

## Raywood, Simon

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**From:** dermot magee [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 30 May 2025 17:31  
**To:** Botley West Solar Farm  
**Subject:** Additional Written Representation - Registration Identification No. 20054922  
**Attachments:** Canada Geese feeding in the field next door. .jpg; Access Road to Jericho Farm Barns.jpg; Flooded Ditches & Culvert.jpg

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Dear Sirs

I would like to add further comments to my earlier submission, in part because my previous comments to PVDP were ignored, but also my frustration at being unable to elicit specific responses to my questions which I made to the representatives from PVDP at the 4 public consultation events I attended which were organised by the applicant. I'm not very hopeful I will receive the answers to my concerns which I believe were reasonable but nevertheless wish to make my comments known to the Inspectorate. My comments cover the following. Scale and Proximity, Impact on residents of Construction, Increased Flood Risk in Worton and Protection of Wildlife.

1. Scale & Proximity: I understand this will be one of the largest solar farms in the world if approved and it would seem very strange that it is to be located in close proximity to Oxford City and Blenheim Palace given the status of both around the world. It is therefore very strange that no alternative sites have been proposed by PVDP even though they would be very conscious of the negative impact on the communities affected which will be significant and span generations of people who live and work in the areas affected. It appears to me that PVDP's motive to enter into a partnership with Blenheim is the prize of a large agricultural estate which will generate greater cash returns for them whether held under lease or sold on to another operator. It is perhaps less astonishing that Blenheim Palace/Estates are eager to accept their proposal and lease their large estates to PVDP given the significant stream of cash that will come to them over the projected 40 years of the project's lifetime. Clearly, the risk to the reputations of The Palace and Unesco is also not a big concern and one can only conclude that they are dismissive of the potential loss of perfectly good agricultural land and the cancellation of the leases to tenant farmers. However I'm sure they have a fallback position if the land becomes unusable for agricultural purposes, given they can switch to house building which they currently operate on a modest scale but will be able to scale up in the future if this proves to be necessary. In my opinion there is a real need for alternative sites to become part of the examination and in addition a more in depth assessment of whether PVDP is a responsible partner given their lack of honesty and clarity to the communities affected. I believe both these issues should be examined and clarified by the Inspectorate before granting consent to develop this solar farm.

2. Construction & Maintenance Impact: Anyone who has lived through a construction project within their neighbourhood will be very well acquainted with the constant noise from machinery, frequent heavy goods vehicles travelling through their neighbourhood that seems to go on for an eternity. The disruption to their peace and enjoyment, dust and disputes etc usually manifests

itself in frustration as driveways, streets and areas in close proximity to the site become clogged with traffic and unsightly debris from the movement of equipment. Often they continue after the construction has been completed. Many residents will be frustrated by the box ticking approach of their local planning departments who either ignore the objections made by residents or justify the approval of development by stating it is necessary and will only be temporary and will revert to normal when the project is concluded. Nothing could be further from the truth and if Botley West Solar Farm is approved the experience of having to put up with any local neighbourhood project will pale into insignificance compared to the disruption that will occur to all the neighbourhoods affected by the sea of solar panels in their area. If Botley West Solar Farm is allowed to proceed in its current scale I believe we will be faced with a timetable between 2- 3 years of noise, disruption etc., assuming it remains in the ownership of the present applicant. At the end of which all the locations affected will have changed immeasurably and the current views and lifestyle will change forever and many residents will seek to move if that is possible, thereby destroying the fabric of the villages affected. The claim by PVDP and Blenheim that they are motivated to contribute to a cleaner energy environment source beggars belief and is disingenuous. Both expect to generate wealth for their respective stakeholders and local impacts are simply an irritation to be overcome by whatever means. In my own environment the intention is to locate solar panels in the field running parallel to our house and garden, with a gap of only 4 metres from the east facing wall of our house to the boundary of the field (2.60 on PVDP maps). This field of panels will cover an area of approx.7 acres and effectively destroy my present outlook, regardless of any screening proposed by PVDP. Furthermore, an even larger field of approx. 11 acres which runs easterly and parallel to field 2.60 on PVDP's map with a higher elevation than my home and will also be in full view. Should the applicant be given additional compulsory powers to allow cabling etc across my land it will be a further concern. This potential threat in the affected areas will also be a concern that many homeowners will be faced with if the project is approved. Promises made verbally by PVDP that solar panels would not be sited close to residential housing have no certainty and can be changed or broken at will depending on the moral fibre of the party making the promises. Screening to limit the visual impact is without much merit as they will take up to 10 years to develop, any planting is likely to be deciduous and therefore expose homeowners to the panels for at least 6-7 months every year. I believe the Inspectorate should investigate exactly the level of privacy and protection that will be afforded to residential properties in close proximity.

3. Increased Flood Risk In Worton: Worton has a history of surface water flooding that is documented in records held by West Oxfordshire District Council and Cassington Parish Council and also included in The Neighbourhood Plan adopted by WODC. Surface water flooding has occurred in 2008/9, 2014/15, 2021 and last year 2024 due to heavy rainfall cascading from Spring Hill to the Cassington Yarnton road. Drainage is poor due to the presence of Oxford Clay resulting in ditches becoming overwhelmed and flooding gardens in the area (see photograph of effect on my property last year). Ditches are not maintained by the owner of the field that borders my property and we are obliged to undertake the work at our own expense to protect our property. Groundwater sits at between 1.1m -1.3m during spring/summer but reduces to 0.9M in the autumn and winter period. West Oxfordshire District Council last year approved the construction of a large basement in a neighbouring property and ignored the professional advice submitted and the objections of all the neighbours who are worried it will add to increased flood risk. These concerns of increased flooding are heightened by the potential risk of additional flooding created by rainwater cascading off panels and pooling in channels to the ditches. In my view the Inspectorate should look at this area where a flooding history exists and exclude it to remove the risk to residential properties or at least insist that the applicant undertakes independent hydrology tests in such areas where flooding history exists to prove the extent of the risk and the corrective action that would be taken before the panels are installed.

4. Protection of Wildlife: We are very fortunate to live in a rural environment that is home to a huge amount of wildlife, in addition to garden birds, we have migrating Canada Geese feeding in the neighbouring field, Muntjac, Bats, and Invertebrates, such as Butterflies. Why is the examination by the Inspectorate not including Ecology within the assessment and examining how the applicant intends to protect the habitats of wildlife when constructing a large swathe of solar panels which may cause irreparable damage to their habitats. I understand the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 protects a wide range of species and am concerned this is being left off the list and overlooked. I would respectfully request the Inspectorate include this on the list of items to be examined.

Yours faithfully

Dermot Magee





