

Ockham Parish Council

Letter to Residents

21th October 2020

Dear Residents and Neighbours

This is an update from Ockham Parish Council on matters relating to Three Farms Meadows (the Former Wisley Airfield).

We want to make it clear that it's far from a 'done deal' that the site A35 detailed in the 2019 Local Plan will be built. Nothing can happen until a Planning Application is submitted and approved. Of the 14 reasons for rejecting the last Application on the site only the Green Belt status has changed.

You are no doubt aware that the site was acquired by Taylor Wimpey in March 2020 and they have been circulating 'Community Newsletters' each month to residents. These show their proposed timeline of events for the next few months. There is a preliminary draft plan for the development, marked 'Work in Progress', which has been submitted to a Guildford Borough Council Design Review Panel. They also have a website: www.wisleyairfield.com, which has copies of documents including minutes of the DRP.

However, The Wisley Action Group has complained to Taylor Wimpey that they are not being open with residents on the details of their plan.

Another major issue for OPC, WAG and the Church is that a number of executives and advisers from the former owners, WPIL, remain as consultants. Strong complaints have been made about this, including a letter from the OPC Chair.

Taylor Wimpey have established a 'Community Liaison Group' (CLG) with participants from local parish councils, All Saints Church, WAG, RHS, and the Guildford Society, etc. We have all chosen to take part even though we are aware it is effectively a talking shop and has no authority over Taylor Wimpey's decisions. It has been made clear on both sides that participation in this group does not amount to support for the proposal. The OPC Chair, Dr Malcolm Aish has participated in the two meetings held so far. At both Taylor Wimpey were subject to detailed questions and the many unresolved and difficult issues yet to be addressed on the site. Minutes of these meetings will be shared on the wisleyairfield.com website.

One of these issues is access to the site. You will be aware that Highways England are pursuing a proposal to redesign M25J10 for which a Development Consent Order is scheduled to go to the Secretary of State in January. The timing is important because Taylor Wimpey have submitted a Planning Application for a 'Stub Road' and enabling works for access to the Ockham Interchange Roundabout. This road is part of the Highways England plan for a new access road to the RHS which would take traffic from the Ockham roundabout through the airfield site and over the A3 to Wisley Lane. Clearly if the SoS rejects the J10 plan the Stub Road will have to be rethought.

In conclusion OPC wishes to make clear:

1. No planning permission for any building on the airfield has been approved or even applied for. Taylor Wimpey's assertion that GBC has approved the site in the Local Plan makes no difference to the work required to get approval for a planning application.
2. While OPC is obliged to accept the 2019 Local Plan, we will support WAG in exploring every avenue to ensure that whatever in due course is built on the airfield will have adequate infrastructure to support it, as far as possible will be consistent with the hamlets of Ockham, and will have minimal impact on Ockham, Hatchford, Wisley, Ripley, Horsley and Effingham. OPC will seek the support of neighbouring councils to this end, and work with the Ockham and Hatchford Residents Association.
3. OPC will continue to work with TW through participation in the Community Liaison Group and to influence their thinking on this project as the draft plan evolves.

You will have recently received communication from Taylor Wimpey about a virtual discussion meeting they are holding on 22 October. Please be open and critical to make an impact on their thinking. You will need to register as soon as possible.

We will provide further updates as and when necessary.

Dr Malcolm Aish, Chair
Ockham Parish Council