[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 15 November 2023 22:59
To: [redacted]
Subject: Downlands Farm Appeal

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear [redacted],

Please can you forward this on to the inspector if possible...

I have been attending the appeal over Downlands farm most days, and watching the live stream when unable to be there in person. I have never attended an appeal inquiry before so apologies if this is not the done way of doing things but I feel I have to write about a few things that I have seen and heard that have bothered me. Before coming to the inquiry I chatted with an architect I know who suggested developers were really on the side of the local people, so I have tried to look for this in the proceedings. Maybe it is just my perception but, on the contrary, there seems to have been a complete lack of respect for local people by the appellant - in terms of both their (the local people's) knowledge and needs. This was evident on the first day when a long standing resident of Snatts road ([redacted]) said that Snatts road was often used as rat-run but the appellant's transport witness dismissed this because he couldn't see how it could be (from looking at a map!), and has been illustrated at numerous points throughout the inquiry. It was epitomised on the day of the site visit when 2 members of the developer's team took it upon themselves to park over the width of the pavement in Snatts road (see attached photos). As well as total disrespect for anyone in a wheel chair this highlights the concern, even the developers have, for the safety of parking on Snatts road (should the proposed SANG car park become full). Whilst I realise it isn't illegal, outside of London, to park on the pavement the Highway Code rule 244 states that drivers "MUST NOT park partially or wholly on the pavement in London and should not do so elsewhere unless signs permit it."

On another day (Highways), there was a lot of discussion about the closest convenience store - for a pint of milk - to the development. Whilst Tesco Express might be closest to people living on Snatts road, this would not be particularly convenient for most people on the proposed new development given the pedestrian access at Fir Tree Grove. The large Tesco in town would be closer, or the mini Waitrose at the Blackdown roundabout - the latter requiring either a short car journey (not great for climate change) or a potentially risky walk involving a crossing of the A22. Of course there is also the new M & S food store near Maresfield that would provide more car reliance for potential residents. Speaking of proximity, it was suggested that the Fir Tree Grove route would be used for people walking to the secondary school. I would suggest most would either drive around the ring road, or walk through the SANG to Snatts road and then through Uplands Drive, Browns Lane, etc. And this is assuming they could get a place at the local Secondary school. Although a new school has recently been built it was only designed to accomodate the number of children on roll at the time - no consideration was taken of the planning permissions either granted (1,000 houses) or being thought of (such as this one). (I was a school governor at the time so am confident of this). Children living on the proposed development would either have to travel further afield for secondary education or make this an issue for other local children.

[redacted] said on Tues 14th that no litter was evident on the site. One of his photographs (p13 CD1/60, 3rd photo down on the left hand side) shows a shopping trolley full of litter! The more general lack of litter around the site is because local people who use the site often pick up litter to try to ensure it is a well kept area. Indeed, the local people would be more than willing to help combat the neglect of woodland management by the current owner, by clearing invasive species for example. The use of these same photos ((p13 CD1/60) to illustrate the fact that a 1.2m board walk would not damage any ground flora shows no consideration for the blue bells and wood anemones that over winter in the wet, walked-on soil (that would be under the board walks) and still come up year after year. Whilst there was plenty of talk about the movement of blue bells and wood anemones, nothing was mentioned of the common spotted orchid regularly seen in areas to be either planted with trees (proposed woodland) or made

into a path (self-binding gravel) in the SANG. According to the Wildlife trusts "The highly perfumed flowers of the common spotted-orchid are particularly attractive to day-flying moths." which perhaps goes someway to explain the abundance of moths and butterflies we see on the site and which were not acknowledged by [redacted] since he only visited in April and October. Another point, possibly irrelevant, is that [redacted] also said he is a director of Aspect Ecology, whereas his details on Companies House suggest otherwise. (Although I acknowledge it is a recent resignation and he probably was when compiling the proof of evidence but he was asked if this assignation was correct in the present tense).

For the record, I live on Snatts road and it **is** used as a rat-run on occasions. After listening to the inquiry I maintain my objection to the development.

Thank you for reading.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

[redacted]




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