



Dear Supporters – please see the latest news below. The article that follows is taken from one by SBW spokesperson Steve Jenkins published in recent Parish Magazines with a message for everyone who enjoys our countryside and particularly for those who may still not be aware of the huge scale of the Botley West proposal - spread the word!

Stop Botley West join the Rally in London



On Thurs 18 April, to coincide with a debate at Westminster Hall, supporters of Stop Botley West joined a rally in Parliament Square to protest against Large-Scale Solar Farms.

Due to short notice, the Central SBW Group and many other loyal supporters were all either away or already committed elsewhere on the day. Nevertheless around 25 people were there, most travelling by a bus laid on at the last minute for them. Armed with placards and banners featuring our now familiar logo they joined supporters from other campaigns including Sunnica (Cambridge), Mallard's Pass (Lincolnshire) and Lime Down (Wiltshire). Steve Jenkins from Long Hanborough was our spokesperson and he gave interviews to several national newspapers and television. His interview with Miranda Norris of Oxford Times was pre-recorded and appeared on the front page of the Oxford Times on the day of the rally.

Several MPs from other affected constituencies joined protesters in Parliament Square including James Grey, MP for North Wiltshire seen above with Andrew Bowie, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero) who also spoke came over and spoke to campaigners including our SBW group and said he supported them.

He called for more protections to stop large-scale solar farms being built in the countryside.

An article in the Telegraph by Emma Gatten, later that day has the headline:

“Renewable energy minister backs anti-solar protests”

Andrew Bowie tells campaign rally outside Parliament that their concerns are ‘completely legitimate’ and that the Government was actively looking into what they can do to protect valuable farmland from being used for large-scale solar farms.

Further Observations from SBW supporters there include:

“I was really pleased to see such a variety of folks supporting the cause. Different post codes, age groups and backgrounds focused on a common goal.” and

“I spoke to a Lincoln man and a Sunnica/Cambridgeshire lady. My feeling was that they feel exactly as we do about the issue.. The Cambridgeshire people were particularly jaded as they have been campaigning for 5 years.”

The rally was a great success for all the campaign groups and many useful connections were made. It really feels that the momentum against these mega solar projects is growing. We hope that next time there is an event like this, we will be able to give you more notice, and be able to get a really big group showing the strength of feeling among our wonderful SBW supporters,

Huge thanks again to those who took the SBW message to Westminster!

Debate in Westminster Hall

Meanwhile, in Westminster Hall at 12:30, Dr Caroline Johnson, MP for Sleaford & North Hykeham introduced a Parliamentary Debate on Large-Scale Solar Farms for backbenchers. Unfortunately, none of the MPs representing constituents effected by the BWSF scheme took part. Neither Robert Courts (Witney, Solicitor General) nor Victoria Prentis (Banbury, Attorney General) as they are not backbenchers. John Howell, MP for Henley was ill. Layla Moran (Oxford West and Abingdon) did not take part either. But Botley West did get mentioned by Chair, Dr Johnson when she quoted from a letter written by the 3 Conservative MP's and Rupert Harrison

(prospective Tory candidate for the new Bicester & Woodstock constituency) calling on the Developer of BWSF to rethink their proposal. The main thrust of the arguments against mega solar was the sheer size of the projects, the destruction of productive farmland and the threat to food security. Watch the whole debate (3hours!) [here](#). Botley West gets a mention in the first 15 minutes.

SBW Consultation Survey

The Statutory Consultation is over and SBW's survey results are being collated. Many thanks to the 1442 who responded to the questionnaire. Two key findings are: 67% did not believe they had adequate opportunity to influence what is being proposed

91% are against the proposal as it is.

The full results and SBW's Adequacy of Consultation report will be published on the website at the same time the developer submits their application for a development consent order (DCO), likely to be July at the earliest.

Donations

Many thanks for recent donations that helped to fund the bus taking Stop Botley West supporters to London. Please continue to donate what you can - to support our efforts to stop this inappropriate development.

What can I do?

1. Get more people among your friends and neighbours to register for updates on the SBW website. This will increase our official numbers of concerned residents as well as keeping them up to date with newsletters like this one.
 2. Please sign this [petition](#) to asking the Government to introduce new restrictions on solar to protect land and food security. It asks for formal priorities for development and regional density caps. These could help ensure energy targets are met without compromising rural landscapes or broader security interests.
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SBW Spokesperson, Steve Jenkins on Enjoying the Countryside while you can

Taking in the View and Appreciating the Public Amenity Value of Our Land.

It's a wonderful time of year to put your walking shoes on and get out and about in the fresh air. With birdsong in full force and summer knocking on the door, there's plenty to discover this month on the footpaths, bridleways and byways that criss-cross much of the Oxfordshire countryside

May is the month of fresh green leaves, the buzz of bees, and the frothy white combination of hawthorn flowers and cow parsley that is especially evocative of spring. With the undulating nature of the local landscape, you're never very far from a spectacular view of the surrounding countryside.

However, it's worth remembering that many of these views will be lost for a generation - possibly forever - if the Botley West solar power station proposal goes ahead.

The sheer scale of the proposal and the potential damage is mind boggling:

- 68 miles of existing footpaths, essentially 'zero traffic' and rural in character,
- overwhelmed by 2 million solar panels,
- 156 Power Converter Stations the size of large shipping containers will drown out any birdsong with a 67dB hum,
- 11 miles long, 4 miles wide, 75% on green belt protected land, threatening rare water meadows by the Thames and adjacent to many other heritage assets,
- 45% of the solar panel area occupying best & most versatile (BMV) land i.e. the best land in the UK for agriculture and food production - damaging food security.
- 2 years of construction noise, disruption and heavy lorry traffic which will severely affect everyone - impacting the work commute, school run, hospital appointments, leisure trips and so on.
- High security fences (together with security cameras) will reduce footpaths to narrow corridors in between countless rows of solar panels, sub-stations and other electrical equipment; existing vistas will no longer exist and the public amenity value of our countryside will be decimated.

The Stop Botley West Campaign is entirely dependent on your generosity, both in time and donations. If you are able to contribute, please do give whatever you can - click the link below and scroll down to the donate section. Together, we will Stop Botley West. Thank you.

Donate





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