

Wicked movie starring Ariana Grande films in Buckinghamshire village

11th April

ARIANA GRANDE

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A village in Bucks has been transformed into the land of Oz as a star-studded movie musical prepares to begin filming.



If it weren't for those unmistakable Chiltern Hills behind the toadstool houses, you'd be forgiven for thinking new set photos of the Wizard of Oz spin-off movie, Wicked, were taken on a Universal Studios backlot.

Your eyes are not deceiving you; the new Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo-led musical has set up shop in the quiet Buckinghamshire village of Ivinghoe in Leighton Buzzard.

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The production was expected to commence filming in its new Bucks location on April 6 with a projected end date of July 26.

In drone footage uploaded to Twitter last month, construction of the set was seen to be underway at Vicarage Farm in Ivinghoe, with a network of colourful straw huts springing up.

A planning application for the film set was submitted by Western Sky Limited in September 2022, with a subsequent consultation finding the location "ideally suited in terms of preserving the amenity of the surrounding area".

However, Kristine Evans, who lives in Leighton Buzzard, objected to the development, suggesting that the temporary film set could have a detrimental ecological impact.

She wrote: "The film unit cuts across a biodiverse landscape - once lost, it will take decades to replace.

"The extensive night lighting systems are also disruptive to wildlife and will certainly interfere with their breeding season, giving them a false understanding of day and night.

"As a resident, the loss of the dark sky in the area also fills me with sadness."

Documentation for the film set development also proposes work experience for production students at the Tring Performing Arts School in Hertfordshire.

The site in Ivinghoe was selected after a review of over thirty possible filming locations, including the Warner Brothers studio in Levesden.

It comes after the approval of the Wycombe Film Studios development last month and amid a boom of filmmaking in Buckinghamshire.

The so-called West London cluster, consisting of studio spaces around Bucks including Pinewood Studios in Iver and Shinfield Studios in Reading, are projected to put the county on the map as a world-class filmmaking destination.

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