

“KEEP WICKWAR A VILLAGE!”

Dear fellow Resident of Wickwar village

We, a group of concerned Wickwar residents, are writing to you to make you aware of a new development application for our village which could have wide-reaching effects for everyone who lives here and to ask for your help to prevent it before it's too late.

What's the issue?

You may be aware that in 2016 a planning application by Gladman Developments for up to 80 residential dwellings on land South of Poplar Lane, Wickwar, was granted outline planning permission, despite strong local opposition.

You may not be aware, however, that Gladman have now put in *another* planning application for the field *immediately next to* the one already granted outline permission for, this time for up to 90 further residential dwellings. This will effectively more than double the size of the development at this site.

Who are Gladman Developments, and why are they involved?

Gladman Developments are land agents, operating in the murky world of “strategic land” promotion; firms like these prepare sites for development by doing the time-consuming work of gaining planning permission for agricultural land. It is then sold on to housebuilders.

These companies don't ever build homes, but work within the labyrinthine planning system, taking advantage of its weaknesses and loopholes. It's a modern-day gold rush: the farming press is filled with adverts for companies offering to prepare agricultural land for building; Gladman Developments offers its services on a “no win, no fee” basis to lure landowners interested in selling up, claiming a success rate of 90pc. The reason for this is the amount of sheer profit that can be made by obtaining planning permission on a strategic site of land.

We feel that this new application by Gladman is a ruthless and rather cynical bid to make the maximum profit from this site, with no real attempt by them to address all the issues that developing on such a scale here would bring to the village of Wickwar.

We are also concerned that should this application be granted permission too, it would open the floodgates for more and more housing developments on agricultural land around our village, until Wickwar's identity as an ancient rural village is eroded away completely. This is a clear and present danger - the map attached to this letter shows areas of land around our village which South Gloucestershire Council is aware the owners are interested in selling for development, updated to include the site which was granted outline planning permission last year and this new application site next to it.

Why should this site be refused planning permission?

- Wickwar is already having to have up to 80 new houses – for a village of this size that is a large percentage of additional homes. So we have taken our share of new housing.
- It is simply not needed here - there is a strategic housing plan in place by South Gloucestershire Council to provide plenty of new homes in the immediate area, as existing

and planned new developments in Yate, Chipping Sodbury, Thornbury, Charfield, Buckover, Filton, etc., etc all show..

- The road infrastructure around Wickwar is poor, and is struggling to cope even now. This development would access onto Sodbury Road, the only major road in the area and the only road through Wickwar village. We are already seeing a steep rise in traffic from new housing in the area and the narrow High Street, with its one-way light controlled section, regularly gridlocks at certain times of the working day. This road is also notoriously dangerous, with drivers speeding, overtaking farm vehicles, etc. There is no plan to improve the road infrastructure.
- There is a very poor bus service in place to link Wickwar with neighbouring settlements, which can only mean in reality more issues from increased traffic and pollution.
- Our village cannot offer the facilities that such a development would require – we have very few shops/amenities, one school which is over-subscribed and no health facilities..
- This development would not bring any economic advantages to our village; the development is outside the village boundary and cannot be linked to the High Street by footpath/cycle path. As parking in the High Street is difficult, and there's little to go there for anyway, any new residents here would simply drive to the larger settlements of Yate, Chipping Sodbury, Thornbury, for shopping, etc.
- Finally, we are concerned that the ancient rural setting and character of the village of Wickwar will be eroded away – for ever - with each development that gets planning permission. We need to look at the bigger picture here, and put a stop to this application.

Do we really have a chance of getting this application refused?

YES, we do! As we've mentioned, Gladman are in the business of getting planning permission granted, and they openly admit to targeting local authorities "whose planning is in relative disarray and either have no up-to-date local plan or, temporarily, they do not have a five-year supply of consented building plots." This was undoubtedly a major factor in getting the planning permission for the adjacent site granted in 2016, but the situation has changed now. South Gloucestershire DO have a five year supply of consented building plots now and are in a much stronger position to turn this additional application down, based on the number of Objections received.

I'm concerned about this too! What can I do?

So, we need to get your Objections in to South Gloucestershire Planning Department, against Planning Application PK17/4552/O. You can do this on line by going onto www.southglos.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/ click on Search Planning Applications, enter PK17/4552/O and then add your comment on the page that comes up.

You can also write to the Planning Department at :
South Gloucestershire Council
Department for Environment and Community Services
PO Box 1954
Bristol
BS37 0DD

Time is running out for this though, so if like us you don't want to see Wickwar spoilt forever by opportunistic development, please get your Objection comments in **before the end of November**.

Some Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions and answers are included to help clarify some additional points and suggestions.

- **I sent in my objections to the last planning application and it seemed to make no difference. Is it worth objecting to this one?**
 - Yes, it definitely is!
 - South Gloucestershire is in a stronger position than last year and now have a 5-year strategic housing plan in place. This application is outside of this plan and is not needed;
 - The Councillor (Marian Lewis) who supported the last application is objecting to this application on the grounds that Wickwar has taken its share of new housing;
 - The number of objection comments received will influence the final decision.

- **I don't live near the proposed site, why should I object to this planning application?**
 - Everyone in the village and surrounding area will be affected by the development - the increase in traffic, noise and pollution;
 - It will change *for ever* the character and setting of our village;
 - If this application is approved, then it's very likely that further development applications will be quickly submitted for the village and these may have a more direct influence on you. See the map attached for other sites identified in a "Call for Sites" study completed in 2015, but this is not exhaustive, land agents are always looking out for new sites to make money on!

- **Why don't we start a petition?**
 - Petitions carry less weight with Planners than individual objections received.

- **How many objections can I make/register for this application?**
 - You can make as many objections as you like. There is no limit. The more the better.

- **Who is key contact at South Gloucestershire that I can discuss this application?**
 - Contact the case officer: David Stockdale, South Gloucestershire Council.

- **Where I can I find out more information about the application and read other objections?**
 - Please use the Planning Application reference: PK17/4552/O
 - Website: www.southglos.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/
 - By Mail: South Gloucestershire Council, Department for Environment and Community Services, PO Box 1954, Bristol, BS37 0DD

- **How do I send in my objections?**
 - Either post them in, or post them on the website.

- **What is deadline for sending my objections?**
 - The current deadline for submitting your objections is 30th November.
 - This may get extended, but is not confirmed nor guaranteed.

- **When will the decision be made for this application?**
 - The actual date is not yet confirmed, but is likely to be December 2017 or early 2018.
- **Will I be able to object after the decision has been made?**
 - No. The decision is final. Therefore, is it important for you to submit your objections before the closing date.
- **Can more than one person in a household put in objections?**
 - Yes. Anyone can put in an objection.
- **What can I object to, and what should I not include in my objections?**
 - Some suggestions for valid objections: -
 - Negative effects on the neighbourhood and community;
 - Over development or overcrowding;
 - Highway safety and road infrastructure issues;
 - Do not make the objections too personal or emotional.
 - Please read the objections already posted by others for further examples.
- **Is there a pro-forma that I can fill out to make it easier for me to send in objections?**
 - There is no pro-forma, as standard responses are not taken as seriously as objections submitted in your own words.