



HOUSE-BUSTERS



The Newsletter of the 5 Villages Preservation Trust

April 2005

A big thank you

A warm welcome to the first newsletter of the 5 Villages Preservation Trust. It has only been a few short months since the formation of the Trust, in response to the leaking of plans to build on the 600 acres at Kentford Heath; but what a lot has happened in that short time!

Firstly, I must **THANK YOU** for joining the 5VPT and for the incredible amount of your support you have given us at our recent meetings. Your support is greatly appreciated and will help to STOP the proposed Watermark development at Kentford Heath.

The Trust itself has a core group of 8 trustees that actively works with several wider groups of local people. We have a general group that includes people from Tuddenham, Kennett, Herringswell, Red Lodge and Kentford, as well as observers from parish and town councils and district and county councils. We have developed sub groups working on action plans, conservation issues, policy and planning, publicity and fund raising. We have experts advising us on a number of transport and planning issues and, of course, we are talking to lawyers, planners and politicians. For the names of trustees please see our contact details on the back page.

We now know a lot more about how this development proposal came about, although the more we learn the more questions that seems to raise. Apparently, the initial idea for was to have an ice rink in Mildenhall, "to provide distractions for the youth". Few would argue that Mildenhall residents are badly served with such leisure opportunities, but to take such a patronising stance, without the clear involvement or participation of the community, beggars belief. However, I digress, what is more difficult to understand is how this idea ended up as support for a mile long rowing strip, 4500 homes and all the ancillary building suggested in the Watermark proposal 6 miles away from Mildenhall in Kentford.

We know Forest Heath District Council has expended considerable amounts of time and money on the support of this proposal with no idea about the need for such a quantity of housing, the capacity of the infrastructure



to support it or even if we have any budding rowers locally! We are, therefore, stuck with a legacy of decisions that need reviewing. Authorities must make decisions based on facts, not fads or whims. They have to include the views of local people as opposed to deciding what is best for them. They have to look at whether a proposal makes sense, whether it is sustainable in terms of the environment, the local economy and socially, whether it is actually needed, and whether it will do what it sets out to do. It is the firm intention of the Trust to make sure our local council live up to these responsibilities.

There are several significant points that will help us gauge the Trust's progress over the coming months:

- We have made strong representations to the Regional Plan;
- We have talked to the District Council about how the Local Development Framework includes the input of local people;
- We have asked the District Council to withdraw their support for Watermark;
- We have asked the land owners to not sell their land;

We will closely monitor what happens and let members know as soon as possible through the press, further newsletters and the web site.

Please feel free to contact myself or other members if you have any questions or you can offer us any help. People have been very generous so far with their time, donations, help and expertise, for which we are very grateful, but we know we will only succeed with your continued support – from buying a car sticker, attending our summer fete or giving free expert advice – all is needed and very much welcomed.

With many thanks

Andrew Holman, Chair 5VPT

Car window stickers

There are 5 'Housebuster' car window stickers enclosed with your newsletter. If you would like to support the 5VPT, please donate **£1** per sticker (why not ask your friends and family to help?) and send a cheque to **The Secretary, The Beehive, Herringswell, IP28 6ST**. Please return any unused stickers to us at the same address. Any money raised will go towards stopping the development.

Dates for your diary

Next meeting of the 5VPT Trustees
21 April 2005

Next general meeting - by invitation (this meeting is for Parish Councils, District Councillors and other interested parties) **Thursday 12 May 2005 at 6.30pm**

Open meeting for all to attend at the Red Lodge Millenium Centre on **Thursday 9th June at 6.30pm**

REFERENDUMS

REMEMBER TO VOTE NO!

Kentford Referendum - **Wednesday 20 April 2005 - polling takes place 4.00pm to 9.00pm**

Tuddenham St Mary Referendum - **Monday 18 April 2005 - polling as above**

Summer Fete to be held in the field behind the Live & Let Live Club on **Sunday 10 July**. Details still to be organized by the Fete Committee. Suggestions have been, bouncy castle, Dog agility display, vintage cars and vintage cycle displays. Perhaps also a car boot sale.

How can I help?

Write to your local Councillors, MP, Parish Council and Press. You will find a full list of addresses on www.5vpt.org.uk

Send a donation to the 5VPT to help with our activities. The address is The Secretary, 5VPT, The Beehive, Herringswell, Suffolk IP28 6ST and cheques should be made payable to the 5VPT.

Find 5 other friends and organise a Parish Referendum. See our website for details, www.5vpt.org.uk, and make sure you get everyone in your village to turn out.

Tell your friends, family, neighbours and work colleagues about us. If they would like to join the 5VPT, they can do so on our website www.5vpt.org.uk or you can print a membership form off there for them to fill in and return to us.

Share this newsletter with anyone who may be interested.

If you think that you can help in any other way, please contact us right away. We are particularly looking for a Solicitor, Lawyer or anyone with legal expertise who would be willing to do some Pro Bono work on behalf of the 5VPT.

theSpin

Orion suggests

Watermark will be one of Europe's most advanced sustainable communities

A soft edged lake will provide new habitats for wildlife

Provide a range of water sports activities

Will create local jobs

The rowing strip can be topped up with no impact on existing water levels. Orion are saying that it will be filled from the collection of rainwater from the housing

Not all the 600 acres will be developed

4,500 homes will be built on the site

Only neighbourhood shops will be built

We will fully consult with local people

It is not allocated as a greenfield site and has industrial land use around the proposed location. On the land there have been aggregate extractions, landfill and intensive pig farming



The beautiful woods that are under threat, and (above right) the stone curlew

Orion Land and Leisure exposed!

Richard Olsen has:

- Previously been a Director of 10 dissolved companies
- resigned from 3 Directorships
- 4 live Directorships

The combined result from the last accounts from the 17 companies he has been involved with is a total loss of £297,000.

NOTE:

In the Public Meeting held at the Live and Let Live Club in Herringswell, when asked, he stated he had only held two jobs since 1985.

...and the Reality - a shortened version!

5VPT corrects

The result

According to the government's sustainable communities plan, new plans should:

- Be built on brownfield sites
- Meet housing need (ensuring that housing numbers set out in planning guidance for the South East are delivered. This is already set out for the area in Forest Heath)

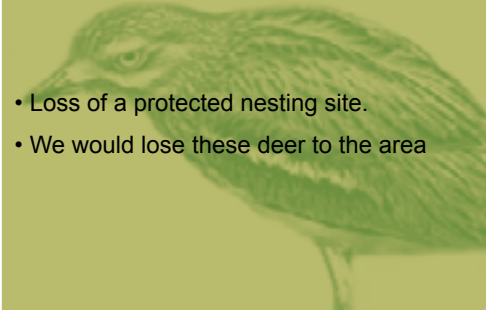
The homes will not be for local people but targeted to people working at Stanstead Airport as it enlarges and also Cambridge overspill

The Orion plan has nothing to do with sustainable communities

- This area currently has the protected Stone Curlew nesting on this and adjacent land. They would not survive the development - these creatures need peace and quiet and will be frightened not only with the development but with the thousands of people wandering around the nature trails.

- This area is currently home to several types of deer, including Roe, Red Deer and Reeves Muntjack, the Muntjack requires an abundance of thick cover. Roe require pockets of deciduous woodland on land that is not intensely farmed - or built on!
- Suffolk has a population of Red Deer that are seen at certain times in the Herringwell woods and Kentford heaths when the different groups are formed for breeding. The population density of Red Deer, as with all other species, varies greatly with the type of terrain and food availability. The development will destroy both.

- Loss of a protected nesting site.
- We would lose these deer to the area



There are already 8 other rowing clubs and lakes either built or under construction in the region. These are all in areas where there is water and also near established rowing communities, e.g. Cambridge.

This lake is a straight ugly strip. It would become unused eyesore like so many sporting 'fads' built in the wrong areas without a community to sustain it.

Our expert advice has suggested the business park and on site sports employment will offer jobs up to 10% of the population at most. This would lead to 9,500 people working elsewhere, using the A14 to commute to the Stansted extension, Cambridge or London. Also using the local roads to Mildenhall, Newmarket or Bury St Edmunds

This will do little to create local work. Residents will either be forced to find work elsewhere or will come from elsewhere to live here, resulting in traffic chaos

This region has the least rainfall in England and there is a prediction of drought conditions for the future. There is already a water shortage in this region. To fill this concrete lined rowing strip will take 60 million gallons. Our experts advise that to keep it topped up will take at least 13 million gallons annually. This is equivalent to some local farmers extraction licences! There is no further water available without local farmers giving up their quotas. The Environment Agency have predicted a serious water deficit by 2017. This area is marked as one with no extra water available

To fill this strip and keep it filled, will require water to be extracted from an already depleted water-table. This development will significantly LOWER the water table

20% or 120 acres of the site will be covered in concrete and tarmac for roads and paths. A further 40% will be taken for houses and buildings

There will be some green spaces re-created but the current greenfields will be destroyed. Local woods will also be affected

These homes will be built not because they are needed in the area, but to fund a rowing strip that is not needed. There are already large scale developments in Newmarket and Red Lodge that meet our area requirements

This development will need to attract people to live here from elsewhere. This is against all policies

Without local shops people will be forced to travel. The extra 20,000 vehicle movements a day will need to be accommodated on local roads and car parks in Newmarket, Bury and Mildenhall

Local car parks are at breaking point, they will go into overload. Already busy roads will reach grid lock

Forest Heath District Council have been urging Orion to hold public consultations on the proposals for a considerable time. They promised this would happen soon in January 2004; they did not book a hall for a local consultation until February 2005. This was then cancelled with a promise it would happen some time in the future. They feel they have a greater chance of the development getting approval if they can get their plans included in the Regional Spatial Strategy before they have to face public opposition

They have to have a consultation BUT they will only hear the answers they want! They do not want to hear that this is not needed, not wanted and not sustainable

It is not intensive pig farming it is extensive pig farming. Outdoor pigs are extensive, almost by definition. As far as gravel extraction goes, there used to be pits which were restored many years ago to arable pasture. This covered only 12.83 acres of the 600 acre site (i.e. 2%)

A site remains a greenfield site until an Authority actively allocates it otherwise. It is obviously agricultural land and therefore "greenfield". The Government's town planning policies, especially relating to new housing development, focus on reusing land that has been "previously developed".

Our recent activities include:

- The Herringswell Village Poll (referendum) where 100% of the voters voted AGAINST the Watermark development. See the Press Release (right) for details.
- Numerous letters and articles in the press, such as this from the **Newmarket Journal**, (below).
- Many many additions to our huge website, including all our Press Releases and everything we know about the Watermark developers.
- Meetings with local Parish Councils; Forest Heath District Council; Suffolk Preservation Society and many other organisations.

'We don't want village'

Objectors to the proposed new Watermark village – which would see up to 4,500 new homes built near Newmarket – have turned out in force for a poll on the development.

Following an emergency meeting of Herringswell Parish Council in February, residents and councillors voted unanimously to demand that Forest Heath Council call a referendum, asking villagers whether they agree to the new town development.

The poll was held on Thursday and every single person who voted, voted against the plans.

The question on which the referendum was held was: "Do you agree to the new town development being promoted in Forest Heath by London development company Orion Land and Leisure/Watermark on approximately 600 acres of open countryside between Kentford, Kennett, Herringswell and Red Lodge presently owned by the Mays Smith and Kiddy Trusts?"

Of the 124 people entitled to vote, 77 took part in the poll – a turnout of 61 per cent. Andrew Holman, chairman of campaigning group the Five Villages Preservation Trust, said: "We are clearly delighted at the turnout and such a united result. This referendum clearly shows the strength of feeling about the proposal.

"We now need to pass this message on to the district council, the developers and the trusts selling this land to show them that we will not stand idly by while they plot to concrete our environment with an obscene proposal of this sort."

The proposals are for a development centred around a 1,500 metre rowing lake and is backed by Olympic gold medallist Sir Steve Redgrave. No planning application has been submitted and it is not thought the plans will go to Forest Heath Council before the end of 2006.

10 March 2005

5 Villages Preservation Trust Press Release

Herringswell residents vote in Parish Referendum against plans for local Watermark development.

Residents of Herringswell turned out in force today to vote in a parish referendum on the following motion:

"Do you agree to the new town development being promoted in Forest Heath by London development Company Orion Land and Leisure/Watermark on approx 600 acres of open countryside between Kentford, Kennett, Herringswell and Red Lodge presently owned by the Mays Smith and Kiddy Trusts?"

Turnout was a massive 61% of the electoral role, obviously far higher than any other local election. The count took place immediately after the booths closed at 9pm and the returning officer Mr David Burnip (CE Forest Heath District Council) announced to a packed hall the result, a unanimous 100% vote against the development proposal.

Comment

Andrew Holman (chair of the 5 Villages Preservation Trust) comments "we are clearly delighted at today's turnout and such a united result, this referendum clearly shows the strength of feeling about the proposal. We now need to pass this message on to the District Council, the developers and the trusts selling this land to show them that we will not stand idly by whilst they plot to concrete our environment with a obscene proposal of this sort."

"For the past 4 years Forest Heath District Council has been supporting this development in private under the mistaken view they have a mandate 'to expand the district's portfolio of visitor attractions, **worthy of a premier holiday destination** by facilitating the watermark project'. It remains unclear to us why on earth they dreamt up the notion that the people of Forest Heath ever wanted, needed or ever thought possible that we could become such a holiday destination."

"Having decided on this course of action, our councillors in their wisdom, agreed to 'to influence the political and regulatory climate in such a way as to improve the chances for the development. This would include incorporation into the Local Development Framework and lobbying Government and other decision makers'². We are appalled at the behaviour of our local council, they have openly admitted to distorting the local Government consultation process. Such actions leave a lot to be desired. They are making strategic planning decisions regarding the future of Forest Heath before any consultation with local people. Once again they are acting in the sole interest of Forest Heath District Council. We should all bear in mind that the council is there to do our bidding, to maintain and improve the quality of our lives, they have wasted our money on this scheme and shown some serious insidious agendas at work with their actions".

¹ Quote from "Reach for the Sky" FHDC Leisure and Cultural Services Plan 2003 – 2007.

² Quote from Major Development Working Group minutes of 3 December 2003.

HOUSEBUSTER facts

There are already 8 rowing lakes in the Region, 3 of which are half way though being completed. We do not need another one!

No provisions have been made for hospitals

Expert advice states an extra 20,000 vehicle movements a day will need to be accomodated on local roads

No provisions have been made for an A11/A14 link road

This is the driest area in England, the Environment Agency predicting by the year 2017 we will have a critical water shortage.

The majority of the people who will live in "Watermark" will be travelling to Stanstead Airport and Cambridge - causing further conjection on the A14

Noise and light pollution - this area of England is one of outstanding natural beauty with no light pollution. This proposed development will destroy this. The noise will drive away the wildlife.



Contacts

Andrew Holman work: **0870 7404887** home: **01638 751806** mobile: **07801 305345**

Dr Allan Marchington: **01638 750374**

or write to: **The Secretary, The Beehive,**

Herringswell, IP28 6ST Website: **www.5vpt.org.uk**