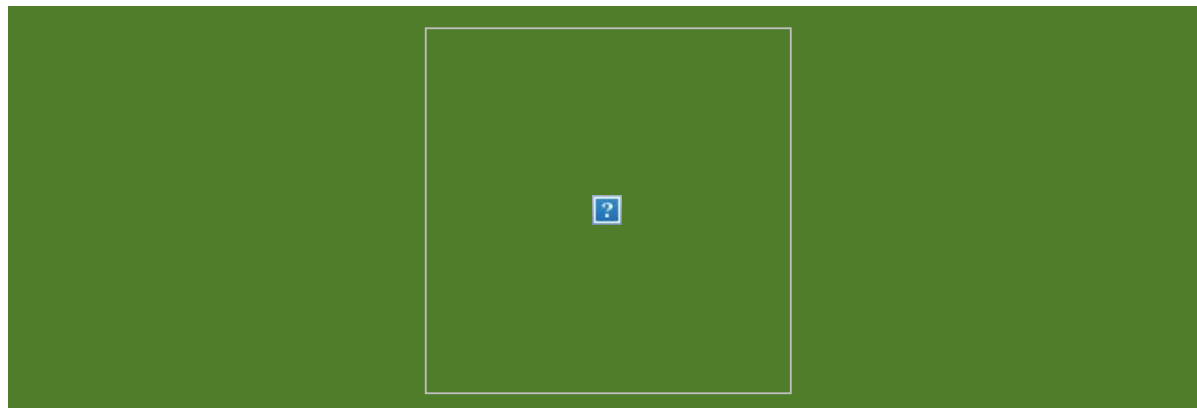


From: [Stop Botley West Campaign](#)
To: cassingtonclerk@cassington-pc.gov.uk
Subject: Reports from SBW about the Statutory Consultation + article
Date: 10 June 2024 21:11:09



Reports from SBW about the Statutory Consultation + article “Another Way: Sympathetic Development Broughton Estate”

Coming Soon: statements from Parliamentary Candidates

Dear Supporters – please see the latest news below, and this month’s Newsletter from Professor Alex Rogers – Chair of the SBW campaign. We have also invited Parliamentary candidates from all parties in both affected constituencies to provide statements on BWSF. These will appear on the website shortly. As ever, your thoughts and offers of help and support are always welcome.

SBW has published the results of their Consultation Survey AND their Adequacy of Consultation Report

FIRST, SBW’s report on the adequacy of the public consultation on the Botley West Solar Farm proposal ([full report here](#)). When PVDP submit their planning application (currently expected to be in September), the Planning Inspectorate will ask WODC for an assessment of the adequacy of the developer’s consultation. SBW compiled its own Adequacy of Consultation (AoC) report which has been given to WODC and will also be sent to the Planning Inspectorate.

Key findings include:

- PVDP's approach to engagement with the affected communities did not have sufficient regard to the relevant guidance and did not meet the standards required for a public consultation.
- The consultation was held over the Christmas and New Year period and therefore did not facilitate public engagement.
- Key surveys and assessments and other important information were not available for consultees to consider. For instance no justification was provided for constructing on the Oxford Green Belt land and on productive agricultural land and there was no assessment of the impact on the settings of numerous heritage sites including Blenheim Palace.
- The Preliminary Environmental Impact Assessment, its Appendices and other Consultation documents were incomplete, confusing, contained unnecessary repetition, were impossible to navigate due to minimal cross referencing and no master index.
- Numerous statements and claims in the consultation documents were inaccurate and, in effect, misleading.
- Consultation information events were poorly advertised, held in inappropriate locations and relevant experts were absent.
- The visual resources provided were inadequate: the maps were the wrong scale and difficult to interpret; the photomontages were highly selective and very poor quality.
- Community Access Points to view the consultation documents were inadequate in terms of location, space, visibility, advertising and signage.
- The consultation was not adequate or legitimate and therefore PVDP should be required to conduct it again in order to achieve effective and meaningful engagement with the public.

SECOND the report on our survey ([full report here](#)) of people's experiences of the public consultation on the Botley West Solar Farm proposal (held 30 Nov 23 to 8 Feb 24). 1,442 local residents responded to our survey by completing the questionnaire which is an excellent result. This report forms appendix 1 to our Main report.

Key findings of the survey include:

- The vast majority of respondents (90.8%) are opposed to the proposal to construct Botley West Solar Farm.
- A significant majority of respondents (69%) feel they were not listened to by the developers.
- A significant majority of respondents (66%) feel they did not have enough opportunity to influence what is being proposed.
- A significant majority of respondents (65%) felt insufficient detail was provided for the consultation.
- A significant number of respondents (43%) felt it was not easy to access the consultation.

TWO FURTHER APPENDICES give more detail on the accessibility of the

information ([here](#)) and on the readability of consultation documents ([here](#))

SBW Chair: Prof Alex Rogers on “Another Way: Sympathetic Development Broughton Estate”

Dear Readers,

On the 19th April, prior to visiting the Arctic to look for new deep-sea species I had the pleasure of attending a Wootton Village Hall Talks, this time by Roger Tempest, owner of the 3000 acre Broughton Estate near Skipton, Yorkshire. The Tempest family are thought to have come to England with William the Conqueror and were given the land in 1097. It is one of England’s oldest Catholic landed families and can trace its history over 900 years.

Roger stated, as a large-scale landowner, that he was anti large-scale solar but that was not my main take away of the evening. His philosophy was very much one of giving back to the community through the sustainable development of the estate. The story is a fascinating one. He started in the 1970s / 80s with the estate in near bankruptcy. The main manor house was in a dreadful state of disrepair, with water penetrating a leaking roof and many of the outbuildings largely derelict. It was a classic case of an asset rich, but cash poor landed family but one blessed with a visionary and very astute businessman with a string eye to sympathetic development that benefitted the entire community and harmonised with its surrounding environment. He started in an iterative manner, sequentially renovating the many outbuildings on the estate and renting them out to small businesses. Within a decade or so 700 people were working on the estate with a range of businesses, many rural in nature or consultancies. This in turn gave a huge boost to the local economy enabling the pub to stay open and expand and many other amenities supported. He used the proceeds to renovate and rebuild the house and grounds which was in severe need of repair. Then he invested in a spa and wellness centre, renaming the estate The Broughton Sanctuary. It is now recognised by National Geographic as one of the best in the world. He is now rewilding ~38% of his land, planting 300,000+ trees and bringing in long horn cows instead of sheep as a more natural grazing animals. All his farming is regenerative, and he is branching into areas like microgreens. The land is all open to the public via managed access, with 28 miles of footpaths, a great amenity for local people and visitors alike.

Reading from the Broughton Sanctuary their approach is summed up very well:

The Estate is a thriving example of how we can constantly transform and evolve by learning from the past and taking the best of what we have into the future. It is this philosophy that is behind our recent name change from Broughton Hall Estate to Broughton Sanctuary. We feel this better represents our vision and mission to be a regenerative space that is rooted in the Nature and Wellbeing of both humanity and the planet.

[Our History: Broughton Hall Estate, Skipton Yorkshire \(broughtonsanctuary.co.uk\)](http://broughtonsanctuary.co.uk)

The difference to what the developers, PVDP, are attempting to inflict on the communities around the Blenheim Estate's land could not be starker. Blenheim has embarked on a range of schemes which provide a rapid return in investment, either through building residential estates on its greenfield sites or, through the latest solar power station development. In the case of the latter, they have justified this mega solar power station by stating that the agricultural land they own is of poor quality (for example, in Parish Council meetings) and is ultimately doomed to low productivity by intensive modern agricultural practices draining the soil of its nutrients. Regenerative farming has not been considered as an alternative to the proposed development which is as large as Heathrow Airport, even in combination with small-scale or community renewable energy projects. Whilst some of Blenheim Estates projects can be seen as potentially sustainable and nature positive (e.g. a major tree planting scheme and the development of bee meadows) the contrast with the unwanted Botley West solar power station is staggering.

Stop Botley West and others have found the consultation with local communities on the Botley West project inadequate, and many local people feel extremely upset by the imposition of a development that will alter their environment and impact on their lives which for most people will be effectively permanent given the stated lifetime of the project of 40 years. It begs the question of what is a meaningful consultation? In my view it is one where the community living on the margins of the Blenheim Estate are genuinely involved in creating a vision and working with the owners and managers of the estate to create a sustainable future in which we are all invested. The result of the approach of the current proposed solar power station is that the estate and many of the communities in West Oxfordshire are now divided and in opposition.

Roger Tempest's talk was inspirational, both as a future vision of what great estates could achieve in a way that is sustainable for nature, climate and people and yet still commercially viable. As a resident of West Oxfordshire, I can only wish for a landowner like Roger. Instead, we have an absentee landlord, living in Monaco trying to make rapid profit through the commercial activities of the estate with little heed to the impact on local communities.

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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