



**Ian Rees
84, Newby Grove
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B37 6QR**

18th February 2019

**Policy and Delivery
Managed Growth and
Communities Directorate
Solihull MBC
Council House
Manor Square
Solihull
B91 3QB**

Re: Draft Local Plan (Site Reference 53): Proposed housing on Clopton Crescent depot, "British Legion Club" and space near Newby Grove, Chelmsley Wood

Dear Sir or Madam,

I have lived in Newby Grove since 1997. One of the positive points that influenced my decision to move to Newby Grove was the adjacent grassed area where my children could play in relative safety and in reasonably close proximity to my house.

On two previous occasions, plans have been proposed to build houses on the grassed area, once about ten years ago in Solihull Councils 10 year Unitary Plan and more recently in the North Solihull regeneration plans. On both occasions, the proposals were objected to by local residents and on each occasion the proposals were withdrawn. We now have proposals to build between 25 – 40 houses on land at the rear of the houses in Birmingham Road, on open space adjacent to Newby Grove and on the current site of the grass cutting equipment storage yard in Clopton Crescent.

When the Chelmsley Wood estate was built in the late sixties and seventies, families were moved from the back-to-back style Birmingham housing areas which were seriously run down and residents had no open, grassed areas to utilise. The lack of green, open spaces was identified as a social issue, an issue that was addressed in the building of Chelmsley Wood.

Through the North Solihull Partnership with Solihull Council, we have seen a constant erosion of the open grassed areas in Chelmsley Wood, which have then been developed for housing. Chelmsley Wood is now seriously in danger of having the clock turned back to the slum housing which residents at that time were so desperate to get away from.

I have copies of documents from the Land Registry relating to the area subject of the house building proposals (Title number WM55151). This is dated 31st December 1975 and relates to the conveyance of the land from City of Birmingham District Council to the Metropolitan Borough of Solihull and has the following covenant:

"The purchasers hereby covenant with the vendors for the benefit of the adjoining or adjacent land of the vendors and every part thereof or so much thereof as is capable of benefiting by this covenant not to use the land hereby conveyed or any part thereof for any purpose other than that of a public open space or except for such purposes or any one or more of them as may be permitted by the Acts." The Acts referred to are the Physical Training and Recreation Acts of 1937 and 1958.

My interpretation of that paragraph is a clear indication that the land should stay as open land for the use and benefit of the local residents and I know of no reason or legislation that has overturned that covenant. Even if it has been overturned, it is a compelling argument to keep the open space as open space. The building of the grass-cutting yard was permitted on the basis that the yard is used for the maintenance of the Solihull Council open spaces.

Why was this covenant removed? Why was there no consultation of local residents during the covenants removal process?

It may surprise you to know that we as local residents are passionate about maintaining our only significant area of open space. We are surrounded by a triangle of three busy arterial roads, which make access to other open spaces a lot more difficult and not viable for unescorted children.

The area is in constant use by a variety of residents. Dogs are walked, children and youngsters play football, fly kites and generally make good use of our open space.

I am aware that there is likelihood when the current contract finishes it is planned to close the grass-cutting yard. But that is not an excuse to turn it into housing. I have a better suggestion for it. We have a group of scouts who currently use a wooden hut in Pike Drive. (I understand the building is being considered for demolition) I would suggest that moving their home from Pike Drive into the grass cutting yard building would be a significant improvement for them. The building could continue to be used without much cost in

conversion for scout use and the open space at the rear would enhance the scout facilities.

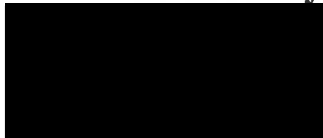
I would wish to point out that Chelmsley wood Royal British Legion Club mentioned in the Draft Local Plan ceased trading just over three years ago. The club is now the Family Tree Social Club. The Draft Local Plan was compiled after the closure of the British Legion. This kind of lack of attention to detail merely serves to highlight the apparent contempt that this area is held in by Solihull Council and North Solihull Partnership.

I would strongly object to the potential loss of the Family Tree Social Club. We have few enough local amenities as it is.

I am aware of the national housing shortage and the need to build new homes. This proposal will have little impact on the national or local need for housing and will indeed be to the detriment of existing local residents. I would therefore ask that you reconsider the proposals for the building of what really is an insignificant number of houses and allow the open space to remain in its original form.

I look forward to your reply in due course.

Yours faithfully

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Ian Rees.

Ian Rees