

FACE

Fleet and Crookham
Environment **is Threatened**



08th March 2015

Locals Concerned As Developer Appeals

Local residents, supported by community action group FACE IT (Fleet and Crookham Environment Is Threatened), are concerned as Martin Grant Homes appeals against Hart's rejection of their proposal to build 300 homes at Watery Lane, Church Crookham.

The development, which would desecrate a significant part of the upper Hart Valley, was felt to be too urbanised for such an area of environmental biodiversity and did not provide suitable mitigation for the effect on the local Special Protection Area (SPA). Concerns such as traffic, schooling, flooding and damage to a sensitive environment had also been raised by residents.

Last chance site walk

A FACE IT 'Journey of Discovery' walk was held on Saturday 7th March to Albany Farm and Watery Lane. Those enjoying the walk included local parish and district councillors as well as local residents. A local expert guided the walk over public footpaths from Poulter's Bridge on the Basingstoke Canal to the parts of the site proposed for housing development and SANG (a suitable

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alternative natural green space). This included the most sensitive part of the site for those who wanted to experience some of the rare and unique flora and fauna in its natural setting and enjoy the tranquil and fragile wetland environment alongside the River Hart threatened by the Watery Lane development.

Wellington boots were essential as the walk included some of the permanently waterlogged areas and water meadows which give the area Watery Lane its name. These are part of the mosaic of different small-scale habitats which make the local area so rich in biodiversity. Some people attending the walk were surprised at the facts of the valuable rich and varied wildlife that we have on our doorstep.

This may be one of the last chances for a guided walk of the area as the landscape will be changed forever if the development goes ahead.

Social & Appeal briefing

An informal social evening was held by the community action group FACE IT at the Crookham Street Social Club on Tuesday 3rd March. During the evening those present were briefed and information was shared about the upcoming appeal on the Watery Lane development proposals. Advice was available on procedures for those wishing to put their views to the hearing.

FACE IT chairman Max Clark commented:

“We believe that Hart has rejected this development application on sound grounds based on National Planning policy which retains strong protections against inappropriate development in sensitive areas. The

community and FACE IT are cooperating with and supporting Hart Council in opposing the appeal and seeking the rejection of this development.

“This is an important opportunity for the community to stand together and demonstrate the strength of feeling against the damage which is being caused by the ongoing indiscriminate building.”

Appeal

The government's Planning Inspectorate has announced an eight-day public hearing at the Lismoyne Hotel, 45 Church Road, Fleet, on 14th to 23rd April 2015. This will be followed by the inspector's final decision either to grant or to uphold refusal of the planning application.

The first day (14th April) will be for the registration of all interested parties and speakers. There will probably be a specific further public day scheduled, for members of the public to present their views at the discretion of the Inspector.

The other days will allow experts, Hart Council and the developer to present their cases. Further details will be provided nearer the time, but the public will be allowed to attend for any part of the 8 days.

Associated documents can be viewed on the Hart Planning website ref: 14/00504.

FACE IT are encouraging the local community to attend and expect to have a number of interested residents attending on the hearing days. This will be our last opportunity to demonstrate the strong public concern against this development.

To find out more about FACE-IT and other proposed developments in the area please visit: www.faceit-group.org.

Please see attached files for the following photographs associated with this Press Release:

		
P1050789_.jpg	P1050806_.jpg	P1050813_.jpg
FACE IT explains landscape character of the Hart Valley.	Housing could come very close to the River Hart.	Waterlogged ground is a permanent feature of the site.

Higher resolution version of these pictures, and further pictures of this event, are available on request.

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Note to Editors:

FACE IT is a local campaign group for the Fleet and Crookham areas of Hart with an increasing membership and profile. The group has been actively engaged in the planning process and has encouraged Hart to review and improve local plans for the benefit of the community and the environment.

The FACE IT group is campaigning for a better local development plan for Hart that provides full and balanced arguments for and against all the potential development sites in Hart and not just for those to the west of Fleet. A key aim of FACE IT is to make the critical information that needs to be considered for planning housing available and understandable to everyone so that they can actively influence local decision-makers.

The sheer number of homes being proposed is of great concern and currently includes 450 homes at Grove Farm adjacent to Crookham Village and West Fleet, a further phase of 170 homes at the 'Edenbrook' development to the west of Fleet, development at the brownfield site of Tudgeys Nursery in Crookham Village, a number of other smaller developments and 'garden-grabbing' schemes as well as the remaining threat of the 300 houses on Watery Lane, Church Crookham, which, although rejected by Hart Council, are currently subject an appeal by the developer.

For further information contact publicity@faceit-group.org or socialmedia@faceit-group.org