

# West End Action Group (WEAG)

2 February 2021

## APPEAL AGAINST REFUSAL FOR 74 HOUSES IN FENNS LANE

Dear WEAG supporters,

It has arrived, as we expected: the developers have appealed against refusal of their planning application for 74 houses in Fenns Lane.

The application, number 19/0154, was for housing on West End's precious Green Belt, and would expand the western boundary of the village. There were 106 written objections from residents, including a 13-page submission by WEAG. The Borough Council refused the application in January 2020.

The Planning Inspectorate announced on 28 January 2021 that the appeal is to take the form of a Hearing, a less formal procedure than an Inquiry. Interested parties may make written representations. The Hearing will be 'virtual' via Teams, Zoom or something similar. The date for the Hearing is yet to be decided.

The Planning Inspectorate asks that individuals or organisations wishing to make similar points to each other should act jointly. WEAG and West End Village Society (WEVS), who submitted separate objections to the original application, have agreed to make a joint representation to the appeal Hearing. We have quickly set up a small team to progress this. I represent WEAG, Dave Norris represents WEVS, and Jeff Llewelyn represents both as he is Vice-Chairman of WEAG and Chairman of WEVS. We may invite others to join the team.

We are studying in detail all the new documentation put forward by developers, formulating our plans, and are or will be in contact with relevant Borough Council officials and Councillors. At a later stage I will circulate an update.

What can individual residents do? All the representations made against the original planning application have been sent to the Planning Inspector, so there is no need to repeat those. The Inspector asks that only new material is sent in now. New material could include any points of objection which you did not make in your previous objection; it would be relevant to send that in to the Inspector, stating that these are additional points; and if you did not write an objection then this is an opportunity to do so. We need to assure

the Inspector that the arguments and the feeling against this proposed development are as strong now as they were before.

An example of brand new material might be photographs of recent flooding in the area, since the land in question acts as a soakaway for rainwater draining off parts of Brentmoor Heath (and please also send any such photographs to us at the team using the email address below).

Another brand new point to make has arisen from Covid. The long-term trend towards online shopping and home working has suddenly been dramatically accelerated by Covid, which means that vacant town centre retail and office space will become available, well beyond the quantity allowed for in the Borough's current assessment of future housing provision. These additional redundant spaces are ideal for conversion to apartments, while also helping revive the town centre - which means there is no need to impose additional housing on West End or other villages, or in any way to invade the Green Belt.

The reference number for the appeal is APP/D3640/W/20/3251262.

Submissions can be sent via the internet at:

[www.gov.uk/appeal-planning-inspectorate](http://www.gov.uk/appeal-planning-inspectorate)

but must be received by 4 March. Anything sent later will not be looked at.

(As at 2 February this appeal has not yet been set up on that website.)

### **GREEN BELT AT FAIRFIELD LANE**

The other part of West End's Green Belt that is under attack is at Fairfield Lane, where there is an application (20/1005) to build four houses which would close off the open character of the lane. Full details about it, including how to object, were given in our 5 January newsletter which may be downloaded from our website at [www.weag.info](http://www.weag.info)

There are currently 40 objections to this application, including an extensive one from WEAG, and it would be valuable to have more, underlining the strength of feeling about protecting the Green Belt. Since the application has not yet been scheduled for discussion at a meeting of the Borough's Planning Applications Committee (it is not on the agenda for the February meeting), the Council will still accept objections.

Regards, and keep safe

Guy

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