

Sir, [REDACTED]

I speak as chairman of the Beacon Action Group and Trustee of Merriens Wood.

Thank you and the other participants for listening to my previous comments about this planning application. I trust as lay people our attempts at conveying our concerns to you will have made a valuable contribution to the debate, by bringing you an insight directly from the people who live in the area and know about the destruction this development will have, if allowed. It will be of benefit to us as we have another public inquiry soon for a development in the green belt just over the road in Chapel Lane also in this same green belt.

In summary, you will have first-hand knowledge about the feelings of the hundreds of residents and the other Trustees, who I am privileged to speak on behalf of, and who are passionate about where we live, and who are totally against this intrusive development in the green belt green wedge.

I will take each point as per the agenda,

This development is on farmland that provides a separation and valuable openness between our two towns. It also provides the necessary wildlife corridor that exists for the wild life to migrate and consequently thrive.

Losing this would be extremely harmful for both people and wildlife and should be resisted.

Farmland is diminishing and the population increasing, facts that are at odds with one another, should we be giving this up for housing and a country park, is this not short sighted in the long term?

Transport issues are a known problem for residents, and despite the experts' statements and evidence, I ask that you give appropriate consideration to the experience of those who have to negotiate this often-difficult situation on a daily basis. For their experience is the reality and not a short visit or a computer model. I suggest we all know the phrase about statistics.

Many of the residents here in the past few days have attempted to describe their frustration to you about this previously.



Saving the Green Belt, we thank in particular in our witness who was able to deliver such a robust and persuasive argument in favour of not building on the green belt, and apart from many other important issues, that in particular, the very special circumstances have not been met.

The countryside park, apart from the discussion about the relevance of this and the numerous local facilities existing either adjacent or in a very short walking distance, as a Trustee of Merrions Wood I can stress the important issue regarding responsibility for ongoing maintenance and costs involved.

This will be a major consideration for the developer, as I understood it was agreed this would be funded by a service charge on each dwelling, which may include the social housing element of the development. These charges can be very costly rising year on year. Buyers and tenants can be put off by this added expense.

I know from experience on a nearby development that it can cause considerable resentment, especially when new residents are paying for maintenance of a space open to all members of the public.

Controlling anti-social behaviour is also a difficult problem. Walsall Council are trying to close Barr Beacon at night for this reason, and we often have a problem at Merrions Wood. How will the challenge be met on this site? I described a few of the problems previously. How do you stop Quad bikes and scramblers entering the area. It's very difficult, a believe me, the harm to wildlife and damage to the landscape by this alone is immense.

In any event opening up the site for public access will undoubtedly destroy much of the habitat, for both flora and fauna. Protected ancient woodland blue bells on this site for instance. Once destroyed by people frequenting the place, the wildlife habitat is eroded and is never going to be recoverable.

Public liability is another costly problem.

Should the development take place will it be phased? and if so, will this be decided in the conditions, as it is important to set out the phase for the social housing and the countryside park, and the timescales for these in the start and anticipated completion date. Social housing often left until near the end as less profitable and landscapes not given the treatment as described.



The Ecology debate was not a balanced discussion, as the ecologist apparently failed to have been on the site and not having sufficient knowledge of the site in question and its sinc status. We are grateful Sir that your intervention which resulted in a more balanced debate, but none the less we found councils response incomprehensible.

Evidence about the wildlife was insufficient and as a Trustee of Merrions Wood it, was disappointing that more was not discussed about the 12 species of Bats that either exist in the woodland or frequent the area. I trust you will consider fully the Bat report given to the Inquiry.

Finally, Sir, we trust that you will attach some importance to the contribution to this Public Inquiry we have striven to truthfully deliver to you, when stating our strong opposition to this development.

We must save the green belt.

Thank you.

