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Cassington Parish Council IP 20055026

Accompanied Site Visits

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing on behalf of Cassington Parish Council to request an Accompanied Site Inspection of Cassington Playing Field, Elms Road and footpath 152/6/10, known locally as The Track, as part of the Botley West examination process.

Please refer to the RR from Cassington Parish Council on this matter as it outlines key issues in detail, but in summary, there are three key concerns which, in our view, make a site visit essential:

1. Flooding Risk

Cassington Playing Field and the surrounding houses on the eastern side of Elms Road have a history of significant flooding, and there are local concerns about how the proposed development is likely to exacerbate this problem, particularly given the increased runoff rate from solar panels, the low-lying nature of the playing fields and Elms Road below hills to the north and proximity to watercourses. A site visit would allow the examining authority to appreciate the local topography and better understand the potential impacts on drainage and flood risk as outlined both in the Cassington Village Relevant Representation and the report provided to Cassington Parish Council by GWP Consultants (Clive Carpenter) submitted as evidence to the Enquiry for the 4th June Deadline for Written Representations.



Figure 1 A/B Flooding on Elms Road and the Playing Field car park September, 2024. Four properties were flooded on Elms Road in this event, a repeat of flooding in 2007.

2. Landscape and Visual Impact

The playing field offers open views across the surrounding landscape, which are highly valued by the local community. There is wide-ranging concern that the proposed solar development would significantly alter these views, encroach on a valued community asset and affect the recreational and visual amenity of the area especially in winter. An on-site inspection would provide necessary context to assess the degree of visual intrusion that may result from the proposal. It will also provide the opportunity to view the boundaries of properties along the Yarnton Road that will be within 25m of the edge of the proposed development.



Figure 2. The astroturf pitch at Cassington Playing Field

3. Footpath 152/6/10 The Track

This footpath is the most used by residents of the village of Cassington and was an essential community asset during the Covid lockdown, essential for exercise and the mental health of the villagers. The footpath rises to the north of the village providing panoramic views at the top of the village, the village church, Wytham Wood and as far as the city of Oxford itself. Views mainly to the west and particularly the east will be lost as a result of the proposed development, in early stages as a result of the presence of solar arrays and in later stages as a result of the proposed mitigation in the shape of hedging. Noise will be a major issue during pile driving and construction of this part of the central section of the development. Overall, there will be considerable loss of amenity and the historic setting of the ancient village of Cassington and its 900 year old Grade 1 listed church and surrounding conservation area.

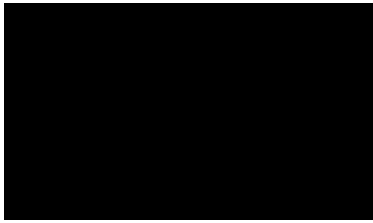



Figure 3. The “Track” during summer. The way the land rises to the north is clearly visible from the photograph. These hills will be covered in solar arrays if the project is approved.

As you will no doubt appreciate from your previous site visits to Cassington, you will understand how this project will impact the entire village in a multitude of ways. It is also important to note, that since 2023 there has been extensive fundraising to restore the playground and this is still on-going. Given the importance of these issues to residents and the character of the village, we believe that a site inspection, accompanied by relevant parties, would be of significant benefit to the examining authority in understanding the local concerns.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Yours Sincerely



 on behalf of Cassington Parish Council