

Response for Deadline 6:

Comments on Botley West Solar Farn: 'Change Request 2: Change Report'

Nigel Pearce, 2 October 2025, IP20052539

1. Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land

The latest changes made by the Applicant are notable for completely ignoring the issue of BMV land. No surprise there: at no stage of the process has the Applicant taken the issue seriously or attempted to avoid BMV land. The latest changes have all been made for other reasons. If there is any reduction in the area of BMV land being used – and there isn't much – it is purely incidental.

There is no significant change to the **Northern Site**. In the **Southern Site**, the area covered by solar panels will actually *increase* slightly, which is a real kick in the teeth for those who live in or near that area, and are dismayed by the Project's intrusive plans. They might also have to accept a further area of industrialisation if the main substation ends up being outside the Order Limits.

There is an important question to be asked about the **Central Site**. Here the reduction in the installation area is about one-sixth. Could the ExA please check whether there will be a comparable reduction in the number of panels? Or will some or all of the panels be relocated and squeezed into the other five-sixths of the Central Site (or elsewhere)? If the latter, there will clearly be a significant impact on other issues, such as biodiversity, flood risk (run-off), visual impact, etc.

2. The Vanbrugh Unit Trust: what will happen to the money?

In REP4-044, The Begbroke and Yarnton Green Belt Campaign (BYG) drew attention to Photovolt's REP3-064 of July 2025. BYG quoted from the latter:

- The Vanbrugh Unit Trust does not have an obligation to provide funds to the World Heritage Site.
- Outside of the 1984 Maintenance Fund obligations, any contributions to the Heritage Property are made on a discretionary basis.

BYG add that, "It has been confirmed that all land outside the park is now leased to Vanbrugh Unit Trust (VUT). This includes any land owned by the Blenheim Palace Maintenance Fund. [VUT] is therefore entitled to all the profits generated from holding that leasehold interest."

A search on the Companies House website shows something strangely circular going on:

- (i) If you look up Vanbrugh Trustees Limited, there are two appointments: Blenheim Strategic Partners LLP and Woodstock East LLP.
- (ii) Look up Vanbrugh Trustees No. 2 Limited, and you find the same two appointments. There are no people listed in either case.
- (iii) If you look up Blenheim Strategic Partners LLP, you find four active officers under the 'people' tag: Vanbrugh Trustees Limited, Vanbrugh Trustees Limited No. 2, Vanderbilt Strategic Limited, and J.A. Pye (Oxford) Ltd.
- (iv) If you look up Vanderbilt Strategic Limited, you find one appointment: Blenheim Strategic Partners LLP. A second entry under the same name does introduce a couple of people as active officers: Edward Spencer-Churchill and Joanne Beazley
- (v) If you look up J.A. Pye (Oxford) Limited, you find two appointments: Blenheim Strategic Partners LLP and Woodstock East LLP.
- (vi) If you look up Woodstock East LLP, you find three officers under the 'people' tag: J.A. Pye (Oxford) Limited, Vanbrugh Trustees Limited and Vanbrugh Trustees No. 2 Limited.
- (vii) One of the 'people' listed under Vanbrugh Trustees No. 2 Limited is Mapquest Limited, which has five appointments: Vanbrugh Management Limited; Vanbrugh Trustees Limited, and Vanbrugh Trustees No. 2 Limited; and Blenheim Trustee Company No. 1 Limited and Blenheim Trustee Company No. 2 Limited. Mapquest Limited is also a director of Blenheim Trustee Company No. 1 and No.2 Limited, and Vanbrugh Management Limited. It is all bafflingly labyrinthine.

If the money from Botley West Solar Farm will go to the Vanbrugh Unit Trust, where will it go thereafter? What guarantee is there that it will become charitable revenue rather than corporate income and profit?