

# AOC ANNEX 2: WAS THE INFORMATION ACCESSIBLE?



## Contents

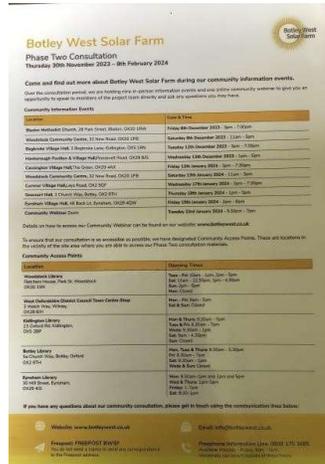
AOC ANNEX 2: WAS THE INFORMATION ACCESSIBLE? .....	1
1. Advertising and signage .....	2
2. Community Consultation Leaflet .....	2
2.1. Entire village of Combe omitted .....	2
2.2. Feedback from first consultation ignored.....	3
2.3. Missed delivery .....	3
2.4. Missing or misleading information .....	3
3. Information Event venues .....	3
3.2. Eight parishes omitted .....	3
3.3. Timing in Christmas period.....	3
3.4. Minimal accessibility outside working hours.....	3
3.5. Disproportionate event length .....	4
4. Displays within venues.....	4
4.1. Maps .....	4
4.2. Photomontages .....	4
4.4. Non-Technical Summary .....	5
5. Information Event Personnel .....	5
5.1. Missing 'experts' .....	5
5.2. Missing spokesperson.....	5
5.3. Inconsistent expertise.....	5
5.4. Attitude of personnel.....	5
6. Community Access Points.....	5
7. Summary of accessibility by village.....	7
8. Contradictions with Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) .....	12
9. References:.....	13

# 1. Advertising and signage

In this rural area parish magazines are the primary source of local information. Many of these are published and distributed monthly during the first week of the month with a deadline for material of around 14th of the previous month.

PVDP issued their first press notification on 16th November and started the consultation on 30th November. This meant the earliest that the information could be circulated to villages in parish magazines was early January.

PVDP did not advertise ANY events locally - no posters advertising the consultation event venues were displayed at or near ANY venue, except Woodstock where a small-print A4 notice was displayed in a backstreet



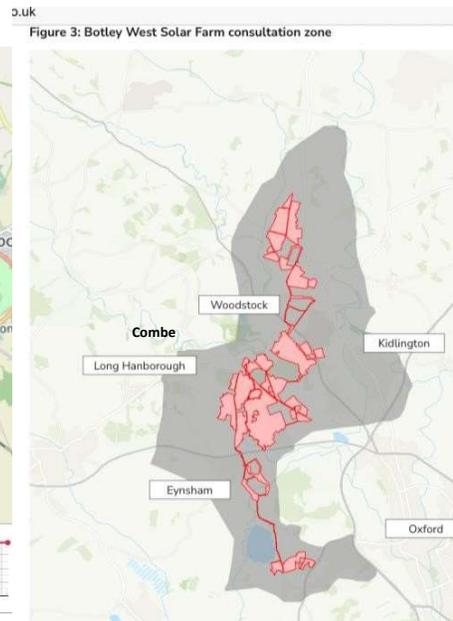
pub and inside the event venue half hidden on a crowded noticeboard. SBW supplied local posters and directions to every venue except Botley which consequently had the lowest turnout of 49.

# 2. Community Consultation Leaflet

## 2.1. Entire village of Combe omitted

In the SOCC, PDVD stated: 'A Consultation leaflet will be posted to all properties in the Core Consultation Zone - an initial distance of 2km from the edge of the proposed solar development areas ...'

*'The CCZ extends beyond 2km in certain areas, eg to incorporate the whole of Kidlington so as not to bisect the village. It has been reduced in other areas where there are no property interests within a 2km limit from the boundary of the proposed development.'*  
A list of included PCs followed.



Despite there being significant 'property interests' in and around the area, The Parish of Combe (population 775 ) was completely excluded from the CCZ despite being within 2km of the boundary of the proposed site - as close as nearby North Leigh and Freeland which were included, and considerably closer than areas of Kidlington and Botley.

## 2.2. Feedback from first consultation ignored

PVDP stated 'We have also considered how our posted materials are presented to encourage engagement with them following feedback regarding the plain envelopes our phase one leaflets were posted.' However, they ignored this feedback and leaflets were delivered exactly as for the first consultation in plain envelopes with no sender's identification. Delivery was also delayed by and muddled up with the Christmas post.

## 2.3. Missed delivery

Some areas within 2km of the site did not receive the leaflet at all and several received them late - a week after the start of the consultation and, in some cases, AFTER that area's consultation event. Examples of missing booklets as of 8 Dec included:

Bladon - Church Street; Church Hanborough - at least 2 properties omitted, including one highly affected one; Long Hanborough - Main Road, Millwood End, Oliver's Close, Regents Drive; North Leigh - Common Road; Woodstock - Manor Road, whole of Park View Estate

## 2.4. Missing or misleading information

The leaflet failed to even mention the size of the site (3,400 acres). It made many unsubstantiated claims (eg on biodiversity net gain). It claimed that PVDP were already working with other organisations who reported they hadn't been contacted. The maps in the leaflet showed no infrastructure and minor roads through the site were difficult to see.

## 3. Information Event venues

### 3.1. Northern section omitted

There was NO Information Event for the entire northern section of the site. A provisional list of venues included Kidlington and Tackley but these were both removed in the later published version of the SOCC.

### 3.2. Eight parishes omitted

Of 15 affected villages (Botley excluded), 8 were omitted from the list of in-person event venues despite being adjacent to the site. The villages of Combe, Farmoor, Freeland, North Leigh, Kidlington, Tackley and Wootton and Yarnton, comprising 20,000 residents = 61% of the total population of 32,000, were unable to attend an event in their own parish. Of these 8 parishes, 5 (Farmoor, Freeland, Tackley, Wootton, Yarnton) had no bus routes to nearby Information Events.

### 3.3. Timing in Christmas period

Attendee numbers before and after Christmas provide evidence of the error PVDP made in ignoring the call to delay the consultation until January. The 4 pre-Christmas events were attended by a total of 252 people. The 5 post-Christmas events were attended by a total of 737 people.

### 3.4. Minimal accessibility outside working hours

Out of 38 hours of consultation, only 6 hours were post 6pm with 8 hours on Saturdays. For the 54% of affected residents in full time work this severely limited their access to the consultation.

### 3.5. Disproportionate event length

The length of events did not correspond to the size of the population: Eynsham and Hanborough with populations of 5324 and 3503 were 30 minutes shorter than those provided for Begbroke (pop 800), Bladon (977), Cassington (794), Cumnor (830).

## 4. Displays within venues

### 4.1. Maps



- no whole site map was shown at any greater scale than 1:35,000; most were at 1:100,000
- 10 sectional maps were at scale 1:10000 (should be 1:2500)
- no plan showed how the sections fitted together (further details in Annex 1)

### 4.2. Photomontages

Very few visualisations were available and most of the key views were omitted. A handful were displayed on easels the rest piled randomly on tables with no clear indication of which area of the site they represented. One 1:100,000 map had coloured dots showing the viewpoints but



### 4.3. Display boards

these were not numbered to match the photographs. For further details see Annex 1.

These contained exactly the same information as the Community Consultation leaflet using the same 'sales speak' with no objective information.

## 4.4. Non-Technical Summary

Insufficient copies (2-5) were available. No attention was drawn to them as a source of accessible information. They were generally left on side benches mixed up with the 20 volumes of the PEIR with no room to sit and read - even though there was usually plenty of space on tables with chairs dedicated to completing feedback forms. It contained no index.

## 4.5. PEIR

Volumes were randomly scattered on benches/tables with no seating. There was no master index. Even PVDP's 'experts' were unable to find specific pieces of information requested by individual members of the public.

## 5. Information Event Personnel

### 5.1. Missing 'experts'

At SBW's request, PVDP agreed to send a list of which personnel were present at which event. They failed to do so. It would appear that the hydrology/flood expert did not attend any consultation (even Cassington which is a notorious area for severe flood problems) and neither did Blenheim Estates who are supposed to be responsible for land management. The ecology expert was also a frequent absentee.

### 5.2. Missing spokesperson

Mark Owen-Lloyd of PVDP - the key spokesperson for the entire project - promised to be and has claimed to have been at all 9 consultation events but this is not true. He did not attend Hanborough or Cumnor.

### 5.3. Inconsistent expertise

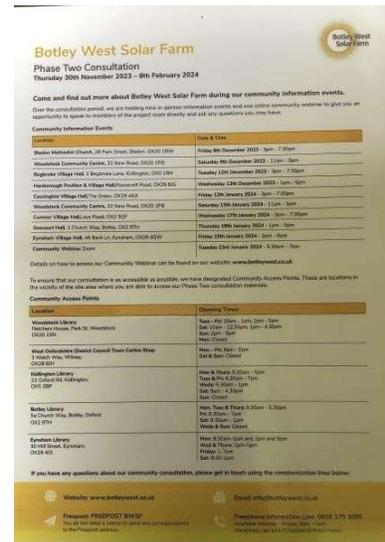
Personnel who were present were not easily identifiable - even as to whether they were from PVDP the developers, RPS the consultants or Counter Context the PR firm - badges worn were not colour coded and were difficult to read. Counter Context could not answer any detailed question about the proposals. Even RPS 'experts' sometimes failed to answer questions in their own area of expertise or gave contradictory answers.

### 5.4. Attitude of personnel

The overwhelming view of those attending events was that it was more a presentation than consultation, they weren't being listened to, that PVDP and RPS personnel were sometimes aggressive and that nothing they said would affect the outcome.

## 6. Community Access Points

No posters or signs were displayed outside or inside any of the five Community Access Points indicating the presence of the documents. In answer to a question from SBW, PVDP said this poster was displayed at every Information Access Point but it was not - as confirmed by librarians.



No use was made of any public buildings nearer to the affected villages, though parish halls and churches would have been more convenient and spacious than the libraries and could have been used.

NONE of the five Community Access Points contained any maps bigger than A3 size and at no better scale than 1:10,000.

There was very limited access to Community Access Points outside working hours due to limited opening, apart from Botley (which had other highly significant issues) and Kidlington.

**Botley Library.** The PEIR documents were still in the 3 large boxes in which they were delivered. These boxes were in a closed room marked 'Staff Only, No Entry'. Inside this room was one small table filled by a computer and monitor and another completed covered with boxes and cleaning materials. It was more as storeroom for unwanted items than office or study area. No notice - even on the "Staff only" door in the main library advertising its presence or indeed the consultation itself.



Botley Library: Information Access Point. Behind this door. No notice advertising the documents available or the Consultation.



Botley Library: Information Access Point. In storeroom behind door marked 'No Entry'. No poster advertising it's presence or anything about the Consultation. No table space.

**Eynsham Library.** Only open for 2 mornings and 4 afternoons each week, closed every lunchtime. The space allocated was totally inadequate. A small desktop already holding a computer was the only table space and the 20 volumes of the PEIR were stuffed in boxes beneath the table. The librarian was apologetic and said the library was too small to provide adequate access. She had not been warned how many volumes would be lodged or how much space would be needed - no site visit had been made by the developer. On the morning the PEIR was delivered she complained that there was too much material to cope with but was simply told "you have a legal obligation to house it" and the boxes were left in a pile for her to find a solution.



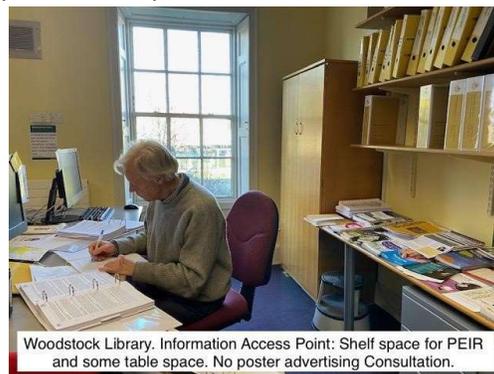
Eynsham library : Information Access Point. Inadequate table space. PEIR boxed and half hidden under table. No advertising of Consultation.

**Kidlington Library** can be considered adequate in terms of space provided for reading but PEIR documents mostly still in piled up in boxes with no explanation.

**Woodstock Library.** Closed Mondays and every lunch time. Nearest to the site and can be considered adequate in terms of location with limited but just about adequate space provided for accessing and studying the PEIR documents but insufficient space to spread out map sections.



Kidlington Library: Information Access Point. Adequate table space but PEIR still boxed and no poster advertising any information about the consultation.



Woodstock Library. Information Access Point: Shelf space for PEIR and some table space. No poster advertising Consultation.

**WODC Shop, Witney.** Only open 9am-5pm Monday-Friday. 7 miles from the site.

## 7. Summary of accessibility by village<sup>1</sup>

**BEGBROKE - Information Event, Tuesday 12 December 2023, 3pm-7.30pm. 46 attended.**

- No Community Access Point
- Population: 800
- No signs to direct people to the venue anywhere in Begbroke. Nothing at the entrance to the car park or on the lane leading to the venue. The car park had about 12 spaces. Nearly ALL were filled by PVDP, RPS or Counter Context's own cars.
- Many experts missing, no Ecology expert present.
- Already packing up at 7pm when some working people arrived with only a few minutes to look at the massive amount of information. Less than 50% of residents could potentially attend during working hours.

**BLADON – Information Event, Friday, 8 December 2023, 3pm -7.30pm. 68 attended**

- No Community Access Point
- Population: 977
- No parking, no disabled access, dangerous narrow pavement approach, insufficient room to display documents. Road outside extremely busy with commuter traffic on a Friday late afternoon. Not a single notice anywhere in Bladon indicating the location. Church or Primary School (in evening) would have been more appropriate venues. 57% of residents unable to attend during working hours

**BOTLEY - Information Event, Friday 18 January 2024, 1pm - 5pm. 49 attended.**

- Community Access Point in Botley Library inadequate - see 2.6(5) for details.
- Population 1370

<sup>1</sup> \*2021 Census figures for populations of Begbroke, Bladon, Botley, Cassington, Combe, Cumnor, Eynsham, Farmoor, Freeland, Hanborough, Kidlington, North Leigh, Tackley, Woodstock and Wootton, and Yarnton.

- Complete lack of advertising resulted in the lowest turnout of any event because it was the ONLY event for which SBW did not supply placards, posters or leaflets due to limited budget and location outside the red line area.
- PVDP did not advertise ANY events and it could be argued that this was a deliberate ploy to cut the numbers of those able to find and attend events. The low turnout of 49 shows what would have happened elsewhere if advertising had been left to PVDP. Turnouts averaging 170 at the other 4 January venues were entirely due to the efforts of SBW.

**CASSINGTON & WORTON – Information Event, Friday 12 January 2024, 3pm- 7.30pm. 195 attended.**

- No Community Access Point
- Population: 794
- Adequate location and accessibility. Many concerns expressed about inability of staff to answer questions. In particular, despite the well-known flooding issues Cassington has, no hydrologist was present. No Ecologist present either. Only advertising supplied by SBW outside and on the door.



Cassington Consultation: As at ALL EVENTS Advertising of venue throughout the village by Stop Botley West group. NO advertising by PVDP

**COMBE**

- No Community Consultation Leaflet delivered.
- No Information Event
- No Community Access Point
- Population of 774 completely disenfranchised

**CUMNOR – Information Event, Wednesday 17 January 2024, 3pm- 7.30pm. 155 attended.**

- No Community Access Point
- Population: 830
- No hydrologist, no ecologist. Mark Owen-Lloyd absent (though later claimed he'd been at every event) and his replacement spent quite a lot of the time in a side room away from the public, not in the hall. Consultees reported that they were met with ignorance or arrogance and that answers to their questions were unavailable, inadequate or contradictory.

**EYNESHAM – Information Event Friday, 19 January 2024, 2pm-6pm, 163 attended**

- Community Access Point: Eynsham Library see 2.6(6) for details.
- Population 5324
- A reasonably accessible venue with adequate nearby parking. Many experts missing.

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- This event ran for only 4 hours despite the large population, finishing before any of the working population could attend.

### FARMOOR

- No information Event
- No Community Access Point  
Population 1521
- Distance to nearest Information Event at Cumnor = 2 miles, no bus

### FREELAND

- No Information Event
- No Community Access Point
- Population 518
- Distance to nearest Information Event at Hanborough = 2 miles, no bus

### HANBOROUGH (comprising Church Hanborough and Long Hanborough) Information Event, Wednesday 13 December 2023, 1pm – 5pm. 80 attended.

- No Community Access Point
- Population 3503 (CH approx 250, LH 3250)
- Finally, a suitable, well known, central venue with sufficient parking resulting in higher attendance despite no signage guiding visitors to the location (other than that provided by SBW).
- However 1pm to 5pm on a weekday is not a suitable time for working people and 12 days before Christmas is a totally unsuitable date.
- Again no Ecology expert present. And, as at other venues, many people left this consultation angry or visibly upset reporting arrogance and bias among RPS experts with frequent mentions of inability of staff to answer their questions. Mark Owen-Lloyd of PVDP was absent (though later claimed he'd been at every event)



### KIDLINGTON

- No Information Event held
- Community Access Point: Kidlington Library see 2.6(7) for details.
- Population 14,644
- This is the largest village adjacent to the site, yet it had no information event. •  
Distance to nearest Information Event at Begbroke = 2.2 miles, no bus

### NORTH LEIGH

- 
- No Information Event
- No Community Access Point
- Population: 1733
- Distance to nearest Information Event at Hanborough = 2.4 miles, half-hourly bus

#### TACKLEY

- No Information Event
  - No Community Access Point
  - Population: 1073
- Distance to nearest Information Event at Woodstock = 5 miles, no direct bus

**WOODSTOCK - Information Events Saturday 9 December 2023, 11am - 3 pm. 57 Attended. Also Saturday 13 January 2024, 11am - 3pm. 175 attended.**

- Community Access Point: Woodstock Library (see section 6 above for details)
- Population: 3521
- Inappropriate venue with very limited parking - the Community Hall is on a narrow residential cul-de-sac, with just 4 parking spaces outside and a further 6 spaces in the car park behind (all used by staff running the consultation). The date chosen was a Saturday just 2 weeks before Christmas - clashing with many local events and opportunities for working people to do their Christmas shopping.



Severe traffic congestion and very limited parking at Woodstock Consultation Event venue



Woodstock Consultation Event. As at all venues, roadside advertising provided by Stop Botley West, only a small notice on the door provided by Developer

- The Town Hall, better known and central, would have been a far more appropriate location. Not a single notice in Woodstock advertised the event or

- advised the location. Several complaints from people who had difficulty finding the location and were then unable to park.
- As they left, several people were close to tears of frustration and desperation that their questions weren't answered and that their concerns and objections had been ignored. The mood was of resignation that the consultation was meaningless and that the project would go ahead regardless same issues apply as to the 9 Dec event. Traffic chaos. No Hydrologist, no Ecologist.

#### **WOOTTON**

- No Information Event
- No Community Access Point
- Population: 602
- Distance to nearest Information Event at Woodstock = 2.5 miles, no bus

#### **YARNTON**

- No Information Event
- No Community Access Point
- Population: 3227
- Distance to nearest Information Event at Begbroke = 1.3 miles, no bus

## 8. Contradictions with Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)

In the Statement of Community Consultation November 2023 in Section 7, 'How will we Consult?', PVDP stated:

'The consultation activities described in this section of the SoCC ensure inclusive, meaningful and open consultation. The activities include a range of methods **to ensure our consultation can be accessed by all members of the community.**'

'These events will be held on different days of the week including weekends, with varied hours **to accommodate different availability within the community.**' [our emphasis]

However, it is patently clear that PVDP's Provision of the Statutory Consultation for the 43,632\* members of the population who would be impacted by the proposal, has been totally inadequate. It has failed significantly to ensure that the consultation could be accessed by all members of that population, or 'to accommodate different availability within the community.'

In the SOCC, Section, PDVD stated: 'A Consultation leaflet will be posted to all properties in the Core Consultation Zone - an initial distance of 2km from the edge of the proposed solar development areas ...' Despite this, consultation leaflets were not delivered to the village of Combe (pop. 774) just 2km from the site.

In summary, regarding adequacy of making the consultation accessible to all, PVDP failed to:

- ensure that residents in full-time employment would be able to attend Information Events
- ensure that those in the northern section of the site had access to an Information Event in their area
- ensure that residents of all parishes would be able to attend Information Events in easily accessible venues
- ensure that all residents received Community Consultation Leaflet in time or at all
- ensure sufficient advertising in the rural communities - such advertising was provided only by Stop Botley West
- provide any evening events extending beyond 7.30pm
- provide Community Access Points with sufficient room to study all PEIR Documents
- provide Community Access Points with adequate opening times

## 9. References:

Transport Statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-statistics-greatbritain-2022/transport-statistics-great-britain-2022-domestictravel#:~:text=How%20we%20commute,-Data%20Source%3A%20TSGB0108&text=The%20average%20usual%20commuting%20time,broadly%20similar%20to%20previous%20years.>

Time Use Statistics:

[https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/incomeandwealth/bulletins/timeuseintheuk/march2023#:~:text=The%20pattern%20of%20daily%20time,and%2018%20minutes%2C%20respectively\).](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/incomeandwealth/bulletins/timeuseintheuk/march2023#:~:text=The%20pattern%20of%20daily%20time,and%2018%20minutes%2C%20respectively).)

UK Labour Market Statistics: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP9366/CBP-9366.pdf>

STOP BOTLEY WEST CAMPAIGN, OXFORDSHIRE, May 2024