

The following is a comment on application **P230457/F** by **Geoffrey Standland**

### **Nature of feedback: Objecting to the application**

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**Comment:** Objection: Grovesend Farm Site Development  
Herefordshire Planning Application no. 230457

#### Conservation.

Set out in Lakeland and affirmed in Barnwell (Court of Appeal) the consideration as to the effect of a proposal upon a Conservation Area 'must be regarded as having considerable importance and weight' and that if a proposal would fail to preserve or enhance a Conservation Area there is a 'strong presumption that permission should not be granted unless desirable on the grounds of some public interest'. No public interest argument has been advanced.

The Grovesend site is wholly inappropriate, being a site of a wildflower meadows, a precious open space for the village, and a haven for wildlife.

#### Character.

Herefordshire's own adopted Character Statement (2007) refers to Grovesend Field as 'an intrinsic element of this part of the village (making) a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the area'. It identifies views across the development site and the 'full importance' (of this and other open spaces) in views from Jubilee Drive.

The planning application refers to consultations with the Council's Conservation Officer, but not the adopted Character Statement, nor any attempt to measure the impact of the proposals against that baseline assessment. The presumption that harm from the development can be mediated by the development will be very difficult to prove and is a doubtful deliverable.

#### Road Safety

The Herefordshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2012) noted: "The local road network would not sustain intensification of use".

Old Church Road is a single-track lane between its junction with Walwyn Road, and its junction with Mill Lane:

- The width for two cars to safely pass each other on a rural road is not available.
- Much of Old Church Road, up to Old Orchard Lane, is single track (only 3.0m in places), and it remains narrow thereafter right up to the junction with Walwyn Road.
- The road itself is in dire need of repair and in its current state is not fit to take an increase in traffic. The surface of the road requires reconstruction, rather than just repair, and surface water drainage issues need to be addressed.
- Formal pavements on Old Church Road are very limited, both in size and availability.
- Old Church Road forms an important part of the village amenities and is used by pedestrians, cyclists, and horse-riders.
- The current traffic situation on Old Church Road does present daily concerns and should this development go ahead the impact of the additional traffic will be significant.
- Stone Drive is narrow, with poor sight lines and it is frequently restricted by parked vehicles.
- Pedestrian safety is paramount for access to the pharmacy and Doctor's surgery and the wider village amenities.

#### Ecology

The ecology report in the application uses an outdated statement/map on Special Wildlife Sites in Herefordshire

and has not identified the Great Crested Newt (a nationally protected species) and other species for the site in adjacent land, nor identified the nearby bodies of water. Fox, Reptiles, Amphibians, and other mammals are seen regularly. Remarkably, an otter has recently been observed on a tracker camera. The field provides home territories with corridors to link the key habitats of many of these species that are resident or actively using the field and adjoining habitats. As well as the newts, other amphibians use this too, together with grass snakes and slow worms.

I am not convinced the ecology of the site has been properly researched, and this has contributed to minimal consideration of the potential impact on the current wildlife established in the proposed development area. To correct this a full Ecology Report needs to be submitted. This would include an environmentally well-designed, long-term habitat creation scheme, with cover vegetation planting, wildlife pond(s), and a safe corridor provision on and off site.

#### NDP Related Concern

There are better suited alternative sites for this sort of development e.g., the Mill Lane site. The Mill Lane location, adjacent to the New School, was an original choice when the village was asked to vote previously, however, there is now confusion and an unclear paper trail of why this site is no longer under consideration. Feedback and consultation inputs gathered during the development of the NDP made it very clear that the Grovesend Farm site was not the preferred development location for most respondents. This was reflected in the NDP plan referendum which has one of the lowest approval ratings of any proposed plan (NDP) with under a 2% nett approval rating vs the average of 60-70% for other local area NDP's. The choice of development sites within the Colwall NDP has brought with it real divide and friction within the Colwall community.

#### Attachment:

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Their contact details are as follows:

**First name:** Geoffrey

**Last name:** Standland

**Email:** [REDACTED]

**Postcode:** WR13 6EZ

**Address:** The Hollies Old Church Road, Colwall, WR13 6EZ

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**Infrastructure from section 106 to consider:** Road condition and vehicle movement capacity.

Surface water drainage integrity and capacity.

Action to protect the Ecology.

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Link ID: [https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200142/planning\\_services/planning\\_application\\_search/details?id=230457](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200142/planning_services/planning_application_search/details?id=230457)

Form reference: FS-Case-509832832