

Raywood, Simon

From: Martin Oldfield [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 June 2025 11:50
To: Botley West Solar Farm
Cc: Susan Oldfield
Subject: Request for an Accompanied Site Visit
Attachments: Susan Oldfield RR 20053368.pdf; Martin Oldfield 1 RR 20053261.pdf; Martin Oldfield 2 RR 20053261.pdf; view N with airport.JPG; View NW with bridleway.JPG; View1 SW.JPG; View2 SW.JPG

Dear Inspectors,

We would like to request an Accompanied Site Visit to our property which is adjacent to the proposed Botley West Solar farm.

Names:

Susan Oldfield: Registration number 20053368

Martin Oldfield: Registration number 20053261

Address: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

We would like to invite you to come to our home, on an Accompanied Site Visit. It is one of the houses on which the proposed Botley West Solar Farm would have the most negative impact. Our home is surrounded by some of the threatened fields and our outlook would be ruined from our garden and almost all our windows. Please note that our living room is upstairs.

We have set out our situation in more detail in our Relevant Representations which we have attached here, along with some further photographs taken from our garden.

The surrounding fields are essential to the setting of our home, but they are also of great importance to all who live in Begbroke and the wider community. The bridleway between Begbroke and Bladon runs through our garden and across the fields you can see in the photographs. It is used by countless walkers, runners and cyclists every day, individually and in groups. It links with the ancient footpath which connects the church in Bladon with St. Michael's Church here in Begbroke, and the Begbroke Conservation area, creating a much loved, circular walk.

We would be most grateful if you could come and see our property for yourselves.

Susan and Martin Oldfield

Prof. Martin Oldfield

Registration Number 20053261

25th January 2025

Dear Inspectors

I wish to register my strong opposition to the Botley West Solar Farm project proposed by Photovolt (PVDP).

I agree with the Stop Botley West campaign and support their well substantiated objections to the Botley West scheme. Here are some of the main reasons why the solar farm project should not be permitted:

- The reports recently published by PVDP are very misleading and are incorrect on a number of issues.
- The project destroys the use of good agricultural land needed to sustain UK food supplies. Local fields have yielded excellent crops of wheat, hay, barley and oilseed rape, all needed.
- 75% of the proposed solar farm would be in the green belt. It would destroy valuable Green Belt land, essential for sustaining the local environment and amenity and recreational use for the Oxford area. The report completely ignores the visual impact of the panels.
- Blenheim is a national heritage site, and has a responsibility to maintain the rural nature of the surrounding countryside. The reasons for destroying this greenbelt land by PVDP do not meet the "very special circumstances" required.
- London Oxford Airport is designated a nationally ~Safeguarded Airport" with a statutory obligation to ensure that its operation is not inhibited by developments. The solar farm on the airfield approaches would reduce the safety of aircraft through glint, glare, possible electrical interference and the lack of emergency landing areas. The report severely underestimates these problems.

- The place for solar panels is surely on the roofs of buildings, such as in the massive housing estates being built in the area, not on valuable agricultural green belt land!
- The PVDP proposal does not examine alternative sites for this huge 3200-acre expanse with 2.3 million solar panels. The proposed scheme is too large and in the wrong place.
- The local environment of the 11,000 houses within 1 mile of the proposed solar farm and 16 surrounding villages would be ruined.
- There is a considerable flood risk in much of the site, especially surrounding Spring Hill above Begbroke, Yarnton and Cassington.
- There would be considerable impact on the local wildlife, who will be severely restricted by the impenetrable fencing surrounding the solar arrays.
- My house is next to many of the fields and will suffer from glint and glare. The suggestion that only ground level view should be considered is far too limited. We have upstairs rooms which look out on these fields. Our surroundings would be ruined!
- The financial backing behind the scheme is opaque, as described recently in Private Eye. It depends on a complex financial structure using Russian money. Most of the profits would go overseas, not to the UK.

I strongly oppose the Botley West Solar Farm project.

Martin Oldfield

Registration identification number: 20053261

26th February 2025

Dear Planning Inspectorate,

I am submitting here further comments in addition to those I submitted on 25/01/2025.

We live at the [REDACTED] surrounded by many of the fields which would be covered with solar panel arrays proposed by the Botley West scheme. Below I have attached photos of some of these fields taken from our windows, along with mock-ups of how these views would appear with solar panel arrays in place. As you can see, this would be disastrous for us, and our local, much prized, environment would be ruined!

While this might appear as special pleading for our particular case, please remember that this monstrous project will also adversely affect 11,000 other local households.





Yours sincerely,
Martin Oldfield

Susan Oldfield

Registration Number 20053368

25th January 2025

Dear Inspectors

I wish to register my deep opposition to the proposed Botley West Solar Farm. There are many reasons for which this scheme should be rejected, and here are some of my major concerns.

Size and Location

It should be noted that PVDP (the developers) never offered consideration of alternative sites. Indeed, their consultation process was perfunctory, and they did not respond seriously to the concerns raised by local residents.

The proposed site would be 11 miles long and 4 miles wide. It would occupy 3,200 acres, of good arable land, and it would involve over 2 million solar panels. It would negatively affect over 11,000 homes, in and around 16 villages. This is a rural area, but highly populated and much visited, and the solar panels and high security fences would be visible for miles around.

Our home would be particularly badly affected, as it is bordered directly by some of the threatened fields. PVDP admit that mitigation would be required, but what they propose would be entirely ineffective as they consider viewpoints only from the ground floor. Our living room and bedrooms are upstairs and have windows directly onto what would be a ruined landscape. PVDP also acknowledge that we would be significantly affected by glint and glare from the panels. These negative impacts do not include the noise and disruption we would endure during installation of the panels, nor the devastated view that would be inherited by future occupants of our house, if they were ever to be removed (40 years?). Our home would be particularly damaged, but this is only a special case of the harm that is threatened to so many dwellings.

Impact on People

Residents would be badly affected but so, also, would be the very many people who daily use the footpaths and bridleways that cross this area.

We live next to the bridleway that runs from Begbroke to Bladon, and witness its constant use. Users include: walkers, daily, with and without dogs; family groups; school groups;

walking groups, walking for health; people following the Shakespeare Way, of which this path is a part; cyclists; riders; and people using this route on their way to and from work. Some users are local, some come from Oxford city and beyond. All benefit from and enjoy the open countryside. It would be pitiful if these walks were fenced in by high security barriers and the views beyond spoiled.

Impact on Wildlife

The threatened land includes productive farmland, ancient woodlands, water meadows, hedgerows and trees. It is home to deer, hares, badgers, foxes, rabbits and many smaller creatures. They cross it by well-established corridors and can roam freely. They are frequently to be seen and are much enjoyed. Their habitat would be destroyed by the solar farm scheme and the security fences.

This area is also rich in birdlife. Buzzards, red kites and kestrel, as well as larks, soar over the fields, and the woods and hedges are home to countless smaller birds. Barn owls nest in the tree above our house and regularly breed there. There were three successful owlets this year. The habitats of all these birds are under threat. The birds themselves are also endangered by the reflecting, glazed panels.

Intrusion into the Green Belt, and Waste of Good, Agricultural Land

At least 75% of the proposed solar farm is sited on Green Belt land. No "very special circumstances" have been established for this intrusion, although such evidence would be required. Green Belt Land is increasingly precious around Oxford city as so much has already been claimed for extensive house-building. We clearly cannot afford to lose any more. Apart from the loss of amenity and well-being involved, a recent CPRE report demonstrated that arable land near to cities produces a disproportionate amount of essential foodstuff.

Furthermore, the area in question is good, productive arable land. At least 45% of it is evaluated as "best and most versatile land", and all of it is fertile and useful, producing fine crops of oats, wheat and barley, and oilseed rape, as well as pasture for sheep and cattle. Our food security is as essential as our energy security and we must protect this vital resource.

Issues concerning Energy Supply and Security

Solar farms are a very inefficient way of generating electricity. They struggle with issues of our climate, technical short-comings, and difficulties of connecting to the grid, involving miles of cables and other infrastructure, all, also, detrimental to the landscape. We do need green energy, and solar panels may play their part, but they would be much better located on rooftops. Vast numbers of houses are being built in Oxfordshire. Equipping them with

solar panels would be efficient and effective, and would not involve the sacrifice of further green fields.

The hypocrisy of Blenheim in this regard should be noted. They jealously protect their beautiful acres, within their walls, while being prepared to sacrifice land for which they are equally responsible, but which is further from the palace. They also invest in large house-building projects, but do not require solar panels on the roofs.

There are questions, also, I believe, as to whether Blenheim's willingness to ruin the surrounding countryside undermines its World Heritage Site status and the advantages that affords, as a charity? It has responsibilities to the historic setting as well as to the palace and its park themselves.

Funding Issues

The financial backing for the scheme raises serious questions, as discussed recently in Private Eye and elsewhere. It involves a complex financial structure, designed to obscure its origins, including significant Russian investment. This raises the possibility of a threat to our national infrastructure and security, as well as ensuring that the expected profits would go overseas.

Increased Flood Risk

The proposed solar farm would cause severely increased risk from flooding. This is significant across the site, but particularly affects the villages of Cassington, Yarnton and Begbroke. These are located around Spring Hill and they are, already, frequently badly affected by floods. Solar panels on the fields above these villages would greatly increase this problem.

Aviation Issues

London Oxford Airport is designated a "safeguarded airport", with a statutory obligation to ensure that its safe operation is not impeded by developments in its vicinity. Solar panels in the fields south of the runway would reduce the safety of aircraft in several ways:

- dangers afforded by "glint and glare"

- potential electrical interference with radar and communication devices

- the removal of safe landing space in the event of an emergency e.g. engine failure on take-off (EFATO)

The airport is the base for several aviation training schools, and trainee pilots regularly practice emergency engine failure routines above these fields. They are required to be able to select a safe landing area, if they should need it. Recently, an aircraft did make such an emergency landing, in a field near Begbroke. This field was one of those selected to be part of the solar farm.

The fields fenced in around the solar arrays would also be hard to access by emergency services, if needed. They would also be a danger to rescue crews, if they had to enter damaged installations.

Conclusion

The claimed potential benefits of this scheme are by far outweighed by the inevitable damage to people, the landscape, the valuable agricultural land, the airport. Indeed, to the quality of life of all those affected, near and far.

For all these reasons, I strongly oppose the Botley West Solar Farm project.

Susan Oldfield







