

Simon Raywood

From: Jonathan Cooper-Bagnall [REDACTED]
Sent: 01 October 2026 16:43
To: Botley West Solar Farm
Cc: contact@stopbotleywest.com
Subject: Botley West Solar Farm (EN010147) – objection from a Woodstock resident

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]

Dear Secretary of State,

Botley West Solar Farm: EN010147

I live at 12 Market Place in Woodstock, and I am writing to object to Botley West. I am not an expert, but I have followed this application closely because it will change the place I live in for decades. I support the Stop Botley West campaign and agree with its submission [C2-161].

I was disappointed that the Applicant's late submissions were accepted. It means more delay and more uncertainty for the people who live here.

Panels closer to people's homes

The Examiners recommended a default distance of 250 metres between panels and homes. In June the Applicant used 250 metres as its starting point [C1-051]. Its new plans [C1-108, C1-111] cut that to 100 metres, and say any extra distance will be decided after permission is given. The Applicant has already admitted the scheme would work with 250 metres.

I don't understand why people living next to it should get less protection than the Examiners recommended. I also don't understand why that decision should be made where no one can see it or object.

The landscape around Woodstock

Woodstock is a small historic town, and the countryside around it is a big part of why people live here and visit. ICOMOS, the body that advises on World Heritage Sites, asked for a proper study of the effect on the landscape. That study still hasn't been done, and the issues ICOMOS raised are still unresolved. I don't think something this large should be approved without anyone knowing what the effect will be.

Too much is being left until after permission

What worries me most is how much is still undecided:

- The Applicant now says at least 300 hectares won't have panels on it, but that land is still inside the site boundary. If it isn't needed, it should be taken out and go back to farming, so we can be sure.
- National Grid hasn't decided where the substation will go or applied for permission. It says it can't connect until winter 2031 at the earliest. Nothing in the order stops building starting before the substation has planning permission.

- The Examiners said money for removing the panels at the end should be set aside before building starts. That hasn't been done. If it isn't, local people could be left with the problem.
- The Applicant hasn't explained why the scheme must be at least 935MW. It also turned down the local councils' proposal for a smaller one.
- Parish councils have shown evidence of flood risk [REP7-068, REP7-077, C2-162, C2-169], but no further panels have been moved back.
- The assessment of the impact on trees still hasn't been done, and the plan for skylarks doesn't work.
- Much of the central site is now part of the potential Three Rivers SSSI.
- Concerns about trainee pilots' safety near the airport haven't been dealt with [C2-210, C2-176].
- The Lower Road cycle path is still on the plans, even though the Applicant said at the site visit on 7 October 2025 that it would be dropped.
- Oxfordshire County Council still disagrees with the Applicant on minerals and waste, and on taking roadside verges.

As a resident, I would have no say on any of these once permission is given. That isn't fair to the people who will have to live with the result.

I respectfully ask you to refuse permission for this application.

Yours faithfully,

Jonathan & Tracey Cooper-Bagnall

[Redacted signature]