

From: [REDACTED]@bbowt.org.uk>
Sent: 24 June 2025 13:39
To: Botley West Solar Farm
Subject: Botley West ExQ1

Dear Sir / Madam,

Please find below the answer from the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust to question 1.8.14 of the Examining Authority's First Written Questions for the Botley West Solar Farm Development Consent Order application.

Q 1.8.14

BBOWT answer

The question states that the proposed development is in close proximity to watercourses, proposes HDD underneath major watercourses and involves transformative proposals along waterways. As this is the case, we consider that surveys should be carried out for water voles, fish and otters as the proposals could have a significant impact on local populations.

The crossing of watercourses/ditches could have a significant impact, even if HDD is being used and the developer has plans to manage bentonite breakouts. If they don't know where water vole burrows are bentonite breakouts could significantly affect them. By doing surveys the developer could locate burrows and select routes to avoid them. Therefore, surveys should be undertaken in advance to know roughly where water voles are present/absent, population densities, etc to help inform where cable should/shouldn't go. The same principle applies to otters. If there was to be a bentonite breakout any water voles wouldn't stand a chance if bentonite entered their burrows.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]
Director of External Affairs & Landscape Recovery
Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust



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