

IMPORTANT UPDATE REGARDING FORTY ACRES

PLEASE ACT NOW!



Developer Appeals and submits a Second Application

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS BY 17th SEPTEMBER

On Thursday 20th August the local Area 3 Planning Committee of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council unanimously decided that it wished to refuse the outline application by Wates for 250 new houses on the fields south of London Road and west of Winterfield Lane which we all know locally as “Forty Acres”. The proposal also included a new community building, open spaces, and an access from the A20.

The Borough could not actually issue a refusal notice as the developer, Wates, had not waited for the result of this second meeting but had appealed to the Planning Inspectorate who have fixed a Public Inquiry to start on 1st December. Instead, the Borough Council has to tell the Inspectorate what it would have decided if the application had not been appealed. It will now be up to that Planning Inspectorate to decide the matter following the Inquiry.

The Second Application - TM/20/01738/OA



Just to add a further complication Wates have chosen to lodge a second application with TMBC in identical terms to the first. The planning system allows them to do this and it means TMBC has to go through the whole process again including consultations with a view to deciding this application. As each application has to be decided on its own merits it means that **anyone who sent in comments on the previous application needs to send them in again in response to this second application.** There is no system to “carry forward” the previous comments. It is also of course open to people who have not commented before to do so now.

The timescale for sending in views is short with the final date being Thursday 17th September.

You can see the new application on TMBC’s website quoting the reference number as above. East Malling’s Borough Councillors Roger Roud and Michelle Tatton have also arranged to put direct links on their website <https://eastmallingsmatters.mycouncillor.org.uk>

As we always say, comments should be based on planning. You could merely repeat what you said before but you can also add to or amend it - although it is important to be consistent with what you said previously!

The Parish Council’s view is that the plans to build on this site are premature in advance of the consideration of the draft Local Plan which starts only a few weeks ahead in October and November. That Plan shows this site within a proposed extension of the Green Belt which we consider is a key part of the local plan review. To permit this application now would undermine that policy. It is also the case this site was not one of those added into the draft plan for extra housing sites to meet Government targets. TMBC has already designated areas for housing within its draft Plan which are sufficient to meet the Government’s requirements *without* the need to include Forty Acres.

In our view the extended Green Belt would if agreed prevent the joining up of East and West Malling and with Larkfield and Leybourne. We also think this is a very important local landscape area with its trees and the well-used public footpaths which criss-cross the site. While these would be largely kept they would no longer be rural ones but be running through housing areas. If you use the paths you could record this and say why you like this area. This is because we felt last time the Borough Officers downplayed the landscape value of this stretch of countryside. There is also the issue of the land having high agricultural value.

We have not mentioned any highway issues as KCC have agreed the new access and while it is of course open to you to raise this our experience is that the Borough Council always follows KCC advice as does the Planning Inspectorate.

THE APPEAL – PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS BY 22nd SEPTEMBER

Although the Public Inquiry for the first application is not until December the deadline for submitting comments to this is also soon on Tuesday 22nd September. **It is really important people make their views known so the Inspectors understand the strength of local opinion against building on Forty Acres.** We do realise this means two letters or emails but that is how the system works.

In this case you have to respond quoting the appeal reference **APP/H2265/W/20/3256877**. Letters should be sent to The Planning Inspectorate, The Square, Temple Quay, Room 3 O/P, Temple Quay House, 2, Bristol BS1 6PN

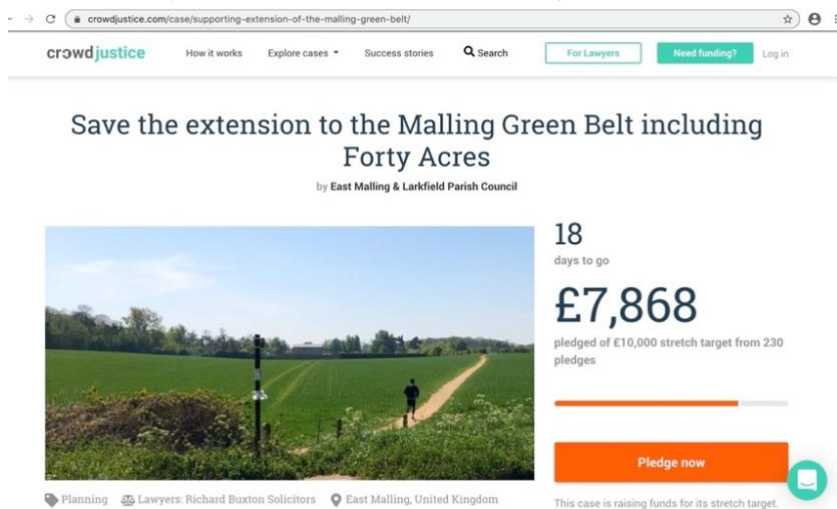
You can also submit comments on line through the Planning Inspectorate's website by going to the appeal page at <https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ViewCase.aspx?caseid=3256877>

Again Roger and Michelle have added the links to their website at <https://eastmallingsmatters.mycouncillor.org.uk>

All of this is one of the most complicated planning situations we have faced and we worry that people will be worn down by this process. However, we do urge that everyone should send in their views both to the Borough Council on the second application AND in response to the Appeal.

Crowd Justice Campaign – We Need Your Help!

We should add that the Parish Council is arranging to be legally represented at the December Public Inquiry. This will be in addition to the Inquiry starting in October into the Local Plan and especially the proposals for an extended Green Belt. This all comes at a cost and we are making an appeal for funds! We are supported by both West Malling and Leybourne in this joint effort and have already raised our initial target of £5000 via our a Crowd Justice Campaign and are now aiming for £10000. Almost £8000 has been raised on line so far. If you can help with any amount please visit the campaign page at <https://www.crowdjustice.com/case/supporting-extension-of-the-malling-green-belt/> - or simply type in your browser 'Save the Extension to the Malling Green Belt including Forty Acres' and you should be directed to the right place.



The screenshot shows the Crowd Justice campaign page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Crowd Justice logo and links for 'How it works', 'Explore cases', 'Success stories', 'Search', 'For Lawyers', 'Need funding?', and 'Log in'. The main heading is 'Save the extension to the Malling Green Belt including Forty Acres' by East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council. Below the heading is a large image of a green field with a path. To the right of the image, it says '18 days to go' and '£7,868' in large font. Below the amount, it says 'pledged of £10,000 stretch target from 230 pledges'. There is a progress bar and a 'Pledge now' button. At the bottom, it says 'This case is raising funds for its stretch target.' and 'Planning Lawyers: Richard Buxton Solicitors East Malling, United Kingdom'.

If for any reason, such as lack of access to IT, you would prefer to make a donation by cheque this can be done by making your cheque payable to East Malling and Larkfield Parish Council. This can be deposited in the letter box at Church Farm, New Hythe Lane. The full postal address is at the bottom of this page.

Such monies will only be used for defending this Planning Appeal and supporting the Green Belt extension in the Local Plan process.

Thank you.

Issued and printed by East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council

Clerk: Mrs V Severn - Church Farm, New Hythe Lane, Larkfield, Kent ME20 6ST