

Simon Raywood

From: Steve Westaby [REDACTED]
Sent: 01 October 2026 15:07
To: Botley West Solar Farm
Subject: Clear and present danger.

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Dear Sir, please forgive me for being repetitive but the fact that this proposal remains on the table implies that the dangers to the local flight training school have not been taken seriously. I will therefore be a little more graphic. There have already been a number of fatal crashes on Bladon Heath in areas where solar panels were proposed. I was first on scene for one of them and in my professional capacity was asked to certify death of the pilot and passengers. They all had blunt deceleration injuries. My son was soon on the scene for a second jet crash where the fuel tank exploded and incinerated the pilots. Photovolt Development Partners were undoubtedly aware of these events when plans were first submitted.

In Holland the Schiphol Airport debacle cost more than €300 million before a solar site one tenth the size of the BW plan was subject to removal by the courts given the dangers to aviation. In the UK several Royal Airforce bases have objected to solar developments in proximity through the established dangers of radar disruption, thermal plume, glint and glare and bird displacement. All these factors are of importance for Oxford Airport to a lesser extent Brize Norton. Sunlight reflected from panels dazzles and interferes with pilot judgment. This was the main issue at Schiphol where the main runway was closed for four hours in the middle of the day for several weeks.

I am personally much more concerned about accidents affecting trainee pilots. Aborted take offs and emergency landings are inevitable and could happen anywhere within a couple of miles of the airport. I have watched small aircraft and helicopters undertake circuits of the surrounding countryside for the past 35 years. If these fields are covered in metal, glass and high wire fences, instead of attempting an emergency landing the pilots will seek out roads or school playing fields in the area. This has stark implications for the local community. Attempted crash landings are indeed survivable in open fields covered in crops. I have operated on several victims of such incidents. They are subject to deceleration trauma of the head, chest and abdomen but not necessarily fatal. In open fields they can be reached by the emergency services. Any landing in a sea of solar panels will cause immediate fatalities through decapitation, traumatic amputation or transfixion injuries. Nor will rescuers gain access to the site in a timely manner. As a senior Cardiothoracic trainee at Harefield Hospital I covered an enormous region of north west London and towns in proximity for major chest injuries. I then developed Cardiothoracic Surgery for the Oxford region from 1986. My explanations are based on considerable trauma experience as a result of which I authored two textbooks of trauma (Trauma, pathogenesis and treatment, and Cardiothoracic Trauma) I was a member of the Royal College of Surgeons committee that initiated the development of regional trauma centres in the UK. I state this so as to be taken seriously whilst understanding that the applicants have repeatedly dismissed the local population's opinions as invalid. I am aware that the flight schools have highlighted the same grave dangers and questioned their own viability should the huge solar site be approved. I am surprised that Brize Norton have not made relevant comments since military aircraft disabled in combat may conceivably have to approach over a vast sea of metal and glass. There are many other potential sites for industrial sized solar sites that do not pose immediate danger to the local community so it is difficult to understand why this particular application is still being considered. What are the implications of the development being approved with catastrophic events afterwards?

Yours sincerely, Professor Stephen Westaby, PhD (bioengineering) DSc, FRCS, MS, FECS, FESC, FICA.

Sent from my iPhone