

Wickford North GREEN ACTION GROUP

Leaflet 3 – August 2007 - this directly affects your neighbourhood

Wickford North Green Action Group (WNGAG) is an independent, non-political group of residents who are leading the opposition to developers' plans to build on the lovely, green countryside at Barn Hall. Gleeson Homes Ltd and Gladedale Group Ltd have submitted an Outline Planning Application for the two fields measuring 4.3 hectares (10.6 acres) to the north and east of Station Avenue. It proposes 3 options for 157, 189 or 200 dwellings. Most would be flats. You can view the actual planning application and most of the 75 documents which accompanied it on the Basildon Council website at www.basildon.gov.uk. Navigate to Planning > Planning Applications > Planning Applications of Special Interest > 07/00801/OUT.

The prospect of another two green fields 'disappearing under concrete and more urban sprawl' is bad enough. But remember the developers do not just own these 10.6 acres. They also own most of the 100 acres of countryside extending up to and beyond Waverley Crescent - easily enough for them to go on to build 1,500 to 2,000 houses and flats!

News - Community Forum at Barnhall Community Centre on Monday 13 August 2007 at 7.00pm

There will now be another public meeting to consider this planning application. Residents turned out in force to the last meeting on 10 January; so, please do so again. Come along to meet your Wickford and Chelmsford councillors and your Wickford North Green Action Group members. The Barnhall Community Centre is in Alderney Gardens behind the parade of shops.

News - You now have until 31 August 2007 to object to the Planning Application

WNGAG have been advised that the deadline for receipt of letters of objection has been extended from 25 July to 31 August 2007. We know that many of you have already written your objections but, if you've not done so, please now write to Mr G Humphries, Planning Services, The Basildon Centre, St Martin's Square, Basildon, Essex, SS14 1DL. You can also e-mail your comments to planning@basildon.gov.uk or complete an on-line form on the Basildon District Council website.

Remember you must give clear reasons for your objection. They must be relevant to this application - see the 5 points listed overleaf. It is not sufficient to say that the area is nice to live in at present or that the proposed development will affect the value of your home. Overleaf are some brief comments which may help but feel free to use your own words. Fancy words aren't what's needed. Just say what you think. Don't hold back! Write now! Together we can win this fight, stop this building, preserve our countryside, and leave a better Wickford for our families to grow up in.

WNGAG have produced more detailed guidance on writing objections in our Leaflet 2, distributed to residents in July, and on our website at www.greenwickfordnorth.org.uk.

News - Tree Preservation Orders are now in place at Barn Hall

WNGAG have finally been successful, after fighting for two years, in having Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) made in respect of 50 individual trees on the Barn Hall fields, plus the mixed woodland at the end of Jubilee Drive and the triangular woodland area between Clovelly Gardens and Station Avenue.

News - John Baron, our MP, has issued a press release and written to Basildon District Council strongly opposing any building at Barn Hall.

5 objections to make about the Barn Hall Planning Application and examples of comments

I wish to object to the planning application ref. 07/00801/OUT made by Gleeson Homes Ltd and Gladedale Group Ltd in respect of the land north of Station Avenue in Wickford on the following grounds.

1. It is contrary to Green Belt policy, harmful to the environment, and will destroy countryside

Basildon District Council intend to return this countryside to Green Belt. Preservation of open, green areas is important for the protection of biodiversity, helps combat the adverse affects of climate change, and guards against the over-development of Wickford. The development plans would 'concrete over' an area of beautiful fields - a place of tranquillity, enjoyed by residents and visitors for relaxation and rambling, an 'oasis of calm' and a haven for wildlife in an increasingly crowded part of south-east Essex.

2. It is contrary to the planned/zoned development for Wickford and disregards the views of the community and its locally elected representatives

Barn Hall is currently classified as Special Reserve. As such, it should only be built on after all other land zoned for development has been exhausted. Clearly this is not the case. Both Basildon and Chelmsford Councils are able to meet their housing needs and, also, the targets set by central government, by allowing new houses to be built at the Wick, Shotgate, Runwell Hospital, within Wickford town centre under the Masterplan, north of Chelmsford, and various other developments on 'brown-field' sites.

This planning application has no regard to the needs of the local people nor to the policies of their democratically elected councils in Basildon and Chelmsford that provide for future developments in a planned and structured manner with proper regard to the local infrastructure. It is totally unnecessary and would destroy for ever an open area of lovely, green countryside for no reason other than financial gain to building companies, which are neither from the local area nor focusing on Wickford's overall needs.

3. It will over-develop North Wickford/Runwell

Existing plans already make nearby parts of Wickford one of the most densely populated areas within Basildon District. With agreement for 600 new homes at Runwell Hospital and another 600 homes (mainly flats) within the town centre as part of the Wickford Masterplan, central government targets for new builds up to 2021 can already be met without building on Barn Hall. To allow incremental building over and above existing plans would surely be irresponsible and irrational.

4. It is prejudicial to the already agreed re-planning of the wider area

Wickford is already planned for extensive re-development under the Wickford Masterplan. Any further development which affects the area around Station Avenue will materially affect the traffic flow - leading to road safety and traffic congestion issues around Wickford railway station.

5. It impacts residential amenities in North Wickford in an unacceptable manner

Wickford is already one of the most densely populated areas in the south-east with strain on local services, eg. transport chaos with local roads consistently grid-locked in the morning and evening rush-hours, over-crowded trains with Wickford and Billericay commuters already complaining of no seats at peak times, shortages of NHS doctors and dentists, lack of school places, potential water shortages, pressures on the sewage system, drainage problems, increased dangers of flooding, and an 'over-stretched' electricity supply system. No doubt such problems could be addressed IF very substantial sums of public and private money were invested. But to allow incremental building of new houses, flats etc in Barn Hall over and above those already planned to meet the targets set by central government for future housing needs up to 2021 - in an area already struggling to cope with the needs of the existing local population - cannot be good, sensible, reasonable local planning. I, therefore, urge Basildon District Council to reject this application.