

I am writing to ask you to reject the proposal by Bargate homes to build 50 houses in Lower Road, Old Bedhampton.

Firstly before outlining my objections I would like to draw your attention to a worrying perception among the public about the whole process of the planning consultation.

The opinion of the many people that I have spoken to on Bidbury Park, where I walk the dog daily is that the housing development is a 'done deal' and that the council have already decided to approve it. They say this process of submitting objections is just ticking a box and will make no difference.

They point to the fact that on the proposed site workers have already been onsite measuring up and clearing hedges. People are wondering are they just jumping the gun?

However I am submitting my objections in good faith as I am sure my confidence in the integrity of the planning process is justified.

It is for these reasons that I ask you to reject the planning application APP/19/00427 for 50 houses on land south of Lower Road, Old Bedhampton:

Old Bedhampton is a little oasis in the middle of a heavily built up residential areas.

It is used by people all over the area and beyond to walk dogs, cycle down the cycle trail, take kids round to the mead on their bikes, sit by the stream on Brookside or go for a run along the lanes.

It is a recreational zone for all ages. People flock to it especially at the weekend. As someone said

' I exhale as I walk down Brookside and see the old houses and the church and hear the stream '

With the ever increasing number of houses already being built round the area - we need an area like this - in fact I believe the council should be putting in place measures to protect it for that reason.

Fifty houses doesn't sound a lot but it will double the cars coming through Brookside Road and Bidbury Lane. Add to that the construction traffic during the build, delivery vans and visitors to the houses - and the whole peaceful atmosphere of the conservation area will be shattered.

Havant council have themselves put forward initiatives for the health of the borough amidst concerns about childhood obesity levels, adult obesity and all the health concerns attached to a overweight, unfit population. In fact in recent weeks Havant have published a paper about new builds and how they are taking the initiative in creating healthy, sustainable new

environments for people to live. They have talked about cycle routes and places for families to exercise together - recreational areas.

This is what you have in Old Bedhampton now ! Don't ruin one environment to create another!

I believe that in granting permission for this housing estate Havant would be contradicting their own policies as if the houses are built they will have such a detrimental impact on an already established recreation zone - its green lung for residents who flock here.

Already there are issues - what makes the area so appealing also creates problems - the pavementless rural roads and blind bends do not lend themselves to lots of pedestrians with bikes, buggies, wheelchairs, dogs and kids. My daughters [REDACTED] walk down Bidbury Lane and Brookside, one to catch the bus to our local secondary school and the other to walk to the local primary. I already worry that it is dangerous! It will be so much worse if these houses are built with the extra cars, vans, lorries and construction traffic with many of the drivers unfamiliar with the dangers of these lanes.

There are daily near misses - I myself, whilst driving slowly came face to face with an elderly gentleman walking in the road round a blind corner. I had to slam on my brakes. Such near misses are a daily occurrence - the fact that no one has been hurt is just pure luck.

Another 100 plus cars along with delivery vans on these rural style roads will make these roads very very dangerous whatever the traffic assessment of Bargate homes tells us!

Believe me I live here and they don't!!

Bargate's assertion that the drivers around Old Bedhampton are courteous to other road users sounds as though it comes from the principles of the 'shared space scheme' that was based on the theory that drivers will reduce speed because of uncertainty about who has priority. Tellingly the Department for Transport have called for a suspension of these schemes after a number of people were killed by a taxi in a

'Shared space ' which is what Brookside Road, Bidbury Lane and Lower Road are. Surely Havant Council must follow this guidance? Without being overly dramatic it is not incomprehensible that a tragedy like this could occur on our blind corners.

This area of Old Bedhampton has been used by generations of families and is a real jewel. I feel so strongly that we have a duty to protect such a jewel for future generations rather than to sacrifice it for the sake of fifty houses.

The harm caused to so many people by building them would be so much greater than any advantage of the houses.

I appeal to the council to turn down this application so that it's not on the watch of us all that this lovely slice of English heritage is changed forever.

Please come here on a sunny Sunday morning and watch how this area is used and what we all stand to lose if this estate goes ahead.