



## **GREEN LANE TURNS RED AT GROVE FARM**

There is significant and growing anger among residents of west Fleet and Crookham Village about the inclusion of Grove Farm in the LDF as a development site for 450 houses, almost twice the number of houses in the picturesque village just 300 metres away. This groundswell of local opinion has been recently exacerbated by the presence of up to 5 teams of surveyors undertaking topographic surveys across a broad swathe of local countryside from Grove Farm to Edenbrook Country Park in the north of the Hart valley. The work has been going on for about 5 weeks and the incommunicative surveyors have been showing scant regard for the natural beauty and biodiversity of the area enjoyed by so many people. Many of the mature trees and bushes have been sprayed with vivid red or blue paint apparently to assist in the survey works. Even the precious ancient woodland ground flora of bluebell and wood anemone along the Green Lane public footpath has been sprayed with unsightly and conspicuous blotches of paint.

Mr & Mrs Butler who live close by are outraged (see photo). They have used this pathway almost everyday for 20 years and feel this insensitive behaviour shows no respect for the environment and the community who love the place. "This route is our gateway to the beautiful Hart valley and has now been despoiled by the extensive use of spray paint. It is vandalism of the first order! Like many of our friends we love this network of footpaths and its lovely countryside setting, so close to the town. We are always seeing buzzards and the sound of the skylarks singing everyday is a joy. Sprawling high density housing here would devastate the valley and the lives so many people."

**Press Release**



FACEIT the local campaign group with an ever increasing membership and profile question this work. "A huge investment is going into this survey which is damaging the character and beauty of the area. This is all taking place before any decisions have been made about the LDF and the democratic planning process has even started. We would like Hart District Council to comment on this activity that seems completely insensitive to the environment and the people who depend on Grove Farm for open space and healthy recreation" said a FACEIT spokesman.

At the heart of this footpath network and easily seen from Hitches Lane is a prominent local landmark known locally as the 'Tump'. It is the highest point of Grove Farm and is at the centre of the proposed development site that extends right down to the River Hart and its floodplain. Housing on this gently sloping hill would be seen from miles around and blight this exceptionally rich and valued valley landscape. This high ground forming the edge of the Hart valley provides visual separation between Fleet's western outskirts and the beautiful wildlife rich countryside beyond. Important populations of threatened farmland birds such as skylark, yellowhammer and linnet, all red listed Birds of Conservation Concern rely on these farmed fields for breeding and flocks of 50 skylarks and linnets regularly winter here and are watched by many people.

Ends

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