

Abingworth Housing Development

Abingworth Nursery: Judgment announced

On 29 January 2014, TVA's claim to overturn planning permission for development of Abingworth Nursery was dismissed in the High Court. The judge, the Honourable Mr Justice Lindblom, determined that Horsham District Council (HDC) had acted lawfully in granting permission for 146 houses in Thakeham.

TVA has issued this statement to the press:

"It is regrettable that Thakeham Village Action has lost its legal challenge against the decision made by Horsham District Council to grant planning permission for a large housing development in Thakeham, a location that the Council itself accepted was not appropriate for such development.

In our view, it is a great pity that the judge did not accept our arguments that the planning decision to build a large housing estate in Thakeham was flawed. The precedent this decision will set for similar developments across the UK will be revealed over time, but we expect that the assault on the UK countryside from housing developments in unsuitable locations will gather momentum because of this decision. Despite that, we will continue to work with the parish council and community to make the best of what we consider will forever change the character of the small village of Thakeham.

The development that unfolds is now in the hands of Horsham District Council and we sincerely hope that the many benefits they claim this will bring to our community are realised."



Some may argue that TVA's action was an unnecessary delaying tactic. However, we were told by our planning advisor that using the concept of 'enabling development' to permit an otherwise unacceptable housing development could contradict planning law. On this basis, it was considered that it was correct to take the matter to the courts for a ruling and we accept that the judge's ruling has now clarified the law on this point. TVA supports the gradual evolution of Thakeham through locally led, organic and sustainable development. In TVA's view, there was an opportunity to achieve an acceptable balance here. For instance, redundant buildings on the mushroom site could have been redeveloped on a much smaller scale, clearing the site and providing housing for local people – all without destroying the surrounding fields. Instead, what we are facing is a large scale urban housing development with facilities that in our view have been poorly thought out. It will result in high levels of traffic in and out of a village that has no pavements and no other reasonable means of going to and from the village. Once again, the process appears to care less about local needs and more about profits for developers.

TVA will continue to try and achieve the best for Thakeham's future.

Water Lane update

The application to develop 75 houses on greenfield land off Water Lane was refused by the HDC Planning Committee in January 2014. Since then, Barton Willmore, acting on behalf of Crest Nicholson, has lodged an appeal to have this decision overturned.

The "Fighting For Our Fields" (FFOF) group, under TVA, has again taken the lead in working to ensure that the refusal decision is maintained.

The initial view is that this appeal should be fought on the basis of an increased risk of flooding and air pollution, the contravention of HDC's Core Policy 1 (landscape and townscape character) and the five-year housing requirement for the south of the District. In an initial contact with the Planning Inspectorate, FFOF requested that the appeal be postponed until the result of the nearby Melton Drive appeal has been finalised.



Above: The field threatened by housing

Water Lane update cont...

In the meantime, FFOF has convened a meeting in early April with interested parties with a view to establishing the expert witnesses that may be required to assist in fighting this appeal.

Waste Local Plan - the final consultation?

It looks as if the West Sussex Waste Local Plan will finally be adopted. Enshrined in the plan will be the commitment for zero waste to landfill. This means that the threat of a rotting rubbish landfill site at Laybrook should have finally disappeared.

After receiving consultation responses on the proposed modifications to the Waste Local Plan, the Inspector has decided that the responses raise no new significant issues.

Therefore, it only remains for Council officials to make a few minor changes to improve the clarity of the Plan and to correct any textual errors. Adoption of the Plan is now expected in April 2014 and it will form the basis for all planning decisions relating to waste development in the County.

Join or renew your membership

Please return your membership slip together with any donation you can afford, so we can replenish our funds following the significant costs incurred by the Judicial Review and continue the fight against the Water Lane development.



Thakeham Village Action - Join or renew your membership 2014

I enclose a cheque (payable to **TVA**) or cash for £5. I include a donation of £ _____

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Send to:

Mark Keenan, Copper Beeches, The Street, Thakeham, RH20 3EP
(1st house on left immediately after the school)

If you wish to help you can email thakehamva@yahoo.co.uk

I would like to receive information from TVA by e-mail. My address is _____

PUBLISHED BY THAKEHAM VILLAGE ACTION
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