

As a hospital based doctor I have not infrequently been challenged by patients who have co-existing mental health issues. There is significant evidence that a walk amongst the beauty of nature is of mental health benefit. I am therefore concerned that the appellants proposed construction of a large solar industrial zone will adversely affect the mental well being of our village residents and the many other users. As a number of other speakers will relate our stretch of the midshires way will be surrounded by effectively an industrial site.

This objection is based on a substantial body of scientific evidence that regular access to green space and walking in natural environments, measurably improves mental health and reduces stress. These benefits are recognizing in clinical guidance which recommends non-pharmacological interventions, including exercise, typically undertaken outdoors as first line treatments for many people with less severe depression. The construction of this Solar Industrial Zone would remove or severely degrade, a low-cost proven mental health resource for the local community.

The national Institute for Clinical Excellence or NICE has produced guidelines that say with less severe depression that a doctor should offer a range of first line treatment options that include an exercise program. Medication is not the automatic step for less severe cases, structured exercise programs are explicitly highlighted as part of first line care. In practice people commonly undertake exercise outdoors in green spaces, such as local woods and fields. There is Evidence from a number of recent publications that suggest additional mental health benefits when exercise occurs in natural environments rather than a purely urban or indoor ones. Currently this part of the midshires way supports this kind of low-cost accessible exercise that NICE encourages providing an environment, that magnifies the mental health benefit benefits of that exercise.

*To have beautiful views transformed by huge metal fences and field upon field of enormous solar panels would have a massive affect on people's physical and mental health and well being. This a time in our history when nature and its benefits are needed more than ever to counter so much negativity in this world and the detrimental effects on our health that this digital era has brought. As someone recovering from a chronic health condition I attribute much of my recovery to being able to access and walk in this beautiful open countryside.*

*Just over 20 years ago I suffered debilitating stress and could not work in a senior management role for several months. I had two young children. Fortunately I was helped to recover. One major plank of my recovery was the healing power of many walk and talk sessions over several months along the Midshires Way to Bunny Old Wood. These wide open green spaces and tranquil vistas helped me to heal in a way I cannot describe other than, this works! A public park or a suburban walk did not have the same effect.*

*I am presently a fit, healthy and successful managing director. I have substantially grown employment and the business I have now run for more than 20 years. Just as important my marriage and family life have also blossomed. Please preserve the Midshires way as it is, for the benefit of present and future generations. Don't spoil this health giving public asset.*

Approving its conversion to an industrial solar zone will therefore directly undermine the quality of a setting well aligned with national mental health guidance. I do not oppose solar energy in principle my concern is that this specific site currently functions as an important, informal public health asset by providing every day free access of a restorative nature. There are many alternative locations and sitings for solar panels that do not entail the sacrifice of such a resource