

A plea to get writing (again!)



Dear campaign supporters,

As many of you are now probably aware, National Grid issued [revised plans](#) for the Sea Link project at the end of November. Despite widespread condemnation of its proposals, they haven't changed substantially and it still intends to build a 28-metre-high, 90,000-square-metre (nine hectares) electricity converter station on Minster Marshes, with the cable coming onshore through Pegwell Bay.

It quietly opened a further consultation period on these revisions, which closes on Sunday, January 12, but didn't publicly announce it and only requested feedback from "affected persons with an interest in the land", which it defines very narrowly. We believe it should consult all stakeholders who are impacted by its proposals – everyone who lives, works or enjoys the natural environment at Pegwell Bay and Minster Marshes.

Its plans still include using the former hoverport as an access route to Pegwell Bay, despite Thanet District Council refusing it permission. It has also moved the mitigation area to a field three miles away, opposite Discovery Park industrial estate in Sandwich. This is entirely unsuitable – it is not functionally linked to Pegwell Bay, is not marshland and is surrounded by industry on all sides. In short, it is a sop and will provide no ecological mitigation to the devastation National Grid's cable and converter station would cause.

We all need to continue to urge privately-owned National Grid to rethink Sea Link and relocate the infrastructure for the grid upgrade.

Our campaign has always been strongly supported by Sir Roger Gale, MP for Herne Bay and Sandwich, and we are delighted to see that East Thanet's new MP, Polly Billington, has come out strongly in support, too.

In an email to a constituent, Ms Billington said: *"I am campaigning hard to get National Grid to rethink the Sea Link project ... I am concerned about the potential for this project to cause irreversible damage to nature in Pegwell Bay and Minster Marshes. The bay is home to Kent's largest population of seals, while the marshes provide a vital habitat for a variety of protected species such as the golden plover, beavers and water vole. This is a vital wildlife corridor and nationally important ecosystem that we risk disrupting at our peril."*

Rob Smith recently interviewed Adrian Pierssene from National Grid about the Sea Link project for Kent Wildlife Trust's podcast Walk on the Wild Side, which you can listen to [here](#).

Emma Waller of Kent Wildlife Trust also said: *"There appear to be several options for Sea Link, yet the current plans will cause significant disturbance to wildlife at a site with multiple statutory conservation designations that should be protected. This includes Minster Marshes, the proposed converter and substation site, which has been identified as [functionally linked land](#), providing important foraging and roosting grounds for bird species at Pegwell Bay. Once this wildlife is lost, it is gone forever, so we would strongly urge National Grid to 'Rethink Sea Link' and consider the other options available."*

While we have not been invited to share our thoughts on the new proposals, we'll be letting National Grid know what we think and we hope you will, too!

And finally, if you hadn't noticed, we have a new Facebook [Save Minster Marshes Campaign page](#)! Please like and follow for the latest updates.

Thank you as always for your continued support.

Save Minster Marshes campaign steering committee