

**From:** Stop Botley West Campaign <contact@stopbotleywest.com>  
**Sent:** 11 November 2023 11:47  
**To:** cassingtonclerk@cassington-pc.gov.uk  
**Subject:** Latest news, plus this week's newsletter, "A Question of Numbers"



Dear Supporters – please see the latest news below, and this week’s Newsletter from Professor Alex Rogers – Co-Chair of the SBW campaign. As ever, your thoughts and offers of help and support are always welcome.

## News

### **Stop Botley West Calls For A Delay To The Public Consultation**

The SBW Chair has written to PVDP to ask for a delay in the public consultation. This is following information that the consultation will run from the end of November to the first week in February. It is felt that holding the public consultation over the Christmas and New Year period will inevitably mean that people are away during the festive break or spending time with friends and family. As such we have requested postponement until after the New Year to allow the public to better focus on the consultation.

### **The SBW Steering Group Takes On A New Project Manager**

SBW welcomes Richard Harris who will be helping the Steering Group with project management related to responding to the Botley West proposal especially through the planning process. We are also very happy to welcome Frances Stevenson on the Steering Group. As the work ramps up towards the public consultation and further steps along the planning process more capacity will be needed to focus on various aspects of the SBW campaign so a huge thanks to those joining us as volunteers in all the roles we need help with.

### **Forever Fields**

Please attend the [FOREVER FIELDS](#) exhibition of works from local artists celebrating our incredible green spaces at Worton Park, 24th – 26th November. See the advert at the end of this newsletter.

## Donations

Many thanks for the donations. Please continue to donate what you can - we will continue to need your support to stop this inappropriate development.

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# What can I do?

1. Head over to [ACT NOW](#) on the SBW website to see our latest suggestions.
  2. Make yourself fully aware of the proposal and how it will affect you, by looking at [Prof Alex Roger's presentation](#) on the HOME page
  3. Prepare for the second round (the 'Statutory' stage) of Community Consultations. What questions do you have about how the proposal will affect you & the Oxfordshire environment, and whether Botley West Solar Park really is the right solution for renewable energy in the UK? (Help coming soon on the website).
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4.

# Co-Chair Alex Rogers: A Question of Numbers: Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Utility-Scale Ground-Based Solar Power Stations

Dear Readers,

As I have described in past newsletters (see 16th October), Botley West is not the only Utility-Scale Solar Power Station being proposed for rural England.

Like Botley West the Sunnica Utility-Scale Solar Power Station is split across three sites in East Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk. It covers an estimated 2,500 acres (smaller than Botley West), stretches for 15 miles and crosses the boundaries of 16 Parishes and towns.

During the planning process for Sunnica, questions were raised about the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with the project. A team from the Centre for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy at Cranfield University undertook a study on this question. This required a lifecycle assessment of the proposed scheme to estimate the amount of energy it generated versus the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with its manufacture, building, operation and eventual disposal.

As can be imagined this is a technically demanding type of study. Where possible Cranfield used figures provided by Sunnica and where such figures were missing, they

developed their own based on other data available and reasonable and conservative assumptions.

Their findings were very interesting. Firstly, the scheme generated energy with lower emissions than energy generation based on hydrocarbons (natural gas), so that could be perceived as a win for Sunnica. However, when compared to other forms of energy generation including nuclear, offshore and onshore wind it compared unfavourably to the renewable energy sources and with nuclear the position was not entirely clear. The study went on to look at whether the Sunnica Scheme was “net zero”. In other words, during the lifetime of the power plant, did it save more CO<sub>2</sub> than was generated in its manufacture, operation and disposal or was it a net carbon emitter into the atmosphere.

The study concluded that the scheme was a net emitter, in other words, during its lifecycle it added CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere (although not as much as conventional hydrocarbon-based energy generation).

The study has been controversial. Based on Sunnica’s own figures the study showed that at 10 years there is a complete offset between the construction emissions and the annualised operation emissions. However, when figures revised to account for various elements of the design of the Solar Power Station were accounted for by the research team, they found that this offset never happens and the scheme emits more carbon than it saves.

Sunnica of course have denied these figures and stated their methods were conservative. Looking at the response of the press most attention has been on the emphasis of failing to meet net zero requirements and not demonstrating how much better solar power generation is in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions than hydrocarbons.

Reading the report, the latter point is clear.

A number of things do arise from this report that are pertinent to the consideration of Botley West. Numbers really matter when looking at the benefits of such schemes in terms of energy production overall, efficiency of energy production and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with the entire lifecycle of the project. For example, getting figures for the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with solar panel manufacture from China is extremely difficult. Furthermore, the details of the scheme really matter.

Sunnica is spread over 3 sites, just like the Botley West Scheme. The Cranfield team demonstrated that such a design was inefficient because of the needs to replicate associated machinery within each site, such as inverters and transformers, as well as battery storage if that is included and the cabling to link multiple sites together. This increased the carbon footprint of the Sunnica project considerably.

Such considerations are important because ultimately the Planning Inspectorate have to weigh the impacts of such proposals on nature, food production and our communities with the overall national benefits in terms of energy production (i.e. the trade-offs) as well as how a proposed scheme compares to alternatives. I have already pointed out a tendency in the Botley West proposal to overestimate benefits and ignore or underestimate impacts and costs to nature and society.

This is something for all of us to consider as we prepare for the upcoming public consultation and associated documentation including the Preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR).

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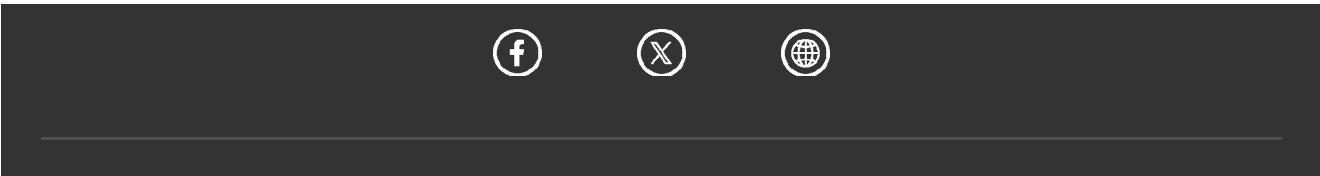
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