

## **THAMES FARM ACTION GROUP (TFAG)**

**UPDATE 17 - April 2024**

# **A BIG THANK YOU!**

### **1. Thank you!**

**Firstly, may I start by giving a shout out to those residents and supporters who very kindly made donations to the 'fighting fund' following the last newsletter. This is very much appreciated and has rebuilt our finances, to enable TFAG to be ready for action, as and when needed next. As previously our intention is to use this money to ensure that any further steps by Thames Farm do not harm the residents of the villages through poorly thought out designs or possible harm to the Aquifer that provides our local drinking water.**

### **2. Judicial Review.**

**We have waited until now to monitor Taylor Wimpey's actions, in case they intended to make Application for leave for a Judicial Review of the Inspectors decision to disallow their Appeal against SODC's refusal to grant a LDC for the carrying out of grouting work beneath the surface of the site. We have checked with SODC, and they tell us that they have not been advised of any Application for a JR.**

### **3. What next?**

**It's always hard to second guess what is in the mind of a developer, however it seems to us that the options for the site now narrow down quite significantly as follows:-**

- a. Submit a full new Planning Application for the proposed groundworks.**

**This is not in the overall scheme of things hugely expensive as much of the data can be recycled/re packaged.**

**b. Re-plan for a different development**

**A lower density scheme could for instance avoid the need for grouting and vibro-compaction all together! This is highly risky, would be very expensive to do and would probably create something that is not a 'core product' in the Taylor Wimpey stable. Hence would probably result in a sale of the site, and possibly a large loss in value.**

**c. Review whether a different ground works solution could work for the current scheme.**

**One that does not need a further planning permission, just revised approvals of conditions previously discharged.**

**d. Sell the site.**

**After taking a hit on their P & L if the site has not already been written down in their accounts.**

**4. Drainage**

**One of the big unknowns in all of this, is a/the drainage solution. It is still an outstanding matter, after 3 failed attempts to find a solution, and may be further complicated by the Prime Ministers statement in Parliament in October 2023, that new developments must not be allowed to take surface water drainage off of sites. This was said against the backdrop of the significant floods arising recently throughout the Country.**

**It was the grouting proposal that caused the need for an off-site drainage solution hence the position might be different with a different form of ground works!**

## **5. Reading Road – Road and Drainage Works**

Interestingly, we have discovered that the Highway works undertaken by TW have not been signed off by OCC as yet, as there are said to be outstanding issues. This includes drainage and other problems, of which the writer has first-hand experience. Further exploratory and investigative work is apparently in hand, and so Taylor Wimpey remain responsible for rectifying any problems. Should you be experiencing difficulties that you think result from these works, you would be well advised to ensure that they are brought to the attention of both OCC and also Taylor Wimpey. TFAG has the necessary contacts for this, so do please ask.

## **6. Changes to the Speed signage and a Gateway Feature on A4155**

One of the other issues that has recently come to light, is that there is something of a tangled mess over works that were approved in 2018 as part of the former Wyevale Planning Permission.

If you did not know that there is already permission in place to allow the moving further north (towards Henley) of the 50/30 mph, double sided sign just north of the Lower Shiplake sign when approaching the village from Henley, then please take note. It is also intended (and approved) to construct a 'Gateway Feature' to be located just south of the new signage. These are those white gate looking structures similar to those out towards Reading at the other end of the village.

Bizarrely, OCC are required to consult with the public about such a proposal, which seems somewhat strange to consult after permission has been given, but nevertheless that is the position. Equally bizarrely, they are seemingly not required to follow the outcome of that consultation process – go figure!

The survey site is here:

[https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/shiplake\\_a4155readingroad\\_30mph2024](https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/shiplake_a4155readingroad_30mph2024)

***Responses should be made by 5.00 pm on Friday 3 May 2024***

TFAG is not proposing to make representations itself, as not only is the work something that some villagers might support and others object to, but also

this is outside the scope of our core purpose. We do not want to be thought of as a nimby organisation that reacts to every conceivable planning issue arising in the villages.

We thought however, that residents may want to think about the issues and hence we are offering a few comments to assist you in deciding whether to object or support these proposals.

- a. The speed limit is already 30 mph leaving the village towards Henley up until the existing change of speed sign - about 50 metres beyond the Wyevale site.
- b. Changing the original speed limit from 50mph to 30mph on the A4155 through Shiplake turned it from a 'rural road' into a 'residential street' This is in part, why all of the 'new' residential development has been allowed to happen.
- c. The signage seemingly makes no difference at all to the high speed traffic that is generally doing far more than 30 mph as it passes through.
- d. What then is gained by moving the 30/50mph sign further north if it already has no effect, and indeed the road widening has resulted in even faster moving traffic?
- e. Moving the sign further north, extends what may increasingly be considered to be an urban area and encroaches further on the rural countryside separating Shiplake from Henley. It may therefore result in promoting further extensions of development towards Henley. So we would potentially get both the fast moving traffic and even more development?
- f. The OCC Officers report on the subject says:

*"I note and accept the submission demonstrates there are ample visibility splays, in excess of DMRB, at the priority junction. Speed will have a limited influence on the number of vehicular accidents given this level of visibility"*

He goes on.....

*“..... but regarding severity the World Health Organisation (WHO) suggest that an increase in average speed of 1 km/h typically results in a 3% higher risk of a crash involving injury, with a 4–5% increase for crashes that result in fatalities”*

**Full document can be viewed [here](#)**

**This can be said of any section of road anywhere, and would suggest that the author is diametrically opposed to all higher speed roads. It ignores the fact that his own statement suggests that in this specific location, a speed limit “will have limited influence on the number of vehicular accidents given this level of visibility”**

- g. A gateway feature may help to slow down traffic, but why have it in a new location, why not have it closer to Shiplake and adjacent the existing speed signage?**
- h. The Neighbourhood Plans for both Henley & Harpsden and also Shiplake have all recently considered where is appropriate for further development to take place, and this is not around this location. There is a unanimous desire to prevent the Village of Lower Shiplake creeping towards either Henley or Shiplake Cross.**

**Hopefully these brief comments will assist residents in making their minds up, and in our view, the only material point in all of this is that of encouraging 'development creep' between Henley and Shiplake.**

**For anyone that missed the last newsletter, and want to know how to donate funds to TFAG for its stated purpose, this should be to following account:**

**Account Name; Peter Boros (and others).**

**Account type; Personal.**

**Account number: 17453259**

**Sort code 60-10-35**

**Branch; NatWest, Henley on Thames**

**DO PLEASE GIVE YOUR NAME AS THE PAYMENT REFERENCE FOR ANY CONTRIBUTOR SO WE CAN RETURN ANY FUNDS IN DUE COURSE**

**If you have any queries, do please contact:**

**Greg Stone: [greg@shiplakestones.com](mailto:greg@shiplakestones.com) or**

**Peter Boros: [tfag.peter.boros@btinternet.com](mailto:tfag.peter.boros@btinternet.com)**

**Thank you for your support.**

**The TFAG team.**