

Ickham, Lit lebourne and Wickhambreaux Conservation Society

Planning Application CA/23/00484: 300 houses at The Hill, Lit lebourne

I write on behalf of the above-named Society. Stodmarsh lies within Wickhambreaux Parish.

Please note our earlier response to this application, sent to you in May. The Society continues to object to this application. Since the public were last invited to comment, more documents have been submitted by the applicant, no doubt at great expense, in an attempt to convince the LA of the merits of the proposal. There is always lingering doubt about the true impartiality of reports commissioned and paid for by a developer.

However, what is not in doubt is that the situation on the ground has changed little. The site is still agricultural land, still outside the built confines of the village, and is not designated for development in CCC's Local Plan. It is still out-of-scale with the existing village, the school is still full and appointments at the doctor's surgery are harder to get than ever. The road safety issues still cause concern to KCC Highways as well as the Parish Council, who note the problems caused by ever increasing volumes of traffic creating hazards for pedestrians and cyclists. There is still likely to be damage to the ecology.

KCC's team for Flood and Water Management, Natural England and the Environment Agency are opposed to development here. The problem is still the potential effect of further pollution on the Stodmarsh NNR, the Preston Marshes and the Lit le Stour river.

The most significant aspect of the new proposals is the 'solution' to achieving nutrient neutrality for the development by building a politely named Water Recycling Centre to deal with sewage and waste water, to be run by Severn Trent. The technology is in its infancy, unproven and without independent verification for its effectiveness. There are no dimensions given for the Recycling Centre but it is likely to be a large and dominating piece of industrial plant, quite unsuited to the edge of a Conservation Area. What is made clear in the document provided by Water Environment Ltd is that there will be noise and odour, a truly unpleasant and unacceptable addition to the village.

It is then proposed to discharge the treated water into the Nailbourne, a shallow, intermittent chalk stream which in summer is often dry. Water would travel through a pipe, which surveys have shown to have structural damage, with cracks and tree roots, pass as an open stream through a community orchard, where children play and eventually enter the Little Stour, a rare and endangered chalk stream.

There is also concern that infiltration-based SUDS are unsuitable for this site and not appropriate for surface water drainage.

'Sludge would need to be removed from the plant and disposed of at a suitable treatment facility.' Where? And how often? And by how many tankers?

The whole plan is absolutely dreadful and completely unacceptable.

We ask you to pay particular attention to the paper sent to you by Mr Tim Bostock on behalf of Littlebourne Parish Council. This is a truly independent report, not involving financial gain. As well as the recent proposal, it covers the importance of the Little Stour as a chalk stream and the wider conservation context.

A site such as the one proposed requires a main drainage connection and unless such sums as funds are available to upgrade the whole system and the Newnham Valley WwTW no permissions for development should be granted. Please refuse this application.

Christine Le Jeune (Secretary)

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