

## Forever Fields community art exhibition illustrates the 5 square miles of countryside set to be lost to solar panels

The Forever Fields Open Art Exhibition will showcase Oxfordshire communities' creative celebration of the beauty, productivity and biodiversity of the countryside that will be lost under solar panels if Botley West Solar Power Station is built.



Oxford, United Kingdom Nov 20, 2023 ([Issuewire.com](http://Issuewire.com)) - FOREVER FIELDS ART EXHIBITION

Worton Hall, Worton Park, Near Cassington, OX29 4SU.



## Exhibition open

**10.30 am – 7 pm Saturday 25th and 10.30 am – 4 pm Sunday 26th November**

**The Forever Fields Project Team Open Art Exhibition will showcase Oxfordshire communities' creative celebration of the beauty, productivity and biodiversity of the countryside that will be lost under solar panels if Botley West Solar Power Station is built.**

The idea was inspired by the prospect of losing **3,400 acres of fields** (equivalent to 2,571 football pitches and 5 square miles) around vast swathes of Oxfordshire to be impacted by Oxfordshire's Botley West Solar Power facility.

It became important to capture images and feelings about these fields before they were lost to the solar panels and to create an archive of all the material generated.

This would mean that if this behemoth of a project is given the go ahead, that the developer (PVDP) and the Blenheim Estate, cannot try to avoid the responsibility to restore fields back to how they are now in 40 years' time.

The Forever Fields project was also designed to enable the affected individuals and communities to express our feelings about the scale of the threat we are all facing.

Over the last few months, people have been submitting works of art to illustrate their love for the meadows and fields that will be lost. The artists, from the young (the youngest is three) to older (the oldest is ninety), include novice, amateur and professional artists who have submitted pieces including watercolours, acrylics and oils, and photography as well as sculpture, poetry, music, embroidery, an immersive film 'Pause Summer' by Charlotte Holmes and birdsong.

A willow coppice sculpture is being created specifically as a focal piece for the exhibition by Andy Goodwin

The result is an evocative body of work that provides a tangible expression of the community's emotion behind the loss. After the exhibition, the work will form an archive of the landscape as a record for future generations.

Jessica Parker's mixed media painting 'Towards Farmoor' was inspired by one of the trips arranged for artists by the Forever Fields organisers to get together in the fields of the Botley West areas and paint outdoors. Jessica's is of the Oxford Green Belt at Cumnor, overlooking the southern section of the proposed development. An iconic view of Oxfordshire that stands to be blighted by the giant solar stations.

Alice Walker, who has just opened Mill Street Arts in Eynsham, has contributed a painting that depicts one of the Wharf Stream Meadows (near Eynsham Lock). She says: "I wanted to show the beautiful biodiversity of plants and the delicate balance of the ecosystem which will be jeopardised and lost if it is dug up and replanted with solar panels. There is no research evidence to show that solar farms are a win for biodiversity. Like many others I walk daily in this area; the act of being out in nature connects me to the planet and to myself. We can use this awareness to guide our actions, to avoid further harm and instead work in harmony with the ecosystem."

Henrietta Batchelor says of her painting in oils: "This is my painting of a field just south of Bladon, which

will be covered in solar panels if the Botley West project goes ahead. I was cycling by early on May morning and thought that this view of the hawthorn bushes, covered in blossom, and the field beyond with growing wheat would be gone forever if the project goes ahead.'

Sarah Bannerman's piece entitled 'View from Tumbledown' encapsulates the view from Cumnor towards Farmoor. She says: "I have looked towards Beacon Hill from my home for 60 years. I have also walked many of the footpaths between Eynsham, Bladon and Church Hanborough: all set to be built over by the solar farm."

Hannah Farncombe created the drawing after being inspired by the wetland meadows at Swinford, at risk from Botley West solar power station. Hannah says: "This is a community project, and our exhibition shows how strongly people in the people feel about the power station being built here, the loss of access to walks in the green fields and meadows around us, and the impact on our mental health."

Anthony Thompson, a driving force behind the project says: "Forever Fields is reflecting how the community feels about the prospect of losing huge swathes of green countryside on its doorstep. The impact on mental health, amenity and community will be devastating. It shows how as human beings we need to be able to walk and breathe within green space. The importance of our health and wellbeing cannot be underestimated.

"The developer has not explained that the reality is that it will remove almost all the green space available in the parishes concerned. For example, in the parish of Hanborough, Botley West represents almost 30% of ALL the space in the parish. Green Belt in particular should not be sacrificed in this way when there are clear alternatives. This project would set a terrible precedent for all the UK.

"And it is disingenuous for the developer to say that this proposal will benefit the local community. Botley West is not a Community Solar Farm. It is a Utility Scale Power Station. It is the wrong proposal in the wrong place at the wrong time for the wrong reasons."

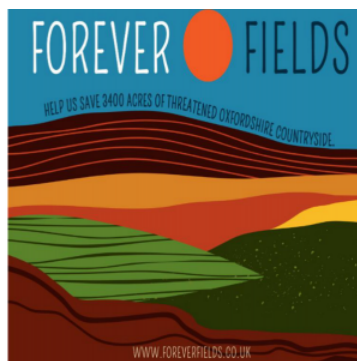
"Blenheim should pull the plans."

**The exhibition is free to attend and will be open 10.30 am – 7 pm Saturday 25th and 10.30 am – 4 pm Sunday 26th November 2023. In addition to the artwork, there will be programme of poetry readings and music throughout the weekend with a performance from Mandolirium.**

The cafe at [Worton Organic Garden](https://www.wortonorganicgarden.co.uk/) will be open throughout the exhibition for refreshments, lunches and dinner on Friday and Saturday evenings.

More details at [www.foreverfields.co.uk](http://www.foreverfields.co.uk)





## Media Contact

Blenheim 7k

sarah.airey@thebuzzworks.co.uk

+447855086447

31 Hill Rise Woodstock

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