Raywood, Simon

From:

Sent:08 June 2025 17:29To:Botley West Solar FarmCc:contact@stopbotleywest.com

Subject:Request for an Accompanied Site InspectionAttachments:Reeves Cottage - View from Garden.jpg

You don't often get email from

Dear Inspectors,

I would very much like to request an Accompanied Site Inspection to my property which is situated very close to the proposed Botley West Solar Farm.

My details:



Contact telephone: Contact email:

Our house sits just a few metres away from the edge of one of the proposed solar panel fields. This particular field, known locally here as 'The Prairie' (100 acres) - due to its dominance and size stretches up a slope for a kilometre and can be viewed from many miles around (from the footpath that runs alongside it, walkers can easily view Woodstock Church and Blenheim's 'Victory Column'). We are part of a tight-knit community of 9 households that will be totally enveloped on one side by this proposed development. The hamlet itself sits at the bottom of a charming vale that leads up towards the nearby town of Woodstock. Within the hamlet there are a series of connected ponds that contain a profusion of Great Crested Newts (the proposed development stretches right down to the edge of these ponds). The hamlet also sits at the midpoint of two popular circular walks that include commanding views over the vale. These footpaths are used extensively by those living in Woodstock and were very much a lifeline during the pandemic. These plans (impacting a number of fields in our immediate vicinity) will totally transform our hamlet idyll and the footpaths around it. To add insult to injury, the developers are proposing to carve a track between two of these fields so that they can lay a cable connection between them. This track would obliterate this ancient footpath that currently winds its way via a charming tunnel of mature hedgerows and trees and is a haven for a wide variety of birds (using a bird identifying app – 12 different species of bird were identified within just 2 minutes of walking along this track).

Our hamlet/vale contains a plethora of wildlife including: Barn Owls, Bats, Kestrels, Badgers, Red Kites (at least 6 roosting pairs), Yellow Hammers, Swallows (annual visitors to their nests in various barns), Herons, Fieldfares, Skylarks, Cuckoos, Sparrowhawks etc etc. It is also home to deer, muntjac's and hares. I understand that the proposed fields for development are high grade arable (our local farmer has transformed them over many years from poor to high yielding land), indeed, when a

member of an archaeological team were digging here recently, one of them mentioned that the land was heaving with worms; something he said that was an increasingly rare sight these days.

In reference to the developers' proposal document paragraph 6.3.20 in regard to "significant adverse effects on the views experienced by users of public rights of way", there is tellingly no mention of the views down across the vale from the footpath on the top ridge of the 'The Prairie' field. I say "tellingly" as it appears that the developers have made little to no effort to see what devastating impact this development will have upon us and the folk of Woodstock. Indeed, when I first spoke to at one of the consultations, he had no idea that our hamlet even existed and was unable to point it out on a map. Likewise, when I first contacted the developers in January 2023, I was assured that: " ... the current plan provides significant buffer zones in areas close to roads, nearby properties and other sensitive receptors. Furthermore, the project will be considering refining buffers to residential properties, and these plans will be updated and presented at the second phase of consultation" However, the plans for the surrounding fields still do not contain any suggestion of buffers or any other form of amelioration. It is also worth mentioning that when interviewed by the "Oxford Clarion" in March, claimed that "... we've been to the top of the Column Of Victory at Blenheim Palace and you cannot see any of our panels from anywhere within the park wall". As I have already mentioned above, this is blatantly not true regarding the 'Prairie' field and beyond.

There is also the issue of noise during construction: For the creation of the 20 acre solar park on the nearby old Banbury Road (over a kilometre away), the noise from pile-driving was clearly heard clanging over the vale and into the outskirts of Woodstock for weeks on end ... and that was just for a 20 acre site. We will have 130 acres (larger than The Vatican!) right on our doorstep ... for what one must presume will be many months.

There is also the impact of one proposed solar field upon another nearby popular walk, as well as its obscene proximity right next to the ancient and wonderful 'common' allotment "Weaveley Furze" which has become a woodland and wildlife haven maintained and enjoyed by the local community (as it has for 100's of years).

Finally, light aircraft from the local airport regularly fly right over our hamlet, where they often practice 'engine cut' emergency measures. As I'm sure that you are aware, glint and glare hinders pilots' ability to clearly see the ground, other aircraft etc, making it difficult to navigate and land safely (especially in regard to EFATO – Engine Failure After Take Off). Helicopters (including Air ambulances) regularly fly around us for training purposes (they use two very tall trees within the hamlet for visual navigation). Again, this activity would become extremely hazardous due to glint and glare factors and EFATO. The army also uses the airspace directly above us for Chinooks.

I have attached a photo with the view from our garden of the nearby (10 metres away) 100 acres field as referred to above.

Thank you for your time in considering this and I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

All my best,

