

**Closing Statement 9/11/25. Rosemary Lewis ref: [REDACTED]**

(See also my D7 response to D6 submissions)

From the launch of the Botley West Solar Farm proposal in Nov 2022 up to the present examination, the local community have worked assiduously to provide sound arguments backed up with evidence based on local knowledge, photography and academic studies to the many shortcomings in this application.

In the early days, the spokesman for PVDP, [REDACTED], and Blenheim Estate's CEO, [REDACTED] made patently untrue statements in the [REDACTED] "won't see the panels" or "they [REDACTED] sed and insulted hard working and successful local tenant farmers, about to have their tenancies terminated, by claiming that the land they had been farming was "drenched with chemicals", "degraded and unsuitable for effective agriculture" and "would be improved by not being farmed". At the same time, they accused us of inaccurate information on our website and of being "NIMBYs".

The StopBotleyWest (SBW) campaign group and its many supporters have tried their utmost to behave responsibly and objectively even in the face of such unfounded criticism from the Applicant. Thankfully the Examiners' written questions have finally revealed that the Applicant has failed - as we have been saying from the start - to consult, to complete assessments, to provide full information, to back up their claims with proper evidence or to answer questions in full. At the October hearings, with time running out, the Examiners' frustration was palpable but the responses from the Applicant's representatives continued to be arrogant, evasive, inaccurate and economical with the truth.

It has become apparent during the examination that the Applicant's whole approach is based on the premise that the planning process is stacked in their favour and the application will be waved through no matter how poor. So they saw no need to carry out proper assessments or to give full and fair consideration of the threat to a World Heritage Site, impact on other Heritage Assets and significant Archaeology, Impacts on Landscape and Residential Amenity, concerns over Airport Safety, loss of Green Belt and of Productive Agricultural Land, increased Flood risk, Cumulative effects, Transport management, Decommissioning, numerous Ecological concerns etc etc. These shortcomings are well documented in submissions by Historic England, ICOMOS, The Gardens' Trust, Oxford London Airport, CPRE, jointly and separately by the 4 Oxfordshire Host Authorities, several Parish Councils - notably Cassington and Cumnor and many other organisations, businesses and individual residents registered as Interested Party. A very limited number of concessions have been forced upon them but they have largely avoided serious engagement with the key stakeholders, statutory consultees or even the Examiners themselves.

If this application was to be granted, it would send a very clear message to other potential developers - that any application you submit, however inappropriate, poorly designed, shoddily presented or insufficiently financed - will get waved through so jump in and submit an application while you can.

An experienced team of 4 highly qualified Examiners have spent 9 months forensically examining the Application's merits and shortcomings (at a considerable cost borne by tax payers). If they recommend that the DCO should be refused, the SoS must surely come to the same conclusion, accept the Examiners' recommendation and withhold consent.

Overturning such a carefully considered recommendation would make a mockery of the whole Planning Process and call into question how that process can be seen as objective. The single argument of "urgent need to reach 2030 targets for carbon emissions and renewables" is insufficient with so many serious, nationally significant concerns, regarding this specific application. It is time to be more selective and, with so many other applications in the pipeline, to avoid allowing a totally inappropriate application from unproven and unscrupulous applicants - including those with uncertain foreign financial backgrounds - to go forward.

As SoS Ed Miliband, said in an interview on the Laura Keunsgberg programme on Sunday 19th October "There has to be a proper process that we follow" and "each project is decided on merit".

## Summary and Conclusion

1. The Applicant's flawed methodology and poor design in so many key areas including Heritage, Landscape (including Residential Amenity and Mitigation for properties, PRow and roads), Airport Safety, Land Use, Flooding, Cumulative effects, Transport management, Decommissioning and use of Green Belt all far outweigh the single mantra of "urgent need".
2. The Applicant's indifference to local residents' concerns - well documented in the Local Host Authorities' Local Impact Report (REP1-072), SBW's own Community Impact Report (REP2-081) and SBW's Report on the Adequacy of Consultation (REP2-083) - is a key consideration which must not be overlooked.
3. The Applicant has already demonstrated that they are not to be trusted, either in their true intentions or their financial or funding background. Calum Miller, MP for Bicester and Woodstock tabled 5 Parliamentary written questions on November 5, 2025. ( [REDACTED] ) Ref: 88545-88549, due for answer by November 12). These are really important and also deserve careful consideration.

**The lack of merit of this proposal has been comprehensively proven and I urge the ExA to recommend that this DCO application should be refused and trust that the SoS will agree in his final decision.**

Although I believe strongly that the whole proposal should be rejected for the many sound reasons already given, should the ExA be minded to recommend an alternative to outright refusal of this application, I would ask them to recommend a significant reduction in the panel area as follows:

1. In line with ExA's own proposed requirement that "a distance of no less than 250 metres between the edge of any part of the proposed operational solar array and any residential dwellinghouse"
2. In line with OHA's well argued proposals in their response to ISH2 Action point 16
3. In line with Cassington PC's request - backed by expert and academic opinion - to safeguard the village from increased flood risk.
4. In line with further concerns regarding the safety and security of Oxford London Airport

I would further ask that the **order limits** be changed in these areas (and in the 4 fields 2.002, 2.034, 2.115 and 2.116 currently designated as food growing areas) to ensure that these buffers are guaranteed and that the land can be returned to agricultural use.