



Botley West Solar Farm - Closing Statement from Oxfordshire Ramblers

In our original registration application, we expressed our concerns that due to the size of the proposed solar farm there would be a major adverse visual impact to users of some of the PRowS throughout the period of the project ie for decades to come. We estimated that around sixty PRowS cross the proposed solar farm with a total length of 28 km. Our view was that the negative visual impact and associated adverse health effects outweighed the benefits of the project.

One of the Applicant's key arguments in assessing the visual effects of the solar farm was that the adverse effects will diminish over time, due to the planting of 2-3 metre-high hedges, "with no residual significant visual effects predicted at summer Year 15". An example of the visual impact is shown in Figure 1. Oxfordshire Ramblers strongly disagreed with this conclusion. In Year 1 the views will be of acres of solar panels. With the new planting the view of the solar panels will diminish over time due to the hedges. However, these hedges will then completely obscure the views of the countryside that we currently enjoy. Our conclusion was that there would be 12 major adverse (significant) visual effects for the duration of the project ie for decades to come. It has become clear throughout the Examination that this is a concern shared by an overwhelming number of the interested parties. Despite these concerns the Applicant continues to claim (see **EN01047/APP/6.5**) that "hedgerow planting is considered an enhancement measure with a consequent beneficial effect".

A far more detailed final submission has been made by our local Group – West Oxfordshire Ramblers. The proposed solar farm would have a huge negative impact on the enjoyment of walking the PRow within their area.

In conclusion, the concerns raised by interested parties and the rather dismissive responses by the Applicant during the Examination process has strengthened our view that the negative visual impact and associated adverse health effects outweigh the benefits of the project. Oxfordshire Ramblers therefore strongly objects to this proposed solar farm and urges the Examination Authority to recommend that the application for Botley West Solar Farm be rejected.


Chair, Oxfordshire Ramblers



Existing view



Year 1



Year 15

Figure 1. An example of the visual impact of the fences and hedges (one of many) is shown in 6.4ES-Fig 8.148 to 8.371 Photomontages (Winter and Summer) Part 6 Representative Viewpoint 32: View looking northwest from footpath 124/5/10, near Begbroke.