

I am one of many cyclists who use the quiet roads in the Bernwood forest for leisure and restoration. The area is right in the middle of beautiful farming countryside, with contours, which give stunning views over the farmland and woodland to the south of Claydon House. It encompasses pockets of ancient woodland, precious and vanishing assets, especially in Buckinghamshire, where so much land is being swallowed up with new house building and large building projects. This beautiful amenity is available freely to the public from the rights of way that run across it. The nearest urban town of any size is Buckingham, several miles away, so this area is right in the middle of the countryside.

Once infrastructure has gone in, the damage is irreparable. Not only would the ground be damaged, but the views over the land would be completely urbanised. It would pave the way for future reuse of the land for urban or industrial purposes, as it would be considered 'brownfield'. Good farming land would be lost, there would be a devastating effect on nature, tourism would diminish. Traffic would make cycling more dangerous.

I appreciate that we need to press on with increasing our green energy production, but surely not at the expense of such wonderful areas, where people can go to get away from busy lives and urban areas, to find peace and tranquillity in the middle of the countryside. There are so many other alternatives that should be used first; as in European countries, car parks could have solar panel roofs – creating shade for cars as well as solar energy. Industrial estates should have roof conversions to incorporate solar panels, or perhaps solar panel blocks could be incorporated there, and certainly the government should insist that all industrial and domestic new builds should have to have solar panels. The technology has been available for many years, yet no one has yet had the will and strength to impose these sensible requirements on building companies.

I believe that Bucks County Council had the idea to promote the Bernwood Forest, an ancient hunting ground, as a place where people would be encouraged to come for recreation in nature as well as to the local attractions of Claydon House and Waddesdon. HS2 has spoilt a lot of our countryside and made such high bridges without any pavement provision for pedestrians or cyclists, with absolutely no benefit to the region. Our towns are growing beyond their natural bounds. We need to keep what is good and beautiful in our rural areas for generations to come.