

GOOD EVENING MR CHAIRMAN, FELLOW COUNCILLORS, THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF CHILHAM PARISH COUNCIL AND THE OLD SAWMILL REDEVELOPMENT CONSULTATION GROUP.

THIS GROUP WAS SET UP TO ASSESS THE IMPACT ON OUR PARISH OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF THE OLD SAWMILL SITE FOR PRIVATE AND SOCIAL HOUSING AND ALSO FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAND EAST OF STATION APPROACH.

WE HAVE CONDUCTED A THOROUGH AND RIGOROUS ASSESSMENT OF THE TWO PLANNING APPLICATIONS FROM THE FIRST MEETING IN CHILHAM CHURCH WITH THE HELP OF OFFICERS FROM ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL TO OUR OWN MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS OF CHILHAM PARISH COUNCIL AND A WIDE SELECTION OF PARISHIONERS FROM CHILHAM, SHOTTENDEN AND OLD WIVES LEES. THE RESULTING COMMENTS AND SEVERAL MORE FROM OTHER PARISHIONERS ARE RECORDED ON YOUR WEBSITE.

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK CAROL RIDINGS FOR HER ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS WE POSED. THESE HAVE BEEN HELPFUL IN COMING TO OUR DECISION.

BECAUSE OF THE ONGOING CONCERNS THAT WE HAVE OVER CERTAIN UNRESOLVED ISSUES WE OBJECT TO BOTH APPLICATIONS IN THEIR CURRENT FORM FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS.

OLD SAWMILL DEVELOPMENT:

1. WHEN WE WERE FIRST INFORMED THAT THE OLD SAWMILL SITE COULD BE USED FOR HOUSING THE NUMBER OF HOUSES SUGGESTED WAS 30. THIS NUMBER HAS NOW INCREASED TO 40. WE FEEL THAT THE HOUSES ARE PACKED TOO CLOSELY TOGETHER AND MORE EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PUT ON PROVIDING A PLAY AREA OR OPEN SPACE FOR SMALLER CHILDREN ON THE SITE.

2. WE ALSO FEEL THAT IT WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR VEHICLES ENTERING AND LEAVING THE SITE AT BUSY TIMES. AS I AM SURE YOU ARE AWARE, THE OLD SAWMILLS SITE IS VERY CLOSE TO THE A28/A252 JUNCTION WHICH HAS SEEN MANY ACCIDENTS OVER THE YEARS.

THESE ARE OFTEN CAUSED BY DRIVER FRUSTRATION AFTER WAITING IN A LONG QUEUE TO CONTINUE ALONG THE A28 TOWARDS CANTERBURY. WE FEEL THAT SOME IMPROVEMENTS SHOULD BE MADE HERE.

BECAUSE OF THE LONG QUEUE AT THIS JUNCTION WE ALSO HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT THE AMOUNT OF TRAFFIC USING BRANCH ROAD AS A RAT RUN. SCHOOL CHILDREN WALK TO THE FACILITIES AT THE RECREATION GROUND ON A REGULAR BASIS AND PATIENTS WALK TO THE DOCTOR'S SURGERY. THERE IS NO FOOTPATH PROVIDED HERE.

ALSO, AGAIN BECAUSE OF THE QUEUING MANY VEHICLES MAKE THE ILLEGAL LEFT TURN AT BAGHAM LANE TO AVOID THE JUNCTION. OFTEN AT HIGH SPEED.

3. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT A CROSSING POINT IS BEING PROVIDED TO CROSS THE A28 AT BAGHAM LANE. WE FEEL THAT THE ROADWAY IS TOO NARROW TO SAFELY PROVIDE THIS BECAUSE OF THE USE BY HGV'S AND FARM VEHICLES. WE ALSO SUGGEST THAT THE SPEED LIMIT BE REDUCED TO 30 MPH.
TRAFFIC ACCELERATES AT HIGH SPEED TOWARDS ASHFORD AND MORE EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO SLOW THE TRAFFIC IN BOTH DIRECTIONS AT THIS POINT.
WE ALSO FEEL THAT THE POSITION OF THE PROPOSED FOOTPATH IN BAGHAM LANE MUST BE MADE CLEAR IN RELATION TO THE CROSSING ON THE A28.
TRAFFIC SURVEYS BY CHILHAM PARISH COUNCIL AND OUR LOCAL PACT GROUP SUPPORT THESE CONCERNS.
4. WE SUPPORT JIM SMITH'S COMMENT ABOUT THE DISPOSAL OF SURFACE WATER AND DRAINAGE FROM THE SITE BECAUSE OF THE CLOSE PROXIMITY OF THE FISHING LAKE AND RIVER STOUR. POSITIVE ANSWERS ARE REQUIRED HERE TO ERADICATE THESE CONCERNS.
5. WITH REGARD TO SCHOOL PLACES, WE SUPPORT ST MARY'S SCHOOL IN ITS DESIRE TO EDUCATE CHILDREN FROM OUR PARISH AND FOR PARENTAL CHOICE AFTER PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE. WE DO NOT SUPPORT THE STATEMENT MADE BY LEE EVANS PARTNERSHIP THAT EXCESS PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN SHOULD GO TO CHARTHAM. WE WOULD HOPE THAT CHILDREN FROM THE NEW DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT BLOCK CHILDREN FROM LONG ESTABLISHED FAMILIES GOING TO THEIR LOCAL SCHOOL IF DESIRED.
6. DEVELOPER'S CONTRIBUTION: WE WOULD SUPPORT ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL'S EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE. WE WOULD REQUIRE DETAILS OF HOW THIS MONEY SHOULD TO BE USED AND WOULD WANT TO CONSULT LOCALLY BEFORE A FINAL DECISION WAS MADE.

STATION APPROACH DEVELOPMENT:

1. WE NOTE THAT THE DEVELOPER IS WILLING TO PROVIDE 15 PARKING SPACES ON THE LAND EAST OF CHILHAM RAILWAY STATION. WE WOULD WANT THESE TO BE FREE AND WOULD LOOK ON THIS AS THE MINIMUM NUMBER REQUIRED BECAUSE OF CURRENT AND PROBABLE USE OF THE STATION IN THE FUTURE.
2. THERE IS SERIOUS LOCAL CONCERN REGARDING HGV ACCESS TO THE COMMERCIAL SITE ALONG STATION APPROACH AS THIS IS CURRENTLY USED FOR CAR PARKING. WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT PARKING ON ONE SIDE OF THE ROAD SHOULD CONTINUE AND THIS IS ESSENTIAL AND SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION IN ANY DISCUSSIONS REGARDING HGV USE OF THE SITE.