a website and I would encourage anyone with the slightest interest to visit it to find out more about the situation and our position:

www.saveoursands.co.uk

Thank you

Helen Cooper

Save Our Sands