

Buffer Zones. (Reg. No.: 20054148)

As a resident of Bladon I am here to discuss the conditions that should be considered by the planning inspectorate re the proposal for the Botley West Solar fields. Those conditions are to expand & to substantially increase the buffer zones around domestic properties.

My property is one of the most affected houses in the area & abuts the solar field section 2.28 on the proposed plan. Currently the buffer zones around Bladon range from 25m-80m. An earlier statement from the developers has allowed me a 45m BZ which is totally inadequate & random. They have offered in mitigation to provide some landscaping & planting which will take years to grow & will never hide the wonderful aspects we currently enjoy. The visual amenity to those affected properties, & especially mine, will be totally compromised.

Living near solar farms requires considering factors like panel types, local laws, environmental & health impacts.

Recommendations vary, but buffer zones around 500 meters for large-scale and 200 meters for small-scale solar farms are common. Potential issues include glare, electromagnetic fields, and environmental impact, such as air quality and fire hazards let alone mental health problems associated with the claustrophobic proximity of the panels.

There needs to be not only a local ruling but a National framework set up by the Government & Planning Inspectorate with agreements & conditions to protect householders from the proximity of these solar panels &, importantly, to give Developers certain parameters & boundaries within which they can plan & arrange their projects which actually may result in less impact on communities & certainly less opposition from affected homeowners.

At the moment it's like the Wild West out there with many different developers not only competing for huge swathes of self-devalued agricultural land but also having free rein to install panels right up to the edge of domestic boundaries. Their sole aim is not altruistic but totally for financial gain with no consideration for residents. Why should their investment be any more important than that of the affected householder?

I therefore propose that Buffer Zones for the Botley West sites, in accordance with international agreements is to be set at a minimum of 500m from any domestic boundary. With this particular application it would only take out less than 2% of the total area. I imagine their contingency would undoubtedly be up to the margins of 10%, so well within a competent business plan.

I would also like to emphasize the detrimental impact of the installation of the solar panels. Each panel will be supported by large steel land screws up to 2.0m in length. The majority of the terrain for the proposed project is laid on a solid bedrock which not only means a huge amount of noise pollution in drilling through the rock but also that the steel screws will rust & fuse with the stone & will therefore, not only contaminate the land from the very start, but will be virtually impossible to remove. There could be up to 10 million screws supporting 2.5m panels. This will ensure that the affected land will never revert back to farmland again & will become an industrial wasteland.

My final point is that our property enjoys many aspects of wildlife, particularly deer runs, badgers, bats, owls, larks, pheasants & migratory birds all of which will be affected by the panels & associated restrictions & fencing. There seems to have been very little local research into the adverse affect on the wildlife but an extended buffer zone would be an enormous help to mitigate the onerous effects of the solar panels.