



Solar Project

Last year we explained that we had set some big green ambitions to fight the climate emergency in the coming years. Whilst we have our clear plan of achieving net zero by 2027 we know we can also help our local economy make big step changes to fight the climate emergency through the resources we own.

By now you may have heard that we have committed to lend around 2000 acres of our land, in partnership with others, for a nationally significant solar project which is designed to begin addressing the critical energy needs of the grid. The project will be led by Photovolt Development Partners, who have a global track record of delivering large scale solar generation and will be promoting this project in the coming years. We will be the majority land owner, alongside three other land owners, to form the proposed area where, guided by the planning process, these panels would sit.

We all recognise we are in an energy crisis and currently rely heavily on countries beyond our shores for our energy, which is at a premium and shows little sign of getting any better – we are all feeling that pain right now with our energy bills rising. As we lend our land to this

project we do so knowing it could deliver enough clean energy to power 330,000 homes, helping Oxfordshire's homes to be self-sufficient, whilst supporting our collective declarations in the battle against the climate emergency.

As you would expect from a project like this, the opportunities to improve things like biodiversity and connectivity within the project area are huge and, although it's a national project, it's vital local communities have their say. The next few months will see a public consultation take place to help shape the best way to deliver this important project. It's unlikely we will see a decision on this project before 2024 and, should it be approved, construction would then start in 2025, to be complete in 2027. The project is also temporary and we will receive the land back in 30-40 years, with the aim of it leaving a positive legacy in the area.

In bringing together this proposal the professional team has spent several years researching opportunities to deliver it; including how it could sit alongside local communities, its ability to improve biodiversity by connecting habitats, its visual impact and connectivity, the longer term legacy prospects after the project completes and, of course, the vital renewable energy benefits for West Oxfordshire.

We are encouraging the local community to take the time to engage with the public consultation to help shape it before it is nationally presented as an opportunity for government to decide. You can learn more and have your say at www.botleywest.co.uk

It is our belief that the climate emergency must be a focus for us all today. At Blenheim we are uniquely positioned to take action in protecting future generations and supporting global efforts to reduce carbon emissions, but also focus on the impact to our local area.

Whilst we know the arguments both for and against field scale solar are regularly made, particularly in relation to the change from traditional farming to renewable energy sources, we do not think these are exclusive of one another and we do believe our partners will consider all feedback and take utmost care during the promotion and, should it proceed, the delivery and running of the project.

We are proud to make ambitious steps like this project to help the UK's energy needs today and in doing so fight climate change for our generations who follow us.



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