

Good morning everyone

My name is Tony Brown and I own the 50ha block of land called Sandford Brake Farm, surrounding the Thames Water Sewage treatment plant at Worton near Cassington. I have farmed this land since April 2011

As a farmer I consider global warming to be the greatest threat to my business because it disrupts every part of crop production. Rising temperatures, unpredictable rainfall, and extreme weather events are damaging yields, eroding soil, impeding crop establishment and making planning harder each year.

To build resilience, I'm hoping to use a portion of my poorer farmland for solar production. This will give my business a steady, reliable source of income offsetting variable crop yields and reduced income as government support is removed from food production. This will allow me to support my business, family and workforce.

Solar will cut my farm's carbon footprint, helping to tackle the very problem contributing to global warming by generating clean energy. I can then grow food on more productive land protecting my business and contributing to the UK's net-zero goals.

I have listened to the debate that suggests farmland should not be lost to solar panels. I would agree that this would apply to productive ground but this land is not, it is heavy clay, requiring considerable mechanical effort to produce arable crops. Our yields at Sandford Brake are poor. Wheat is our primary crop. The average UK wheat yield across 50 hectares would be 380t. In 2025, 2024 and 2022 we produced 57t, 163t and 226t respectively.

I would therefore advocate the proposed system of capturing green energy whilst establishing grazing below the panels must be one of the most resilient forms of energy capture and farming combined. I believe this will improve wildlife habitats whilst the ground under the panels will continue to sequester carbon over the duration of the scheme.

I appreciate I hope to benefit financially from this project but I also believe that my children and their children are at serious risk from climate change. This project will on its own will not resolve global warming but it is perhaps one small building block in the construction of a greener and more resilient world. Thank you.