

PLANNING REF : 241567
PROPERTY ADDRESS : St. Brelades
: Longwater Lane, Finchampstead, Wokingham, Berkshire
: RG40 4NX
SUBMITTED BY : Mr And Mrs Tina and Graeme Grieve
DATE SUBMITTED : 24/07/2024

COMMENTS:

We are objecting wholeheartedly to this development on several grounds.

Firstly it is our understanding that this plot has never been part of Wokinghams development plan as it lays outside of the settlement boundary for the village. The land lays close to the old gravel pits which are now in the process of being turned into nature reserve. As the land level of the pits are not the original level, there can be no retrospective, current or historical information, that is relevant regarding flooding in the area. It is very clear that parts of the land to the south of the plot is prone to high water table levels. The past few winters have seen the land south of the plot and surrounding nature pools have been un-passable due to flooding.

It would be incredibly shortsighted to assume that lakes dug in the area will remedy any potential problems in years to come. They haven't so far. As dog walkers we know the issues we have here. The land, both the plot and the new nature reserve and surrounding areas need to be monitored for several years to come and not having surveys done in the dry weather. On the environmental side of things, we understand from the Environment agency, the situation worldwide with climate change impact will only get worse, surely it is short sighted to ignore the issues we are experiencing Now and ignore what we the local villagers know, have and do experience ,for surveys taken by companies paid for by the developers and place homes in direct path of problems in the future.

We noticed that the developer mentioned lighting requirements for the development and have put forward so called sympathetic down lights. It is worth noting that lights in the village are not the norm and with this plot being so close to the nature reserve, any lighting would impact on the village and region. We also noticed it was regarded as normal to have lighting and that impact to the reserve would not be impactful due to the lights already being omitted from the cricket pitch and football pitch in Eversley. It would be worth noting several points on this issue. First the lights are not in the village, they lay outside the area and come under, we understand Yateley, Hampshire. Secondly historically those lights predate the gravel pits and the nature reserve. As they are in the next county with much tree protection they do not impact on the village or the reserve. Massaging information is not a good idea!

The water treatment plant we understand is now running at full capacity and as regular walkers along the river we can say that the treatment plant discharges into the river 24/7. Currently, we are concerned by the environmental impact more homes will have on our rivers health. Will the developer be forced to invest in a much needed extension to these works to accommodate the extra pressure these household will place on it. Or are we expected to cope when

the whole system collapses. What do we all do then? Will Wokingham county council involve themselves once the village is ankle deep in sewage? These comments might sound fanciful but do you live here? No you don't. This is a very strong concern for the villagers.

We noted that as part of the layout plan, the public footpath which currently runs from Longwater lane to Cricket hill along side the plot will be diverted to allow access to the nature reserve. Have the developers got the permission of the nature reserve owners. We doubt that very much as for both human, animal and fauna safety and protection, access to the sight would no doubt be restricted for these reasons and should not be accessible 24 hours a day.

Going back to the public footpath, once the development was built this would become an unpleasant dark alley, not a pleasant public country path used by many local residents.

Land in this village, Longwater Lane, Burnmoor meadow, the allotments, land along and leading both sides of Longwater Road to the Blackwater river to name a few, in fact the entire village is prone to higher water table. We may not get flooding from the river, we do every year experience very poor ground drainage. Even the building of the houses on Burnmoor meadow some 30 years ago had a massive impact on the gardens which lay behind them on Longwater Lane. The ground is silt and has very little structure to it. It holds moisture for most of year. Water during heavy rain falls, runs down hill at Jubilee road, or from high ground leading from St James church on the hill, and flows down hill to collect. The plot in question lays at the bottom of this water flow and historically has had bad drainage.

It is also mentioned in the planning application that there is a shop. Well not really, unless you want a coffee and cake or a filled roll. They supply very little produce and what they do supply is very expensive, not good if you are encouraging affordable housing. Most families cannot afford to buy the few exclusive and extravagant items they sell, you'd be hard pushed to buy milk or a loaf of bread for less than 4.

We used to have a small excellent village shop and filling station but sadly they closed several years ago. Our new shop is basically someone's hobby and not really fit for use for young families to buy emergency supplies.. On this point, it is worth noting that families with one car or no cars are restricted to shopping. Having only one supermarket, a small Waitrose in the next county. By car it is true it takes only about 5 mins to get to, but it is quite impossible and terribly unsafe to walk to. In fact trying to walk anywhere out of this village, with scarce or non existent footpaths. What footpaths there are in this village are narrow and not safe for families to use. I myself was almost hit in the head by a van wing mirror whilst walking from the Greyhound pub to the old monument junction. The footpath is only 3 feet wide at most. Families wishing to walk to Eversley for the The Chequers pub or The Frog and Wicket for instance need to cross Longwater Road as the path runs out. The problem is the crossing point is blind and dangerous and is inches into the 30 zone.

Our GP surgery is full to bursting and a further 40 households would place incredible pressure on those services. The car park is rammed full on a daily basis, the car park at Avery corner is constantly full with the staff parking from Finchampstead School. Again another issue for potential parents needing to use this school if they can't use the Village School. Walking to the practice is impossible and unsafe we have no alternative but to drive on very poorly maintained roads. The surgery is already having to cope with extra households from the Nine mile ride extension end of the Arborfield development plus new homes planned for Rooks Nest Farm development on Barkham Ride and retirement home situated on Barkham ride to name a few.

We understand there are no current dental places in Finchampstead. We have to attend a dental practice in Lightwater, a 30 min drive away. This village does not have its own GP or dentist.

The village school is full and over the years as it has had to expand which has had a negative impact on the residents who live close by with high noise levels with screaming and shouting getting much worse. This situation will only get worse if more children need to use these facilities. Parking around the school has been an ongoing issue and will get worse if these houses are built because we can assure you due to the unsafe nature of our footpaths and speeding traffic through the village even in the 30 zones, no one will walk their children to school and will instead use their cars. Parents already obstruct driveways, park on double yellow lines and generally cause disruption and near accidents on The Village daily. Few park in the memorial hall car park choosing instead to get as close to the school gates as possible. This situation will only get more dangerous. It is also worth noting going back to the lighting of the new development and how this is not the norm for this village, we believe that a crossing for the school was rejected due to pedestrian lights and it was rejected because it was not the norm. Please see previous notes on Finchampstead School parking.

We have no bus service in this village unless you count one bus one day a week only on a Tuesday morning. This village is totally cut off from public transport, the closest train station is Crowthorne again incredibly unsafe and a lengthy walk to get to it. Cycling in this area is a case of taking your life in your hands. Narrow roads, no verges lots of traffic and fast and unsafe speeds.

This development will not only put terrible pressure on local resources, such as they are, it will put pressure on the local community. It will not benefit locals in anyway as there are plenty of affordable homes being built in Arborfield, Swallowfield and all around Wokingham. These 40 homes we believe will make no appreciative difference to the housing stock numbers required.

These homes or development will impact negatively on this small village, our mental health will be impacted by further struggles to obtain medical services, will take away from the little open space we have and cause more issues with poor water drainage and impact negatively on our fragile local environment and our surroundings.

We strongly suggest if 40 more homes are needed they should be tagged onto the already enormous developments elsewhere around our region. Wokingham has become one enormous housing development, so honesty does it need to squeeze 40 more houses into a totally unsuitable sight?

Thank you for reading.