

**REG NO [REDACTED] Sustainable Woodstock**

**Written Summary of Oral submission made at Botley West Hearing  
Open Floor Session Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

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My Name [REDACTED]

Interested Party Number **REG NO [REDACTED]**

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[REDACTED]. Representing Sustainable Woodstock

Thank you for opportunity to speak on community benefits.

We are part of the Community Action Group Oxfordshire Network (one of 117+ Oxfordshire members), we encourage working together through community-led projects so that we are more informed, resilient to climate change, protect our local environment and promote nature recovery.

We understand the urgent need for the rapid reduction of greenhouse gases and for a development such as Botley West in the Oxfordshire.

Solar Energy UK is the **trade association for the solar industry** in the UK and they list and recommend several good practices including ....  
**aiming for a community benefit fund that offers a lasting legacy for communities.**

We know that benefits are not yet mandatory ....they are voluntary only.

Given the massive scale of Botley West, the location and vicinity to so many communities .... there is an expectation of a community benefit that is proportionate.

Another recommendation by the trade association includes apportioning opportunities for community investment through a community ownership scheme. These schemes usually offer enhanced supplementary funds for communities. Allocating some community ownership has been suggested ... **so far this has been rejected by the developers.**

Immediately after the May hearings – 2 things happened -

First - a local press release announced .... that the community fund had doubled to £441,000 per annum. People were curious – unsurprisingly ... most had no idea whether this was generous and many asked my opinion. In truth ... this is far from a generous offer to Oxfordshire communities.

The 2nd thing that happened was the Government published a consultation – a Working Paper on community benefits and renewable energy projects. They stated that all energy projects, ... right across the country ... should have community benefit schemes that are as strong as possible. When comparisons are made – the suggested fund is not as STRONG as possible.

Every project is clearly unique ... consequently making comparisons hasn't been straightforward ... and following an email to the CEO of OCC and a subsequent conversation with OCC it is clear that this hasn't been easy for the county council. We sympathise - they have enough on their plate without having to manage a process that is new to them and relies on a voluntary approach.

However, it is unclear how Oxford County Council appear to have come to an agreement for such a low level of community benefit (£525/MW installed). As the benefit is for the lifetime of the project (next 40 years), the amount agreed now is clearly very important to communities ... and Oxfordshire.

On their request, we very recently sent a number of current examples to OCC that range from (£1K to 2K per installed MW per annum). It seems that a 'good practice' benchmark of £1000/MW installed/year is currently being discussed, such as that proposed for the 800 MW project in Newark. (Great North Road).

An alternative scheme has been suggested that would be fairer to investors – a % of income generated is likely fairer for developers because it better reflects their revenue streams. 2% seems to equate with a Danish example and policy. Based on a conservative estimate of Botley West generating of around £50million income/year for the owners. ... this community benefit would be about £1million/year similar to £1000/MW installed.

**There is a compelling case for greater fairness than is evident so far.**

I am using this time to appeal directly once again to the developers.

**Yesterday, the applicant said they did not know what the community wanted in terms of community benefit – this was very frustrating** as we and others have been campaigning for a figure of £5000K per installed MW for approximately 2 years now (incidentally, the same suggested figure in the Gov consultation Working paper).

NSIP KNOW that Government set mandatory contributions for renewables will not be agreed before a decision is made by the Secretary of State on Botley West.

**We would strongly urge the developers and OCC to re- consider the community benefit contribution.**

We would like to see a more open process for the discussion of community benefit for Botley West - at the moment, it seems and feels like it has been done behind closed doors with no proper opportunity to comment.

**We have the following questions.**

**Q1** We'd like to ask the developers and OCC what is happening on community benefit at the moment and whether there will be any open consultation on it with the communities involved at any point?

**Q2.** We'd like to ask the developers and OCC if an agreement has actually been made?

**Q3.** While understanding this is not part of the consent process, we'd like to ask the Inspectorate team today if they have any experience or understanding of when an agreement should be settled?

**Finally**, time will tell what is finally decided as a fair community benefit figure, we believe what PVDP is currently offering is anything but proportionate given the size, location and many other factors considered at these hearings.

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Written summaries of oral submissions made at any Hearings held during the week  
commencing 6 Oc

I strongly urge OCC to continue the fight for a fair and just community  
benefit. **THE END**