

Planning Applications and Backland Development

Dear Residents,

The TWRA is noticing an increasing trend for backland development in our villages (ie the purchase of back gardens for the construction of new houses). This is happening because all regions are under pressure to create new homes. Land for development of new housing does not appear as if by magic, but must generally come from brownfield sites (former industrial locations, schools, etc), conversion of Green Belt land, or from people's back gardens (which are also considered as "brownfield" land). Specifically, the TWRA believes that back gardens in our villages are important social and ecological green corridors, housing wildlife and trees, which should be protected from development.

The following describes how the TWRA reacts, including what we do, and what you could do if this occurs near to you. This has been particularly prevalent down Shelveys Way in Tadworth, and we describe below what we have done there.

In the TWRA we have a sub-committee which looks at **ALL** local planning applications once per month, and comment on them if appropriate, including the placing of objections. We look above all at the impact on local residents and on local services, plus we look at national and local planning policies which can include impact on the street scene and highway issues. Minutes from our meetings are available for review on our website. Our comments go to the Council, who review planning applications, and they sometimes come to us for specific points or clarifications. After their review, they either approve or refuse, but can also place restrictions on certain aspects, such as tree protections. Unfortunately, decisions by the local Council to refuse planning permission are often overturned by the Planning Inspector in Bristol.

Taking the present Shelveys Way development as an example of our work, the TWRA objected strongly to the earlier application on a number of grounds including harm to the street scene, tree cover and drainage implications. We also expressed concern at the cumulative impact of parking and traffic on Shelveys Way and the lack of infrastructure in the area, such as schools, doctors, etc. You will note that the previous application was withdrawn, and we are now reiterating these concerns in relation to the current application. Although the formal period for consultation is just ending, the Council has confirmed late comments are accepted, so anyone wishing to comment should ensure they get their comments in as soon as possible.

Residents of Shelveys Way and adjacent roads are mounting a strong campaign against this development and we are supporting them on this. Please note that our Council sets the policy for our borough, and can impact on the source of land for development. If you have any concerns, please do send your representations to the Council and our Councillors. We also ask you to keep an eye out for possible development and to bring them to our attention as soon as possible in case there are trees which merit protection, and so we are alert to proposed developments.

We would welcome more volunteers to help our efforts to preserve the character of our villages, by joining our committee, and please do note we are all volunteers, and can only succeed with the good will and support of our residents.

Kind Regards,

Jeff Temple, Chairman TWRA - 13th January 2023

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