

Simon Raywood

From: Sarah Watkinson [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 October 2026 18:25
To: Botley West Solar Farm
Cc: Stop Botley West Campaign
Subject: Objection to Botley West Solar Farm application

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Botley West Solar Farm: EN010147

I am disappointed that the Applicant's late submissions have been accepted, causing further delay in the decision for Botley West and a request for yet another response from Interested Parties.

I am a supporter of the Stop Botley West campaign and fully endorse the comprehensive SBW submission of 16 July. I am concerned that despite these new proposals the Application is still irretrievably flawed. Too many questions remain unanswered and the Applicant seeks to defer too many important decisions until after any development consent is granted when they will be beyond public scrutiny and challenge.

Opportunity Costs of Botley West Solar Farm. Since the initial proposal, new geopolitical threats have underlined the need for UK food security, nature recovery has been proven to be essential for a liveable climate, and harms to human health incurred by loss of people's access to green space have been quantified in terms of NHS costing. In the light of current understanding, the opportunity costs associated with the loss of productive farmland, of nearby accessible green space for local communities, and of an irreplaceable part of internationally-valued cultural landscape, would appear to be simply unacceptable.

A number of concerns have still not been addressed:

Lack of necessary expertise. The Applicant has failed to demonstrate the necessary competencies in mapping, in farmland husbandry, estate management, community interaction, ecology or biodiversity conservation to be entrusted with a 40-year tenancy.

Ecology and Bio-diversity net Gain. Arboricultural impact assessment still not done. Skylark compensation strategy unworkable.

Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI). A large part of the central site is now on the list of SSSI designation proposed development, named The Three Rivers potential SSSI site based on the presence of the rivers and river valleys in the region. This needs to be considered.

Community food growing - no further mention. These areas should be removed from the red-line boundary.

Red-line Boundary. At least 300 hectares of land are now stated by the Applicant as not to be used for panels. The certainty that this land will never be used for panels should be secured by moving the red-line boundary. It can then be returned to food production.

Heritage and Landscape. The Landscape Character Assessment requested by ICOMOS has not been undertaken and issues raised by ICOMOS remain unresolved.

Irreparable losses to West Oxfordshire and the nation will result from handover of the central site, which not only frames a UNESCO site but is also an internationally treasured cultural landscape. The central area in particular exemplifies the backcloth of English Literature from Chaucer through Shakespeare to George Eliot and Anthony Trollope. Embedded in a solar installation, the rural Long Distance Footpath, the Shakespeare Way, will no longer offer walkers a view of the kinds of farmland ecosystem – the *even mead* and *fallow lea* – famously described by the Duke of Burgundy in Henry V.

I respectfully request the Secretary of State to refuse outright the grant of a DCO for this Application.

Name: __Sarah Watkinson_____