

THAMES FARM ACTION GROUP (TFAG)

UPDATE 3

Sent to all residents who have registered on the TFAG Database.

On the 6th December in Update 2 TFAG outlined various initiatives that had been undertaken and others which were to be initiated in order to persuade the various agencies to recommend refusal of the drainage application by Taylor Wimpey for the discharge of the reserved matters planning condition within the outline permission granted in 2017 for Thames Farm.

Following the achievements to date which were detailed in Update 2 TFAG set out a number of additional goals.

The goals were;

- 1) To approach SODC again to dismiss the planning application on technical grounds.
- 2) To ask Polly Reynolds from Temple Bright (our legal advisors) to formally write to SODC to request an extension to the additional time given for consultation on the 23rd October.
- 3) Request Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) as the lead flood authority to take up the matter and assess the matter fully and diligently.
- 4) “Encourage” John Howell to raise the issue in Parliament.
- 5) Continue the social media activity to raise awareness and bring as much pressure on the agencies and Taylor Wimpey as possible.
- 6) Raise funds for the fighting fund.

What has been achieved?

- A number of letters from Peter Boros to SODC requesting that the application be refused because the proposed drainage scheme is a material variation to the original

planning consent have so far been rebuffed. A formal complaint has therefore been made to SODC.

What is also disappointing is that the work carried out by Taylor Wimpey to create the new entrance into Thames Farm and corresponding road widening, which under the original terms of the planning consent should not have started until all of the reserved conditions including the drainage had been discharged, were subsequently retrospectively granted by SODC, which in itself shows a shocking disregard by SODC and Taylor Wimpey towards the residents of Shiplake.

All legal avenues to overturn these decisions and to recognise the application as a material change are being explored.

- SODC has also rejected the request to grant an extension of time for the residents to respond to the Taylor Wimpey FRA. This is inequitable as Taylor Wimpey with all of its resources has still not yet produced an FRA and the residents are still expected to produce a response within 14 days.
- OCC has declined to take up its responsibility as the lead flood authority and has now “passed the buck” to Thames Water having initially referred the issue to the Environment Agency.
- John Howell presented the petition in Parliament and asked a Parliamentary Question of the Minister for Housing, and awaits a formal response.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V2Gr8vHoDgw&feature=youtu.be>

- Social Media has been very active with a lot of negative feeling toward Taylor Wimpey in particular.
- 60 residents of the 170 who indicated that they would support the fighting fund have contributed to date.
- The Parish council has commissioned JBA to carry out preliminary work in anticipation of the Taylor Wimpey FRA so that the residents stand a fighting chance of meeting the 14 day deadline to respond.
- Taylor Wimpey has now removed all Taylor Wimpey signage from the Thames Farm site and warning signs have been erected.
- The petition now has 1106 signatures

- The TFAG database now has 227 residents registered with approx. 170 stating that they are willing to contribute to the fighting fund.
- Further BBC coverage showing this widespread issue and including Shiplake was broadcast and can be seen here.

<https://youtu.be/rQmbWT-0QMs>

- TFAG had a meeting with a number of senior executives from Taylor Wimpey to discuss the drainage solution proposed.

The Meeting with Taylor Wimpey.

On a video call the week before Christmas, TFAG met with the following Taylor Wimpey representatives;

N [REDACTED] S [REDACTED], Managing Director, Taylor Wimpey, West London

R [REDACTED] B [REDACTED] Technical Director, Taylor Wimpey, West London

M [REDACTED] S [REDACTED] Taylor Wimpey HQ, Group Planning Director

The meeting was requested by Taylor Wimpey and was cordial.

The main points raised in the meeting were;

- TFAG stated that Taylor Wimpey's approach had been poor, there had been no consultation whatsoever and the only reason the meeting was being held was because the residents had "revolted". Additionally, that Taylor Wimpey's PR was appalling. Taylor Wimpey apologised for its poor communication and submitting an incomplete drainage scheme.
- TFAG stated that Thames Farm was unsuitable for 95 houses and the residents, whilst being reluctantly resigned to development of the site, expected the development to be self-contained ie. that the drainage should be a standard SUDS solution as originally envisaged in 2017 when Outline Planning was granted.
- TFAG stated that any additional flood risk was unacceptable.
- TFAG requested to be consulted before any new proposals are put to SODC. Taylor Wimpey agreed to do this.

- T FAG requested that the Thames Farm site be tidied up and all waste removed and the fencing improved which was acknowledged and will be reviewed.
- T FAG requested that Taylor Wimpey fulfils the tree planting obligations set out in the Planning Permission.
- T FAG requested that residents should be indemnified from any unexpected consequences of Taylor Wimpey's proposals
- Taylor Wimpey stated that it was looking at other drainage options for the site.
- The Lashbrook option has not been withdrawn but it is on the "back burner" whilst other options are being considered including taking the waste water directly to the Thames.
- Taylor Wimpey will develop a communications strategy and present it in the first week of 2021.
- Taylor Wimpey's FRA will not be completed until March/April 2021!!!

Conclusions from the Meeting;

- The drainage issue is clearly a major problem and will be difficult to overcome both technically and commercially.
- The fact that the meeting was called was entirely as a result of the letters sent to the agencies and Taylor Wimpey, social media, and adverse publicity the residents have created against Taylor Wimpey. **YOUR VOICE MATTERS.**
- Whilst we now have direct communication with Taylor Wimpey we cannot let up the campaign. Taylor Wimpey is a hugely successful commercial machine which wants to protect its brand but not at the expense of commercial reality. Its first consideration will always be to its shareholders.
- Taylor Wimpey knows that it has fight to placate the residents and will realise that the spotlight will be on the agencies so they cannot expect the same box ticking by SODC that has been given to this application hitherto.

- “The proof will be in the pudding”, as to whether Taylor Wimpey communicates and is seen to acknowledge the very real concerns of the residents. Also, whether Taylor Wimpey approaches things in a truly consultative way or not as TFAG requested.

The Next Steps For TFAG.

- To explore all avenues to get SODC to acknowledge the material change that the drainage proposals comprise.
- To continue the social media campaign and engage the regulatory agencies ensuring they are held to account/do their job fully and diligently.
- Prepare the response to the FRA in conjunction with JBA.
- To raise funds for the fighting fund. TFAG is already spending money on the preparation for the FRA and legal costs. For those who stated that they were prepared to contribute please do transfer those funds to the following account;

Actions for the Residents.

- For those who stated that they were prepared to contribute please do transfer those funds to the following account;

Account Name; Boros and Mercer

Account Number; **17453259**

Sort Code; **60-10-35**

- All contributions will be acknowledged by email
- Any funds not spent will be reimbursed pro rata at the end of the campaign.
- To mail Taylor Wimpey to express concern and objection to the Taylor Wimpey plan. In the letter sent by Taylor Wimpey to the residents in early December the Managing Director of Taylor Wimpey asked residents to mail their questions to shiplake@taylorwimpey.com . Please can any resident receiving a reply from this mail address please copy TFAG and those who have mailed and not received a reply please inform TFAG.

- Make your voice heard. The videos and photos below taken on Monday 28th December illustrate why we don't want the village turned into a cul de sac of closed roads for months on end with traffic controls and the ensuing disruption, and the clear danger that the increased flooding risk presents to the village.



IMG_3306.MOV



IMG_3307.MOV



IMG_3304.MOV



IMG_3297.MOV







Thank you for your support.

A Happy and Healthy New Year to All

TFAG.