

Wickford North GREEN ACTION GROUP

Leaflet 6 – March 2008 - this directly affects your neighbourhood

News - Developers' Planning Application to build on Barn Hall rejected by Basildon Council

On 12 February 2008 Basildon Council's Planning Committee rejected the application by Gleeson Homes Ltd and Gladedale Group Ltd to build up to 200 flats and houses at the end of Station Avenue. The main reasons were that this is open countryside, outside the urban area of Wickford, and that development would result in urban sprawl. Council policy is to return these fields to Green Belt and meet future housing needs by regenerating town centres.

This is a significant victory BUT the fight to save Barn Hall permanently from development continues

The developers have appealed to the Planning Inspectorate (central government) in respect of the delay in reaching this decision. Basildon Council will now defend their rejection of the plans at a public inquiry and the Planning Inspectorate will make the final decision whether Barn Hall is built on or not. Gleesons and Gladedale don't just own the two fields at the end of Station Avenue. They own most of the 100 acres of countryside up to and beyond Waverley Crescent. They intend to 'concrete over the lot', build up to 2000 houses and flats, and ruin your neighbourhood and lifestyle!

Can local residents do anything more now to help the fight? You bet they can! But you need to be fast!

Although letters opposing this development, already submitted to Basildon Council, will be forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate, everyone has the opportunity to submit further comments direct to The Planning Inspectorate, 3/16 Eagle Wing, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6PN **to arrive there by Monday, 10 March 2008**. You need to give your full name and address, send 3 copies of your letter; and quote the appeal reference no. APP/V1505/A/08/2063131/NWF, the Appellant's Name, Gleeson Homes Ltd and Gladedale Group Ltd, and the address of the proposed development, which is Land at North of Station Avenue, Wickford, Essex, SS11 7AY. For those of you who prefer to use the Internet, comments can also be made on-line and by e-mail at www.planningportal.gov.uk

Your personal comments are best. Just write exactly what you and your family feel, and why, about issues like:

- Preserving this beautiful area of open, green countryside at Barn Hall;
- Protecting the environment, biodiversity, combating climate change, reducing pollution, and stopping over-development;
- Safeguarding nature, wildlife, birds, butterflies, meadows, ponds, hedges, copses and wild flowers;
- Having a quiet and peaceful area in which to relax, stroll, walk the dog; and for your children to play and grow up safely in;
- Listening to the views of local people and having regard to the needs of the local community - allowing them, via their democratically elected local councillors, to decide where the future housing needs of the whole district should be met;
- Supporting Basildon Council's policy to improve Wickford's town centre with better infrastructure, new public buildings, more retail outlets, and new houses and flats - via the Masterplan - instead of developers like Gleesons and Gladedale trying to build where they will make most profit; and remember, for them this is just the start of a massive development of 2000 houses;
- Planning new housing, not in the countryside, but in urban areas where it will help regenerate town centres;
- Stopping further urban sprawl and over-development which has already harmed other parts of Wickford;
- Transport chaos and traffic congestion on Station Avenue, Swan Lane, the High Street, and the A132 in and out of Wickford in the rush hours, before allowing hundreds more cars from this development to further block Station Avenue and the High Street;
- Overcrowded trains from Wickford and Billericay to London, your inability to get a seat, and dangerous travelling conditions at peak times - right now, before this extra building; and poor bus services to and from Wickford - meaning yet more car journeys;
- Shortages of NHS doctors and dentists - what problems have you and your family had?
- Lack of primary and secondary school places, with Wickford's schools full - do you want pupils sent to Basildon?
- Potential water shortages and/or pressures on the sewage system;
- Drainage problems, surface water standing on the fields and running off, and the increased dangers of flooding;
- Further demands on electricity supplies which have suffered regular failures and required expensive upgrades in the past;
- Basically - just why you enjoy living where you do and how it will be spoilt for you and your family if this building goes ahead!

Do, please, find time to write. It will help. This is far from 'a done deal'. Basildon Council will resist this development 100% at the appeal. So will Wickford North Green Action Group (WNGAG). We'll also let you know when and where the inquiry held by the Planning Inspectorate will be - though that could take anything from three months to over a year.