

OSSINGTON AIRFIELD AND ITS IMPORTANCE TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AS A HERITAGE ASSET, WILDLIFE SITE, COMMUNITY SOCIAL FACILITY AND A LANDSCAPE WHICH IS LOCALLY DISTINCT

BACKGROUND

Ossington airfield lies to the west of the village of Ossington. It is bisected by the road from Carlton on Trent to Kneesall which follows and utilises part of the old runway system. The land is agricultural but farmed at a low intensity and has many areas which are left uncultivated and rough. North Wood (designated as Ancient Woodland) lies immediately to the North East of the airfield and Laxton Syke SSSI to the North West.



The airfield as it appears on Google maps

The requirements of an airfield - a large open area with no obstructions; together with the extensive runway system which makes intensive farming impossible, creates a landscape which is unique in this region which is otherwise dominated by intensive farming and roads set between mature hawthorn hedges.



View towards the south



View to the West along two sections of the Northern boundary



View to the East



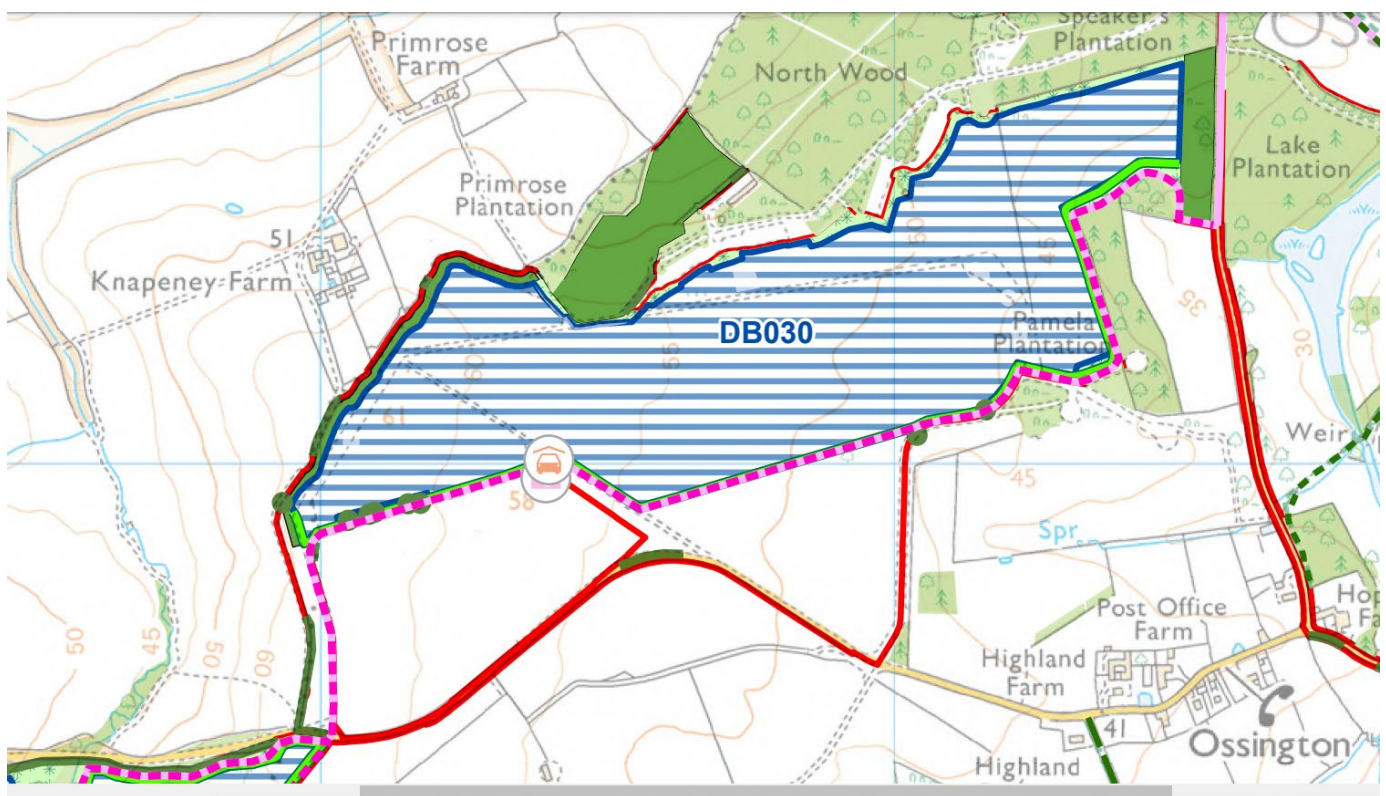
The airfield is a special place: “There is a distinct atmosphere which I think comes from the airfield’s heritage as a Second World War airfield and the respect that engenders along with the often complete silence apart from birdsong or high aircraft noise.”



Animal tracks in the North West corner of the airfield. The top two photographs show tracks coming onto the airfield from the direction of Laxton Sykes SSSI. The lower photograph running along the North West boundary

The particular conditions of the airfield create a rare habitat that cannot be replicated anywhere in the vicinity and certainly not within the site area of the GNRSP. The developers now call the scheme a Solar and Biodiversity Park and have worked hard at creating an overall scheme where biodiversity is an important element, but it appears that the airfield has been completely overlooked as an amazing habitat both in its own right and due to its position within the zones of impact on the extensive and important Laxton SSSI and next to Ancient Woodland.

It is proposed to place the solar panels in a band across the airfield's northern boundary. (see map below). Unfortunately, this is where the land is roughest and where many areas are left uncultivated or as permanent grassland. It is also nearest the Laxton Sykes SSSI and baulks and the Ancient Woodland of North Wood. The animal tracks and visual evidence show how strongly these sites are interlinked, particularly by the bird, hare and fox populations. It is also the area most favoured by walkers because of the distance from the road, the amazing views across the Trent valley and the feeling of peace and serenity where people can relax and restore their mental wellbeing.



Extract from GNRSP map No 5. This shows the extent of solar panels on the airfield. The area is hatched in blue and Notated DB030. The Laxton Syke SSSI is the area shaded beige on the North West Corner.

The airfield is important for four reasons:

1. IT IS A LOCAL HERITAGE ASSET

This second world war airfield is not one of the most prominent or well known of airfields of that war. However, it is an important Local Cultural Heritage Asset both in terms of its physical remains but also its cultural importance both to local people and those who hold an interest in recent history. The Airfields of Great Britain Conservation Trust thought the airfield sufficiently interesting and important to erect a monument. The unveiling of this monument was remarkably well attended (see photo).

There are physical remains from the airbase. The runways, drainage/communication pits, a brick pill box (which appears to be lost in the proposals), the pits for the arrestors – an unusual aircraft stopping mechanism, and an impressive concrete pillbox which was to be the “last stand” in the event of an invasion.

See:

Appendix 1 Airfields of Great Britain Conservation Trust comments on the importance of World War 2 airfields to heritage and culture.

Appendix 2 Airfields of Great Britain Conservation Trust description of the airfield

Appendix 3 Photo of the unveiling of the monument

In their executive summary Elements Green state “The design has been informed from the earliest stages by environmental considerations. Site selection and early design have taken account of community..... factors including:

- Avoiding development within heritage assets.”

Response

Solar panels on the airfield destroy a local cultural heritage asset

Elements Green also state in GOOD DESIGN 1.3 (10) (p9)

“Applying good design to energy products should produce sustainable infrastructure.... sensitive to place including impacts on Heritage”

Response

Solar panels on the airfield are not sensitive to their impact on its importance as a local cultural heritage asset and will entirely destroy the integrity of that asset.

Elements Green state in SITE SELECTION (29) p18

Heritage factors included within the analysis are as follows:

- Areas not suitable for development - listed buildings; scheduled monuments; conservation areas; historic parks and gardens; and battlefields.
- Areas identified as best avoided - local heritage designations (Historic Landscape at Laxton and Sherwood Forest Heritage Area); land within 50m of scheduled monuments, and land within 50m of listed buildings.

Response

Although Ossington Airfield has no designations it should be encompassed in these areas due to its historic significance on a regional rather than local level. It had battlefield status in the second world war when it was extensively bombed. Some of the last bombs of the war were dropped on and adjacent to the airfield.

2. IT HAS A PARTICULAR CHARACTER TO THE LANDSCAPE (DUE TO ITS HISTORIC USE AS AN AIRFIELD)

Elements Green say in Site Selection 4.3 SENSITIVE VISUAL RECEPTORS (47) p30

Views out from streets and public places within villages are often contained by buildings and vegetation and the Development has been designed to minimise visibility from villages, avoiding fields which were more openly visible.

Response

Throughout the GNRSP proposals for the whole area solar panels are generally hidden from close views from the road by the high hawthorn hedges which are a characteristic of the locality. The airfield has no such hedges (one of the features that defines its character), and the view from the road as it approaches or leaves Ossington is of a wide-open space. The road does not cut straight through the middle of the airfield but runs a zigzag course focusing views into the airfield. Solar panels will be visible and very intrusive and damaging to the airfield's distinctive character

3. IT IS AN IMPORTANT WILDLIFE SITE AND UNUSUAL NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

BIRDS AND OTHER WILDLIFE

This landscape of the airfield suits ground nesting birds. Lapwings and skylarks (both on the RSPBs "Red List" of birds in decline and requiring protection) appear here often and in significant numbers. Chris Johnson farms the airfield land to the south of the road and also has two fields on the northern section. One of these has nesting sites for lapwings which is supported by the Countryside Stewardship scheme. He has provided the following notes:

"Lapwings have been part of the ecology of the airfield for many years now. Steadily growing in numbers with many nesting sites over the airfield especially where spring drilling has taken place.

Good observation is critical for the birds to be successful in the rearing of their young. They face many challenges from the likes of rooks, buzzards and foxes. All are present on the airfield.

The airfield provides

1. Good open views from ground level to the sky
2. Food source. The many different crops and rotations provide invertebrates for them to feed on. The grass edges to the concrete runways provide habitats that are never cultivated. A natural beetle bank.
3. Livestock graze the airfield and farmyard manure is applied to the arable fields also adding to the invertebrate population
4. Lapwings are classed as waders and the heavy clay of the airfield becomes waterlogged during wet times."

Barn Owls breed in one of [REDACTED] to the south of the road and other old airfield buildings. Their main feeding area extends all over the airfield and to the North where they hunt around the permanent grasslands and rough areas of Knapeney Farm - ideal hunting grounds.

Curlews have been seen on the airfield although not this year. One has recently been seen on adjacent land.

Another bird that is declining in numbers but can be seen in large flocks on the airfield is the linnet. They seem to flourish on the low intensity farming of the airfield and the adjacent sykes and baulks of the open field system of Laxton.

Below is a list of birds seen on the airfield prepared by an ornithologist but most of them have been seen by all visitors.

Lapwing

Blue tit

Great tit

Sparrow

Fieldfare

Robin

Chaffinch

Skylark

Blackbird

Kestrel

Barn Owl

Buzzard

Red Kite

Pheasant

Partridge

Bullfinch

Crow

Canada Goose

Duck

Heron

Starling

Brambling

Chaffinch

Bullfinch

Cuckoo

Green woodpecker

Pied wagtail

Yellow hammer

Collared dove

Reed bunting

Swallow

Rook

Linnet

Hooded Crow

Wheatear

Other birds seen are Jays and pigeons.

There used to be a pair of Little Owls although not this year.

Other animals which use the airfield as a feeding ground and corridor are foxes, hares and deer. The small seasonal ponds would appear to be ideal for Great Crested (and other) Newts. The developers bat surveys located the exceptionally rare Barbastelle bat in the adjacent woodland.

Elements Green's DESIGN APPROACH DOCUMENT describes their design process and the key principles relating to the development of the design. The proposal for solar panels on the airfield deviates from the stated design principles in relation to important natural environment in that document.

SITE SELECTION states

(31) p20

- Areas identified as best avoided - local wildlife sites

Response

The airfield is an important local wildlife site - both in its own right and its importance to Laxton SSSI. Natural England's classification of Network Zones in relation to key sites such as SSSIs and Ancient Woodlands is one of their key principles to protect biodiversity.

1. The lapwings particularly are found near the western section of the airfield. They nest in the southern field but the birds are more often found flying over the northern section particularly the central northern and north western parts. The proposed solar panels significantly reduce the area of open space which is so essential to the lapwing; threatening their existence.
2. The installation of solar panels at Ossington Airfield in Nottinghamshire has raised concerns regarding potential detrimental effects on local wildlife. While specific studies on Ossington Airfield are limited, general research indicates several ways in which solar farms can impact wildlife, particularly when established on former airfields.

Potential Impacts on Wildlife:

- a) **Habitat Alteration:** Airfields often consist of open grasslands that serve as habitats for various species. The construction of solar panels can lead to habitat loss or modification, potentially displacing resident wildlife.
- b) **Disturbance During Construction and Maintenance:** The development and upkeep of solar farms fauna can cause disturbances, such as noise and increased human activity, which may disrupt local.
- c) **Barrier Effects:** Large expanses of solar panels can act as barriers, hindering the movement of terrestrial animals and fragmenting habitats.
- d) Although there is no significant evidence of bird casualties due to solar panels, the risk of collisions cannot be entirely dismissed, especially if the panels create glare that could disorient flying birds.

- 3. It is unlikely that sensitive and vulnerable birds such as the lapwings and skylarks will remain on site or return after work is complete due to the extent of the noise and disruption bringing materials and during the erection of the fences, the solar panels etc.
- 4 The airfield has a close relationship with Laxton SSSI. Although the latter SSSI is based on its habitat, that habitat supports a large number of animals including red and muntjac deer, hares and foxes. The feeding grounds of many of the birds on the Laxton Sykes extend up to and over the airfield. It is a frequent occurrence to see the large flocks of linnets and starlings, crows and other smaller birds fly over Knapeney Farm and onto the airfield.

Evidence submitted by Natural England stated that more than 25 per cent of SSSIs are affected by off-site pressures

- 5. The positioning of the solar panels disrupts the hunting grounds of the barn owls quarter of the land and on round the back of Knapeney Farm and on to the eastern end of the airfield

4. THE AIRFIELD IS A COMMUNITY FACILITY

The pattern of runways and the open nature make the airfield a popular place for walking with dogs or without, with family or without for the people in Ossington and the surrounding villages and towns. Some people explain how they walk there to help with their anxiety, grief or just to help with mindfulness. Some just enjoy the walking, jogging, birdwatching, or the views.

The most common use is for dog walking. Here dogs are safe to be off the lead which is not possible on public footpaths

Until fairly recently one man brought his drum kit in the back of a van and played for hours in the evening.

The Ossington painting group occasionally use the site for an afternoon's tutorial.

There is an airfield "community" as many people who meet come to recognize each other and stop briefly to chat.

Elements Green state in their document THE GNR VISION AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES 2.2 PROJECT SPECIFIC DESIGN PRINCIPLES 15

Using the framework set out by the NIC's overarching design principles and drawing on good design criteria set out in NPS EN-1 and technology specific guidance provided in NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) 5 the following project specific design principles have been adopted:

- Places

- PL2 - seek opportunities to enhance access and recreation to improve health and well-being

Response

Solar panels on the airfield do not enhance but diminish the ability for recreation to improve health by taking away that quality of peace given by openness in the natural environment that users of the airfield currently enjoy. There is a proposed new permissive route way crossing the airfield but this will have none of the particular qualities which make the existing place so special.

- PL4 - facilitate understanding and appreciation of local cultural heritage throughout the life of the project;

Response

Solar panels on the airfield destroy the ability to understand and appreciate this very significant local cultural asset by taking away the integrity of the landscape and structures

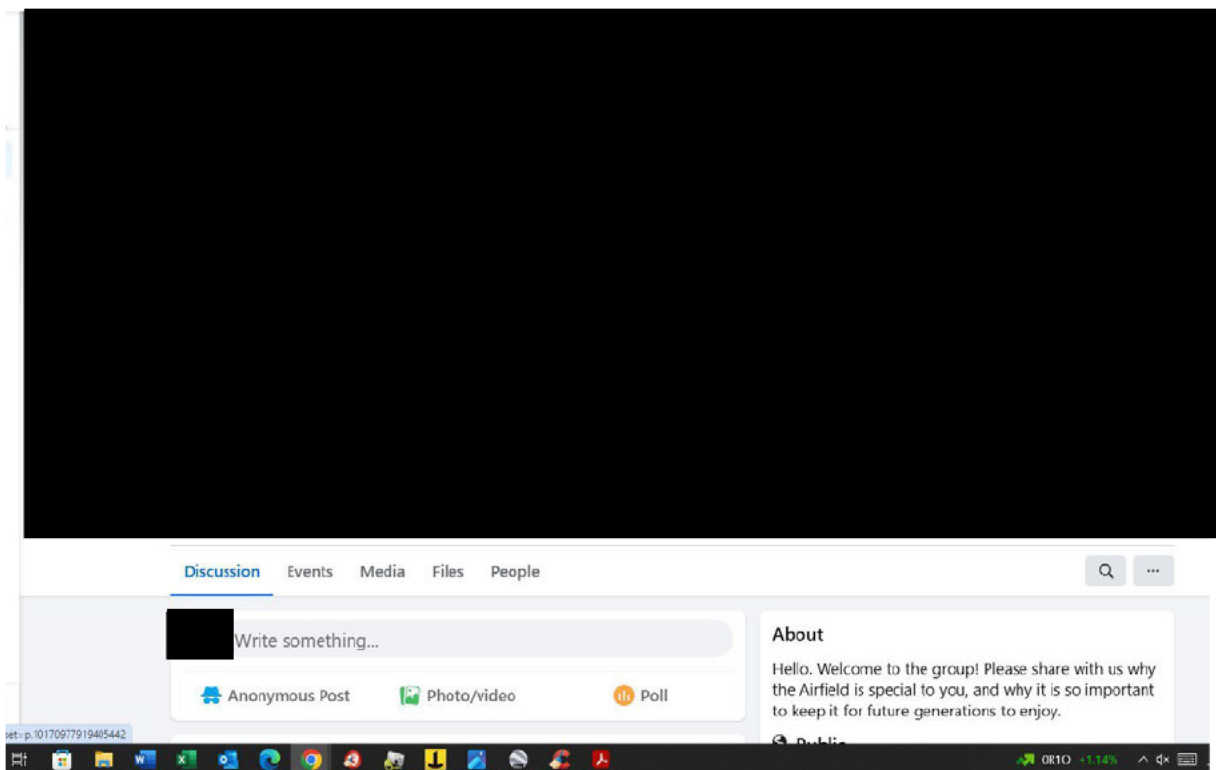
- PL5 - design with local landscape character in mind, providing a legacy of landscape enhancement

Response

Solar panels on the airfield show that the GNRSP has not been designed to take account of local character. The panels do not enhance but destroy the particular local character of the airfield landscape.

The FRIENDS OF OSSINGTON AIRFIELD GROUP Facebook page was set up so that local people could express why the airfield is so special to them and to provide evidence to put to Elements Green with a request to rethink the positioning of solar panels in this area. There are currently 95 members and the numbers are increasing. The page is really popular and users of the airfield constantly comment on the unique importance of the airfield's surroundings with regards to their mental health and wellbeing. They share photographs, memories, questions and links to information. There is an airfield "community" as many people who meet come to recognize each other and stop briefly to chat

The profile picture is from the Newark advertiser (June 2022) and shows the well-attended ceremony to unveil the memorial stone commissioned and erected by the Airfield of Britain Conservation Trust to commemorate the airfield and pilots who worked and trained there during WW2



The pattern of runways and the open nature make the airfield a popular place for walking' with dogs or without, with family or without, for the people in Ossington and the surrounding villages and towns. Some people explain how they walk there to help with their anxiety, grief or just to help with mindfulness. Some just enjoy the walking, jogging, birdwatching or the views. There are also cyclists, learner drivers, drummers and artists. We hear on Facebook of people who learned to drive there in the 1960's and 1970's.

Unless you know and appreciate the airfield the GNR Solar Park proposals would appear to meet the needs of those who currently use it because:

- The solar panels are limited to an area running along the northern boundary.

- The protected lapwing nesting site is not included in the area covered by solar panels


- There is a proposed footpath travelling East/West across the middle.

However, the essence of what is so special about the airfield and why it is so attractive to walkers, especially dog walkers, will be destroyed by the proposals.

Elements Greens DESIGN APPROACH DOCUMENT Part 2 THE GNR VISION AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES states in PL2 – that one of these design principles is to “seek opportunities to enhance access and recreation to improve health and well-being”. Their proposals for solar panels on the airfield do not enhance but diminish the ability for recreation to improve health by taking away that quality of peace given by openness in the natural environment that users of the airfield currently enjoy.

We ask that DB030 is removed from the solar panel proposals. The runway system, all the built structures and features (landing lights and arrester gear workings), the character and atmosphere of the airfield would remain intact and unspoilt. The birds, bats and other animals and plants would remain undisturbed. The lapwings and skylarks, both endangered species and so vulnerable to the loss of open space and to the major disturbance caused during construction, would remain.

SELECTION OF COMMENTS FROM FRIENDS AND USERS OF OSSINGTON AIRFIELD OPEN SPACE


February 6

This was sent as an email to me from the lovely David Coupland, who most of you know. He visits daily, often with his son and numerous dogs, and feeds the birds there.

I have been using the "Ossington airfields recreational facility" since 2004 bringing my dogs twice daily, morning and evening most days. The airfield is great as it allows folks to exercise themselves and their canine companions in an area of peace and beauty which due to its aspect allows us all to spot each other's position and avoid unnecessary dog clashes which can get messy.

There is a distinct atmosphere which I think comes from the airfields heritage as a Second World War airfield and the respect that engenders along with the often complete silence apart from birdsong or high aircraft noise.

It's a great place to walk, unwind and de-stress and experience all weathers to the extreme given its complete openness.

I am not alone in enjoying the flowers, peace, trees and wildlife. I am aware of lots of other regular users of this unique "facility" who, like me come daily. I know that there are regular users who come at different times of the day as their routines allow.

For a number of years now I have been supporting the wild birds at the airfield, filling feeders in the various tree copses and spreading birdseed on various walls or on handy pill box rooves which make amazing bird tables. I do this to help the various species of wild birds present, to help them to survive and flourish.

Flocks of lapwing, fieldfare, starling, skylark, Canada goose, duck and crow share the space with sparrow, bullfinch, chaffinch, robin, blue tits, great tits along with the introduced pheasant and partridge who are wary of buzzards, red kite, kestrel and barn owls which all patrol the site on a daily basis. My rudimentary knowledge of these birds is as nothing to some of my fellow airfield users knowledge and passion on this subject.

I "found" the airfield 21 years ago and have never left. It supports amazing wildlife, has developed a community of like-minded souls because it offers a strange welcome of bleakness, often extreme weather and complete silence which can't be easily found.

The paths which cross Ossington airfield must remain available to ensure this facility remains available to current and future users. It promotes mental health and wildlife and is crucial to the local community.

David Coupland
Common Farm


February 2

Ossington airfield is a lot more than another useful piece of farm land to be sacrificed for their Net Zero project, by an Urban Elite who have little interest in the countryside or those who enjoy it. For many it is a place of "Memories" that they can walk around and enjoy, not somewhere to be fenced off and covered in Chinese Solar Panels.

I well remember learning to drive there at 13 and spending time driving my Go-Kart around the runways 63 years ago. Later walking over it examining the crops between the old tracks and runways, as the Agronomist for 3 local farmers.

Using it as a navigation mark and practicing approaches to the runway when I learned to fly a microlight, in my retirement.

Quiet, contemplative evening walks over its tracks, with a close friend who lived adjacent to it, often with her grandchildren, dog and CAT! As we watched the sun set over Ollerton.

Less quiet evenings, enjoying listening to the Drummer who practiced there as he could not play at home! In sombre moments, remembering the dedicated young men who flew from there to defend our country, especially those who didn't return.

Ossington Airfield has served us well, and is still doing so, growing food and spiritually. Please do not destroy it for a Vanity Project. Put your solar panels on roofs, car parks and industrial buildings and let us continue to enjoy this little piece of historic rural England.

All comments

[REDACTED]
Yes, yes, well said! Great memories. I forgot about the drummer! He did go up there when we first moved here

[REDACTED]
Do you remember when the drummer forgot to take them home with him??

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I remember just the stool up there ..

[REDACTED]
Very well put. I totally agree. My family love it x

[REDACTED]
February 7

We can't lose this



February 7

Ossington Airfield has been and remains a wonderful stomping ground for me and my family for around 20 years. Our children have learnt to walk, ride a bike and drive a car on the airfield. Our walks here with cousins and friends have been quality time together, where we have talked and taken numerous photos.

I believe the heritage of the site should also be valued and retained. Places like this can never be recovered - if solar panels are placed on the airfield it'll be a true loss to Nottinghamshire and its people.

I'm not against solar panels. There is a huge area proposed for the panels which on the whole I agree with, except I think it's greedy to use this airfield site along with all the other fields.



[Redacted Name]

Nice post and pictures Matt

[Redacted Name]

Great words. My family live there and enjoy it.

February 11



We have seen
Muntjac and roe deer

Just a few birds I have seen on the
airfield

Barn owl

Brambling

Chiffchaff

Bullfinch

Gold finch

Cuckoo

Green woodpecker

Pied wagtail

Yellow wagtail

Grey wagtail

Skylark

Starling

Yellowhammer

Collared dove

Reed bunting

Swallow

Rook

Linnet

Green plover (numbers have increased
over the years thanks to the local
farmers' attention to detail of their
nesting sites)

2 red kites have decided to stay

Hooded crow

Good evening to all

We - my grandchildren /children and numerous dogs -
have enjoyed walking around the airfield. Over the past forty
years. Whatever time of day, we have always met some fellow
walkers, always have a nice word or two. We hope this can continue.

Nice observations Peter, a lot of people of all ages get pleasure from the old airfield and its wildlife.

What will stop it going ahead? My daughter and family love it.



February 1



Comment

You do get some wonderful
sunsets



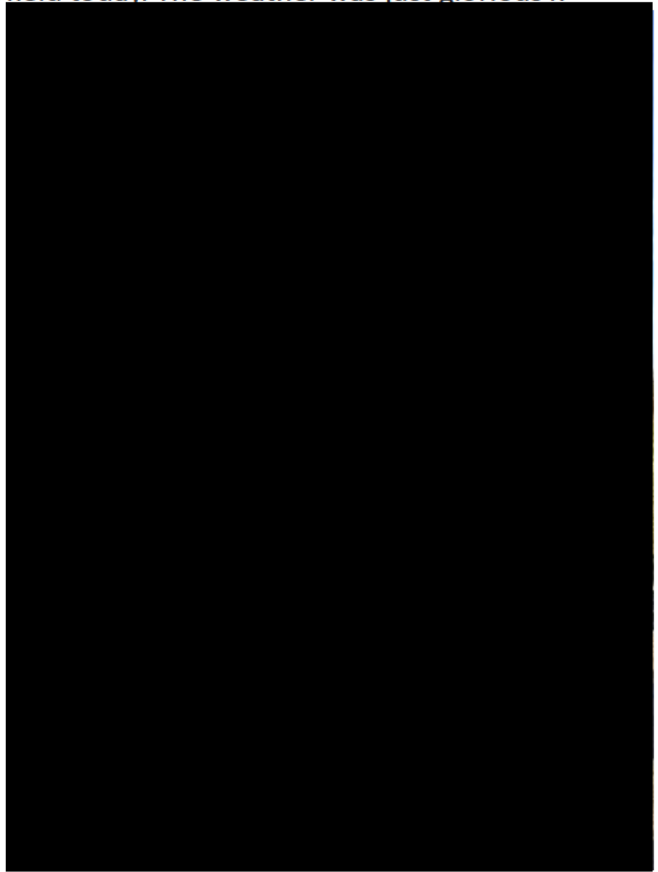
February 11

My last couple of visits training my 4.5 months old pup have been a little fresh, but still very peaceful and rewarding. We love being able to safely have space, whilst still being able to train with real life “other distractions”. I always go home feeling so much better, and refreshed after a walk round the airfield with my boys.



February 2

It was lovely to see so many people enjoying the airfield today. The weather was just glorious x



February 14th

Just signed the petition and joined your group and asked Mr Google for information.

During World War II, RAF Ossington Airfield in Nottinghamshire, England trained aircrews on a variety of aircraft, including the **Airspeed Oxford**, **Vickers Wellington**, **Curtiss Tomahawk**, **Avro Lancaster**, and **Avro Lancastrian**. [\[link\]](#)



Aircraft used at RAF Ossington

- **Airspeed Oxford**: Used for training aircrews [\[link\]](#)
- **Vickers Wellington**: Used for training aircrews and in the Nickel Operation to [\[link\]](#)

Other information about RAF Ossington [\[link\]](#)

- RAF Ossington opened in 1941 and closed in 1946
- The airfield was a major RAF training airfield
- The runways were broken up to construct the A1
- Some taxiways and buildings have survived
- A memorial was unveiled at the airfield in 2022

February 3

A Special Place

The old airfield rests, peaceful and quiet, just the sound of the birds, and the breeze in the night.
No one knows all the secrets it holds, in its acres of concrete, grey and cold.
I don't live here, I never have, but this place feels like home, somewhere to relax.
I know this place well, it's like an old friend, I know most every inch, and what's round the next bend.
From its concrete secrets buried beneath, to catch out a plough with a bang or a screech.
To its network of drains all brick built, like art, this secret network sets it apart.
Secret sheds that hide in the woods, now holding memories, and secrets for good.
The big red sunsets at the end of the day, and the beautiful sunrise as the next comes to play.
It's golden fields of barley and wheat, growing us food, for our nation to eat.
This place is more than just concrete and fields, it's a lasting memorial to wounds never healed.
Its national significance in our history and war, now lies quiet, respectfully, in this place we adore.
It's a place to think, a place to ponder, a place to sit, and a place to wander.
With its fields of gold and its concrete so cold, for its farmers, who make this place thrive, growing the food, that keeps us alive.
It's one of those spiritual and beautiful places, it's somewhere special to all those it embraces.
But what now for the future, what will it become? To be covered in panels to harvest the sun?
I truly hope this isn't the case, we need to protect this special place.
Put the panels on buildings, car parks and shops, don't bury our history and stop us growing crops. Let us keep our memorial, our memories, and secrets of old, hidden in fields, and concrete so cold.

Anon.

Absolutely beautiful

Love it!



Love it too.

[REDACTED]
Lovely walk around the airfield this morning 9am saw 3 other regulars too all before 9.30am



Appendix 1 The Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust report

In many ways, airfields remain Britain's best kept secret. We all rely upon them; we all could not survive without them. Yet far too many people still cannot see the real value before their eyes. Time to unlock that potential.

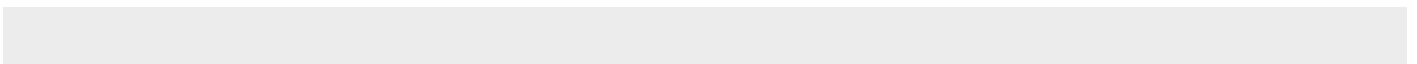
Since 1909, the airfields of Britain have proved to be the greatest assets this country has ever seen. Phenomenally brilliant places which have benevolently revolutionised everyday life. Massive winners and achievers, endlessly fascinating and important beyond all belief. But where is the recognition?

Now at long last a brand new charity is in action to counter this sheer unfairness. The Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust is designed to reverse this trend and honour in constructive ways our premier historical sites. Memorials will be erected at disused airfields. Information will be gathered and made available to boost existing airfield history. Education support will be provided to help enthusiastic young people secure airfield or aviation-related employment.

Despite what many people might say, Britain's airfields are extremely popular. Exciting areas possessing uniquely indefinable atmospheres and infinite depth, anything but 'bleak' or 'windswept' as their detractors would have you believe. History however shows that our airfields have always had to cope with a crisis of some kind and as ever our disused airfields are suffering today terrible indignities. Mindless destruction continues as priceless pieces of land or buildings vanish - all too often for shallow aesthetic reasons - when they could all be easily retained and employed in perfectly viable alternative roles. This is why the Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust is urgently needed.

At least our airfields will always be there, even if aircraft have long gone from them. You only need to walk down the street to see an airfield link in one way or another: it may not be immediately obvious but virtually everything we encounter has some form of connection. And just imagine what daily life would be like if Britain's airfields did not exist. A massive and almost unquantifiable number of direct and indirect jobs lost, an economy significantly deprived of huge sums of money each year, and diminished social values. Not forgetting potential military collapse and complete loss of freedom! Could you seriously live with that thought?

The airfields of Britain therefore matter. They have helped both their country and the entire world far beyond the call of duty. Time to help them for a change.



APPENDIX 2 - ABCT comments regarding Ossington Airfield

Description of the Airfield and its importance

Originally opened in a more protracted way than usual under Bomber Command over the final third of 1941, control of Ossington after a few months switched to Flying Training Command for No 14 (Pilots) Advanced Flying Unit to form there on 26 January 1942. Its Airspeed Oxfords kept busy both here and at several other associated airfields until transferring to Banff in May 1943.

Bombers eventually came to Ossington next month with the arrival of another new element, No 82 Operational Training Unit, whose Vickers Wellingtons again employed Gamston in a supportive capacity. Instructional flying carried on apace, although as occasionally occurred elsewhere this unit eventually was reduced to three-quarters strength before it disbanded on 9 January 1945.

Eight days before had brought yet another change, and perhaps the one which Ossington made its biggest mark upon society in general, even if people to this very day may well not realise this to be the case. No 6 Lancaster Finishing School had formed, needing to wait a month before No 82 OTU finally finished at this airfield. Training continued but now for eventual British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) civilian aircrews and using Avro Lancasters. A further advance in this form of flying on 1 November 1945 when the LFS was redesignated as No 1384 (Heavy Transport) Conversion Unit, and from then used the Lancaster's transport offspring the Avro York to continue with this type of long-distance flying training.

Eventually this final unit disbanded on 30 June 1946 and Transport Command, which prior to then had affiliated with BOAC, gradually wound down Ossington before closing this airfield the following October. Supervision switched the following spring to Flying Training Command, later in January 1953 to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries; lingering parenting responsibilities at last ended on 3 March 1959.

By towards the close of the 1960s, much of the runways here were already starting to disappear. Two of them have become a minor road to the west of the village but not that much of Ossington is now left. Maybe this airfield may not be regarded as that prominent, but anyone now flying to places such as New Zealand should give a thought to the development efforts carried out at this place which made what happens today possible.

Officially setting airfield in stone

AN AIRFIELD now has an official marker of its existence — 80 years after aeroplanes first flew from there.

Following several years of research and planning, which was interrupted by the covid pandemic, residents came out in force to witness the unveiling of the memorial stone at RAF Ossington.

The Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust commissioned and erected the special granite marker stone, inscribed with the dates of the airfield's inception and closure.

The stone is placed close to what was the centre of the airfield, near the intersection of two of the runways — one of which is now the public road connecting Ossington to Kneesall.

Many joined together afterwards at the vil-

lage hall for light refreshments, and a chance to reminisce and examine memorabilia.

The commissioning of RAF Ossington changed the small village forever as the village school and two farms had to be demolished, and the road to Kneesall closed for the duration of the airfield's existence.

During the second world war thousands of airforce personnel, including many Canadians, were based at Ossington while in training to fly bomber aircraft.

Directly after the war the airfield was used as a training base for BOAC pilots.

Kenneth Bannerman, chief executive officer of ABCT, unveiled the memorial with help from residents who had been involved in the project, after an introduction by Georgina Denison, the owner of the land.