

THAMES FARM ACTION GROUP (TFAG)

UPDATE 4

Sent to all residents who have registered on the TFAG Database.

On the 3rd January in Update 3 TFAG reported on the first meeting with Taylor Wimpey, updated the residents on the activity during December and set out a number of goals for TFAG as a result of the responses from SODC and the meeting with Taylor Wimpey.

The goals were as follows;

- 1) To explore all avenues to get SODC to acknowledge the material change that the drainage proposals comprised.
- 2) To continue the social media campaign and engage the regulatory agencies ensuring they are held to account/do their jobs fully and diligently.
- 3) Prepare the response to the Flood Risk Assessment FRA in conjunction with JBA.
- 4) To raise funds for the fighting fund.
- 5) To continue the fight against the proposed drainage proposals from Taylor Wimpey to discharge water into the Lashbrook from both a flooding and environmental perspective.
- 6) To hold Taylor Wimpey to the commitments made in the meeting with TFAG in December.

What has been achieved?

- Despite lobbying from TFAG, The Parish Council, Local Councillors and our local MP SODC has declined to view the extreme changes from the original application by Taylor Wimpey as a material change to the application. Unfortunately, there is no quantitative measure as to what constitutes a material change, it is a subjective decision made by SODC. You may well ask what on earth is material if this case isn't given that the original application made no mention of off-site drainage let alone digging a massive drain through the middle of the village and depositing the surface water from Thames Farm into the Lashbrook!

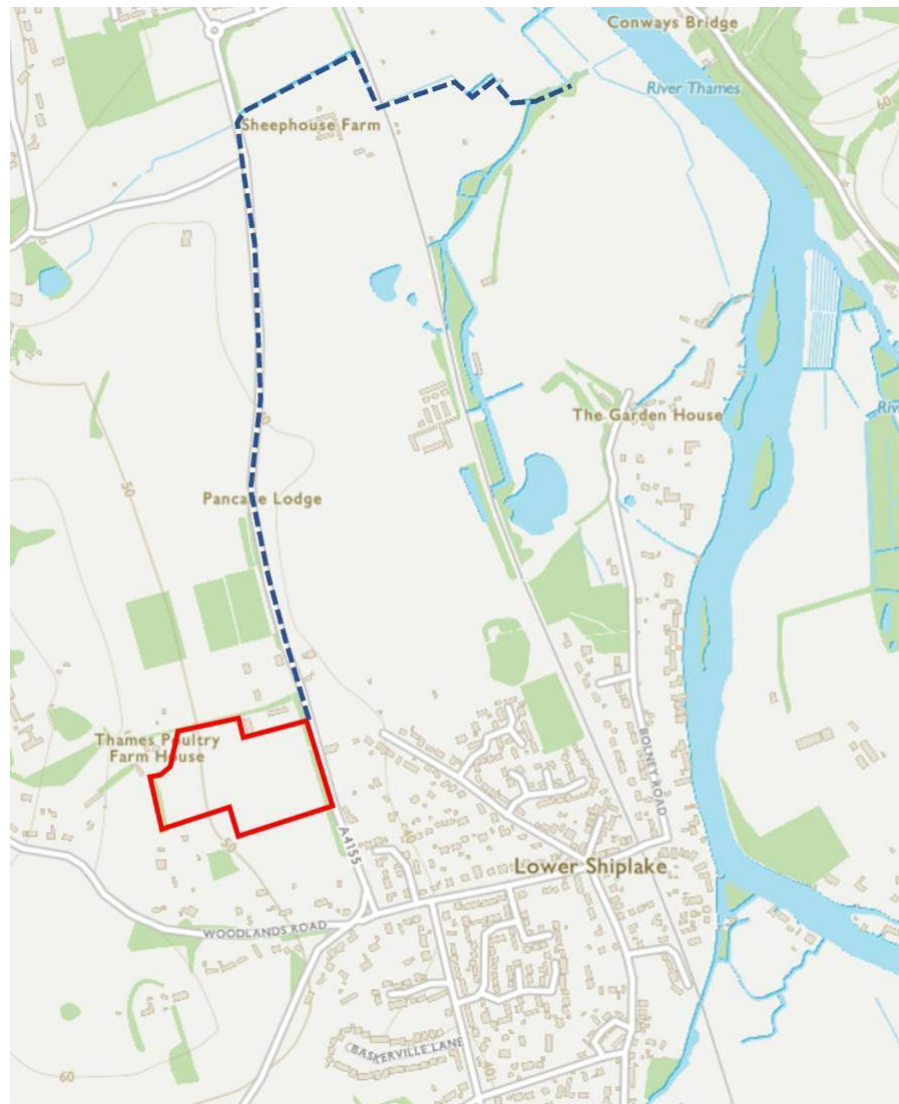
- As highlighted in the previous TFAG Update, work commenced on the Thames Farm site before the reserved conditions had been discharged by Taylor Wimpey. TFAG complained to SODC that its own internal published processes had been ignored by its planning staff as well as ignoring the conditions set when the planning permission was originally granted on appeal. Unsurprisingly SODC has refuted this claim so TFAG has now passed the complaint to the Ombudsman.

The Head of Planning at SODC, Adrian Duffield, in his reply to the complaint disingenuously stated that the reason for the complaint was based on the residents not wanting the development and were using opposition to SODC's actions and the complaint process as a way of preventing it.

- The social media campaign has continued as has the coverage by the Henley Standard and the BBC which has highlighted flooding issues across the region as a result of poor planning regulation and incompetence, largely by SODC.
- The Parish Council appointed JBA to respond to the FRA from Taylor Wimpey requested by SODC in October. SODC gave the residents only 14 days to respond to the FRA when produced, even after an extension was requested, so JBA has already commenced preliminary work in order to be ready to respond given the short timescale imposed by SODC.

JBA was reviewing the application by Taylor Wimpey in its entirety and whilst acknowledging the risk of flooding as a result of discharging surface water into the Lashbrook they also highlighted concerns with the grouting of the site which could result in unknown flooding impacts and also a risk of contamination of the water supply to Shiplake and Henley. JBA has prepared an interim report on the hydrogeology aspects of the Thames Farm site which has been widely circulated and also posted on the Shiplake web site. Please click on this hyperlink [interim report](#) to view the JBA report.

- To continue to raise funds for the Fighting Fund. To date 72 residents have contributed to the fighting fund out of the 170 who stated that they would. Thank you to the 72 residents who have contributed to date.
- The continuing fight against the drainage proposal has continued and forced Taylor Wimpey to look at alternative options. The latest proposal from Taylor Wimpey is to take the surface water down the Reading Road towards Henley and join the watercourse alongside Sheep House Farm, under the railway and down toward the Thames. Whilst this would spare Shiplake from the proposal of discharging into the Lashbrook and the ensuing disruption from the civil engineering works, it is bound to face opposition from other residents and landowners in that area.



The latest proposed drainage route from Taylor Wimpey.

- A further meeting was held with Taylor Wimpey on the 24th February when the latest drainage proposal was revealed to TFAG. TFAG requested that the lighting on the Reading road be turned off which Taylor Wimpey agreed to try to make happen although it is a Highways agency issue.
- TFAG has asked Taylor Wimpey to provide additional data for JBA to analyse and consider the grouting issue in more detail. This will enable JBA to check the validity of some of the conclusions drawn by Taylor Wimpey's engineers from data prepared many years ago but which still forms the baseline for current calculations.
- TFAG has authorised payment of interim invoices from JBA by the Parish Council.

What Now?

Actions for the Residents.

1) Make Your Concerns Known.

The preliminary JBA report highlighted potentially massive consequences of the proposed grouting of the sink holes and voids on the site and its potential impact on the underlying aquifers that supply our drinking water.

JBA pointed out that the aquifer could be compromised if the grouting was too deep as the water table could become affected by widening the underground watercourse and possible leaching of materials from the grout into the water thereby compromising our drinking water quality.

For those who are unaware it is worth noting that the aquifer under Thames Farm is a major part of the water supply to Henley, Shiplake and the local area. The pumping station at the top of Bolney Lane, is the extraction point for this water and is only 50 yards from Thames Farm!!!!
So should the water quality be compromised the consequences could be disastrous for the wider community.

This raises a number of very serious questions.

- 1) Residents should consider whether they think any risk to this natural resource should be taken in any way whatsoever.
- 2) Given the lack of responsibility and apparently reckless approach taken to date over Thames Farm do you trust the agencies to get this right? If they get it wrong the consequences could be massive in scale.
- 3) Given the lack of transparency shown by SODC to date regarding changes to the application do you think we should insist on total disclosure of all facts and a consultation process be established?
- 4) Do you believe that we can rely upon the agencies insisting on Taylor Wimpey underwriting the consequences of the grouting works?

If the potential risk to the aquifer alarms you in any way or you are concerned about the flooding implications of their scheme, then TFAG strongly suggests that you write to SODC, The Environment Agency and Thames Water to express your concerns. It is the pressure of residents concerns that prevented the Taylor Wimpey proposal being passed last October following the most rudimentary of reviews by the authorities. The risk to the aquifer now uncovered by JBA is arguably even more important to the wider community. This action needs to be

taken within the next 14 days before the latest Taylor Wimpey proposal is submitted to SODC for consideration.

One thing is for sure, they (the agencies) cannot and must not be allowed to get this decision wrong.

We must make them accountable, it is just too important.

Please make your concerns known to the following;

Please quote Reference Thames Farm P20/S2808/DIS in all mails or letters.

1. Emma Bowerman
Principal Major Applications Officer
Planning
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils
Customer services: 01235 422600
emma.bowerman@southandvale.gov.uk.
2. David Bell
Senior Flood Risk Engineer
South Oxfordshire District Council
david.bell@southandvale.gov.uk
3. Jason Sherwood
Growth Manager South & Vale
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
New Road
Oxford
OX1 1ND
Jason.Sherwood@Oxfordshire.gov.uk
4. Richard Thompson CEnv MCIWEM
Environment Planning and Engagement Manager Thames Area
Environment Agency
Red Kite House
Wallingford
OX10 8BD
richard.thompson@environment-agency.gov.uk
5. Johnathan Fleming
jonathan.fleming@environment-agency.gov.uk

6. Mr Alex Swann
Planning Advisor
Environment Agency
Planning_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk
7. Development Planning Department
Thames Water
devcon.team@thameswater.co.uk

2) Fighting Fund Contribution.

Thank you to all residents who have contributed thus far.

For those who haven't had the opportunity to contribute to the fighting fund please can you transfer funds to the account below. We are spending money now with JBA and legal advice. This campaign has a way to go and we may need to act very swiftly once the Taylor Wimpey FRA is eventually produced or if SODC and others do not take into account the very serious issues raised with the aquifer and flooding.

- For those who stated that they were prepared to contribute please do transfer those funds to the following account;

Account Name; Adrian Mercer

Account Number; **17453259**

Sort Code; **60-10-35**

- All contributions will be acknowledged by email
- Any funds not spent will be reimbursed pro rata at the end of the campaign.

3) Make Your Voice Heard.

Write to the Henley Standard letters@henleystandard.co.uk and make your points via Social Media.

Thank you for your support, it makes a difference.

TFAG.