



KINGS LANGLEY AND DISTRICT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION KINGS LANGLEY GREEN BELT UPDATE - JUNE 2018

CONTACT US:

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THE TROJAN HORSE AT RECTORY FARM



The many villagers who attended the Annual Parish Meeting this year heard about the latest plans for Rectory Farm by the new owners, Angle Property.

Their intention is to submit an outline planning application for approximately 125 houses. (An outline planning application is generally used to find out if a proposal is likely to be approved by Dacorum Borough Council before any substantial costs are incurred.) This would mean:

- building on both the Green Belt (shown in blue, left) and brownfield (shown in orange) elements of the site;
- building 50% more houses than the maximum number identified for the site by Dacorum; and
- putting another access road onto Hempstead Road in the 40mph section.

This approach would also circumvent the scrutiny that the application would be subjected to as part of the development of the Local Plan. To make the application more appealing, some of the site would be made available for affordable housing, parking for the High Street, Kings Langley Football Club and community open space.

Angle Property would then look to 'sell on' Rectory Farm with outline planning permission to a house builder. However, outline planning permission doesn't bind the house builder developing the site *in any way at all*, particularly if they argued that it was not financially viable. It could simply be used to argue that having declassified a large part of Rectory Farm's Green Belt, developing more of the site's Green Belt would be no great loss.

If successful, outline planning applications could be submitted for one or more of the other 3 sites in the village. At this stage no application has been submitted, but the Association will publicise on its website, Facebook, Noticeboards etc when it has and urge all our members to write to Dacorum Borough Council opposing the application.

The Association have already written to Dacorum opposing the proposed over development of the site.

WHY A PARISH PLAN?

So, as explained previously, despite the village's resounding "No" to building on Green Belt land, we're already seeing efforts towards making it happen!

This perfectly illustrates the pitfalls of our present system of piecemeal development, in which clearly expressed views of local people can be overridden by builders and speculators. Fortunately, this no longer needs to happen, because the Localism Act of 2011 gave local people the power to develop their own neighbourhood plans, encouraging developers and communities to work together to enhance the attractive features of their locality, instead of destroying them.

While local plans must be consistent with the Borough's plans, it was recognised that a Parish Plan will bring significant benefits through "joined up thinking" about the kind of village we want, with forward-looking strategies on a wide range of issues including traffic, parking, local services, economy, workplaces and green spaces - in short, everything that could make Kings Langley even more attractive as a place to live and work.

This kind of planning requires a great deal of effort to collect detailed evidence, along with the widest possible range of residents' views, so there is every advantage in starting work now. Asking everyone "what do we want for our village?" will also help us keep a lookout for anyone thinking about building on more of the Green Belt land we value so highly.

The Parish Council therefore agreed that work should go ahead on the Parish Plan, and a small volunteer steering group has been formed with representatives from the Parish Council, the Residents' Association, Transition in Kings, and Kings Langley Community Benefit Society (KLCBS - whose plans for turning Rectory Farm into a community asset can be seen at <http://www.klcbs.org>)

Participation from local residents, groups and businesses is an essential part of the Parish Plan, and anyone with skills or interest in this project is welcome to join us. (You can contact us via any of the above organisations). For everyone living or working in Kings Langley, **please watch this space!**

SOME GOOD NEWS

The appeal by McCarthy and Stone against the decision by Dacorum to refuse their application to build 40 retirement apartments in Hempstead Road was dismissed. The Planning Inspector decided that:

- the Council could demonstrate a five-year Housing Land Supply;
- the proposed development would have a significant harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area; and
- the development would not amount to good design

The Planning Inspector gave significant weight to these factors conflicting with the Borough's development plan. Our congratulations to all the local campaigners who successfully fought one of the country's largest housebuilders – it just goes to show that David can still beat Goliath.

NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW THAT

1. Housing targets:
 - The Government's target is 300k new homes per year by the mid-2020s;
 - The last time 300k homes were built in one year was 30 years ago; and
 - Two thirds of those houses were small developments built by small and medium size companies.
2. According to the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) **the government has already identified enough *brownfield* land to meet its five-year housing target!** There are:
 - 17,656 brownfield sites;
 - 25,000 hectares of brownfield land; and
 - Space available for a minimum of 1,052,124 homes.
3. The Local Government Association found:
 - **400,000+ homes have been granted planning permission but are still waiting to be built;** a 16% increase in 12 months
 - developers are taking 8 months longer to build homes for which they have planning permission than they did 4 years ago; and
 - developers' and builders' organisations continue to argue the planning system is a barrier to house building.
4. Sharing the house building burden:
 - **Local councils have a *legal duty to cooperate with neighbouring councils when producing their Local Plan*,** which ensures the planning of housing and infrastructure is coordinated properly.
 - It also means neighbouring councils can contribute to meeting the housing needs of Dacorum where proposed developments are just over the border.

For these reasons, the Association disagrees with Dacorum's approach to only include sites with a capacity of 10 plus units. The approach should be to focus on the quality and suitability of sites. Kings Langley has many smaller brownfield sites in and around the village which could be brought forward in preference to large-scale housing developments.

The Association has written to Dacorum drawing attention to the Government's continued opposition to Green Belt development other than as a last resort and suggesting consideration is given to smaller scale developments rather than the current large scale Green Belt options which run counter to Government policy.

No reply has been received.

The Association have asked Dacorum if they have contacted St Albans and Three Rivers *for any such developments to contribute towards the overall housing needs of Dacorum*; For example, the redevelopment of Pinnacle House and the proposed redevelopment of West Herts College, both in Home Park Mill Link Road in Three Rivers, which will result in 156 residential units all of which will look to Kings Langley for shops, schools, and health services.

No reply has yet been received.



KINGS LANGLEY AND DISTRICT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

THE FIGHT GOES ON

Firstly, Thank You...

- The result of the village poll, with 99% of those participating being opposed to building on the Green Belt, was fantastic.
- The response to Dacorum's Issues and Options paper with 600 emails, 7,046 comments and an unspecified number of the KL&DRA's postcards, was amazing (although not all the emails or comments were about Kings Langley).
- The 2,185 signatures on Sir Mike Penning's on-line petition (now closed) and the Parish Council's written petition, opposing Green Belt development in Kings Langley, both of which were presented to Parliament, was astonishing.

However, NONE of the proposals for large scale housing developments on Hill Farm, Rectory Farm, Shendish and Wayside Farm have been withdrawn, amended or conceded.

...but, the fight goes on

To continue to fight the current proposals for large scale housing development in Kings Langley, we need you to donate; donations can be made by cheque payable to 'KLDRA' or by bank transfer:

Name: Kings Langley & District Residents Association
Sort Code: 20-39-07
Account Number: 10394165

PayPal donations can be sent via our website. You can also find out more about KLDRA:

On our website: www.greenbeltmatters.com
(including our response to the Local Plan consultation which was paid for by public donations).
By emailing: residents@greenbeltmatters.com
On our Facebook page: www.greenbeltmatters.com

You can drop off correspondence, application forms and donations at the Kings Langley Parish Office, Charter Court, Vicarage Lane, Kings Langley WD4 9HR. Non-computer users can contact Ann Martin c/o this address for information about KL&DRA.