

LSWAG NEWS 01.07.09

Loughborough South West Action Group (LSWAG)

Welcome to the first edition of the LSWAG news letter.

This is designed to keep you in touch with developments concerning the proposal to build 3000 houses together with other facilities on the fields leading up to the Outwoods.

It is also an opportunity for us to let you know what LSWAG has been doing to raise general awareness about the proposals and engage with Charnwood Borough Council to prevent the loss of an extraordinary area of our local landscape.

At LSWAG's initial meeting on 20th March 2009, it was decided that, in order to be effective, three things needed to be done well:

Seek Expert Advice - Communicate our Message - Gain Community Support

Since the first public meeting LSWAG has been very active and we have carried out the following;

- we have employed DPP, a planning consultancy, with the help of an anonymous benefactor.
- we have distributed over 8000 fliers to local residents and in car parks at the Outwoods, Beacon Hill and Nanpantan Sports Ground
- a website and email address was set up within a few days of our first meeting. www.loughboroughswag.co.uk
- A 5 minute film has been made about the area, which includes interviews with local people. 100 DVDs of the film have been made which will be sent to planners, councillor's, MP's, other decision makers and the media.
- Our planning consultants have examined the development proposal and have prepared a submission for Charnwood Borough Council outlining our (LSWAG) objections to the scheme.
- We have had a meeting with Andy Reed MP who is sensitive to our cause although he has little influence in local matters.

He has agreed to ask the Minister for Housing questions relating to a number of clauses in the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Bill, which is currently going through Parliament.

This Bill is a bit complex, but aims to simplify the planning process. However, as it stands it may act as a charter for developers and deny us some of the

democratic rights that we have at the moment, hence the need to change a few of the existing clauses.

We also discussed the Sustainable Communities Act 2007, which CBC are considering at the moment. This Act has cross party support and starts from the premise the 'local people know best' so it's a bottom up approach, which has the potential to bring greater scope for managing a number of functions, which currently sit within Central Government, back to our local elected members. This could be very useful in terms of planning. However, council's need to opt into the Act by 31st July 2009 and CBC have not yet made a decision on this.

- Accompanied by our planning consultants we have discussed our initial objections with Richard Bennett, Head of Strategic Planning for Charnwood Borough Council at a meeting on Tuesday 23rd June.
- Our planning consultants are compiling further written submissions to Charnwood Borough Council which will be submitted in due course.
- Local resident Mark Birkin has prepared an ornithology report for LSWAG based on his survey of birdlife of the area over a four year period.

Charnwood Borough Council (CBC)

The CBC planners' major concerns about the proposal are the impact it would have on: Ecology, Landscape, Transport and Drainage.

CBC is preparing or has commissioned detailed reports in all relevant areas of concern.

CBC is expecting to receive the findings of a detailed transport survey in the next few weeks. This will be a highly influential report not only in relation to the LSWAG site but for all other proposed sites, such as Garendon.

CBC officers are unable to discuss or speculate on bypass proposals until the transport report has been considered.

CBC officers have advised Smith Stewart Reynolds (SSR) that some aspects of their submission are already unacceptable, particularly regarding the proximity of the proposed development to the woods adjacent to Parks Barn Farm.

Although the developer, Fox Strategic Land Holdings have withdrawn their backing to the scheme, their consultants, SSR Planning, appear to be in the process of finding a replacement investor /developer – without this they would not be in a position to proceed.

The CBC planners have advised us that proposals to build a Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) on the LSWAG site will not go away in the long term. Only the strength and quality of public opinion would be likely to be effective.

The Planning Consultation Process

The number of representations to the Council regarding all sites (including Loughborough South-West), has now exceeded 2000. The planners are currently preparing a summary of these submissions, for presentation to Councillors in August. They have indicated that in their view, the Garendon Park proposal stands, despite opposition from Leicestershire County Council and English Heritage.

The Planning Process Timeline

The timeline for the planning process from now on is as follows;

Stage 1. Pre submission Consultation

- **June / July 2009** Charnwood Borough Council officers assess the consultation responses.
- **August 2009** An officer decision on the various options highlighted will be presented to members
- **December / January 2009 / 2010** the final draft Core Strategy document and report based upon Councillor opinion will be considered at a cabinet meeting.
- **January or February 2010** the final draft will be published.

Stage 2. Proposed Submission Core Strategy - A formal six week consultation on the submission version of the core strategy will be undertaken. Only comments made at this stage will be considered at the examination.

- **January to April 2010** six week consultation period during which further representations will be received.
- **April, May, June 2010** officer review of responses.
- **Summer 2010** final draft published.

Stage 3. Submission - Submission of the Core Strategy to Secretary of State

- **Summer / Autumn 2010** Submitted for Inspector consideration

Stage 4. Examination - Examination of the Core Strategy by an independent Planning Inspector to assess the soundness of the Core Strategy.

Stage 5 Adoption - Adoption of the Core Strategy inspector's Report

- **Late Summer /Autumn 2010** Inspectors conclusions published and are then binding.

What you can do now

Public opinion is very important and will be given due regard by CBC **as long as it is based on planning issues.**

Objections to development proposal must be based upon planning issues such as landscape and visual impacts, traffic, ecology (flora and fauna), drainage and flooding, noise and light pollution, other environmental issues such as loss of agricultural land, archaeology and cultural heritage.

More details can be found on our website www.loughboroughswag.co.uk

FEEDBACK PAGE

We have had support from the community in terms of donations, help with graphic design, website construction, leaflet distribution, film making and have received 100's of emails and letters.

We are committed to representing your views as fully and openly as possible, which means we need to hear from you.

This is an example of what you have said so far and it would be very helpful if you could let us have further comments.

'This development would destroy the

visual amenity of what is arguably one of the most beautiful areas of countryside in Leicestershire.'

'The recreational and leisure amenity would be lost or be less enjoyable.'

'This is one of Loughborough's few redeeming features.'

'The town has already been damaged by poor development and has little character.'

'The wild life (flora and fauna) would suffer.'

'The woods would be under greater pressure from people, cats and loose dogs, which disturb ground nesting birds.'

'Traffic congestion already exists on many roads and this will make matters worse.'

'Noise and light pollution will have a detrimental effect on a wide area.'

Please help us and show your continued opposition to this proposal.

Please contact us again with your email

address. This is particularly important if you did not receive an email about the recent public meeting. Unfortunately, one of our files became corrupted resulting in the loss of some addresses.

We would also like to know how you would prefer to be contacted.

Are you happy with the email arrangement? This is our preferred method, since it is quicker and importantly, more cost effective

Do you check the website?

Would you prefer to receive a news letter similar to this?

Would you be prepared to help deliver it.?

If you have any ideas on how we can improve communication, how we can raise awareness about this proposal please do let us know.

info@loughboroughswag.co.uk

www.loughboroughswag.co.uk

or write to: The Secretary 203 Nanpantan Road Loughborough LE11 3Y

Remember LSWAG is for you and for everyone who like us cares deeply about our local countryside.