



To whom it may concern,

I am writing to object to the planning application PL/2026/01383; Land off Blind Lane, Southwick, Wiltshire with the proposal of; development of 90 dwellings with new access from Blind Lane, internal roads and footpaths, areas of open space (including play space), drainage, landscaping and associated plant and works.

Objection reference JH/. 05042026

I object to the development as identified as PL/2026/01383, on the grounds described below; although not exhaustive cover some key aspects that dictate the proposal is detrimental to the integrity of the village, local amenities, services, existing infrastructure, local ecology, biodiversity and transport infrastructure. It also conflicts with the Exiting Southwick neighbourhood plan (SNP).

The development breaches a long-recognised boundary of Blind Lane which has always been considered the village limits, this is a common understanding of the existing population and probably contributes to why development hasn't taken place previously.

The balance of the village community and sense of identity will erode as the expansion will create a more disparate suburb and lose or dilute the cohesive nature of the local population. The proposal is circa a 10% increase in the size of the village, much larger than the existing population agreed in the SNP.

Flooding

the area identified for development has historically and through empirical evidence flooded on regular occasions, with the stream flooding gardens in residences along the stream boundary it has also overflowed into the field there have been several large areas of flooding on the agricultural land there is a high water table and a very clay like soil. These events cannot be ignored given the extra hard standing in the proposal and loss of natural drainage; this can only add to the complexity. The runoff will not be dealt with effectively from the storm drains (likely to connect into existing drains) or a reduced capability natural soak away. From the impermeable areas plan it is clear a lot of land will be used for hard surface which will flash off and put any drainage system under pressure, therefore leading to further localised flooding. Something the new residents will fail to enjoy.

There have been several occasions where the flood water has flooded the sewers along Blind Lane allowing sewerage waste to enter the gardens of the houses along blind lane further pressure on the land upstream will only exacerbate this problem - downstream of the proposed development. The identified development only connecting into the under pressure existing

sewage drain is unlikely to have the capacity to take on a further 90 dwellings it is old drain system that has a limited flow capability I do not see where this has been addressed and appears overlooked. The main sewer on Blind Lane is 150mm in diameter and will not cope with the extra demand of the development of the 90 houses, the new development drainage system will need to connect with the more robust Wynsome Street sewers. A revised proposal needs submitting where waste is dealt with appropriately taking it back to the main interception point. This proposal will invite significant issues such as bottlenecks and increase the likelihood of sewerage management failure. The planned sewer is identified as connecting to the Blind Lane sewer and needs redirecting, taking a route out through the existing farmland and joining to the Wynsome Street system whilst avoiding the domestic properties. I would like to see a support package provided by the developers over the life time of the property development to provide a 24 hour fully funded emergency call out to resolve any issues impactful to the local residents.

I am sure if you consult effectively with all of the residents along the line of the Stream along blind lane you will be provided with numerous photographs of the events over time.

To reiterate flooding has been observed previously on many occasions to varying degrees and is at its worst throughout the winter period, the loss of the open fields and natural drainage as a result of new roads, pavements, covered surfaces and driveways will pressurise the already delicate balance of drainage for the land. As there are natural rises and falls along the length of Blind Lane and land surrounding the development this will increase the risk of local flooding and the generation of a stagnant pool of intensely localised surface runoff water will not address the issue created and exacerbated by the development.

Site access

Viewing the plan, the site access is in the wrong location it conflicts with closely located existing access points to both Hollis Way and Southfield, especially given that Hollis way is the main run and access to the school and at peak times this is particularly high. Given few people walk their children to the school and there are large numbers of cars using this area. there are times during the day the high level of traffic will be in conflict with the traffic exiting from the new development, again this is another reason to avoid a development of this size and focus only on developments identified in the SNP, identified previously.

As the probability is the development will take a number of years, heavy goods vehicles, aggregate lorries, cement mixers and so on, will demand access and due to the current demands a separate site access vehicular route will be required and an alternative route to enter the site is required.

To reiterate the development shouldn't go ahead; however, if the poor decision to permit this development to progress is given, then access to the site should be at the far end of Blind Lane next to the island where there are turning circles and existing dual routes into the area. All access traffic should be entering Blind Lane via the main A36 Frome Road along Wesley Lane; this will reduce potential conflicts with existing residents in a busy area the school runs and deliveries around this time. Provision needs to be made for this increased level of traffic for the residents that live along the Wesley Lane route and on the island and this is the most sensible access point given they size weights and disruption of these vehicles.

Unfortunately, and since the diversion of traffic from the A36 into Bath, the lane currently is used as a 'rat run' when the roads are busy on the main A36 Frome Road and Wynsome street and there

is also high levels of traffic at these times because of the increased incidents of road works along the main routes (A36 Frome Road and Wynsome street). This is due to heavy use due to the restrictions through Bath which are now impacting local trunk roads and through the village.

The proposal of putting traffic calming in place will only increase vehicular noise as vehicles stop, start go over bumps, detour obstructions and so on. The impact on shock absorbers and bumps, creaks and rattles as they traverse any contours in the road only increases noise pollution. This is also completely unacceptable as it has a negative effect on background noise levels and the quiet enjoyment of the village. The position of the monitoring of traffic along blind lane for the transport / traffic survey report was in the wrong place as it did not pick up vehicles heading into Hollis Way from the direction of Trowbridge, so cannot be considered an effective analysis and will need revisiting.

Travel plans

Access to local areas outside of the village for the majority of journeys will have to be cars/ automobiles; the identified local bus service is miserable an honestly quite unsupported, anyone living in the new development in all likelihood will have to have a car. Given that most families typically have more than one car that's going to be in the region of 90 to 180 extra vehicles in and out of the site at various hours of the day particularly at peak travel times.

The wrongly identified adequate bus service given the fact is just lip service. accessing the site via cycle routes is tenuous at best given the route into Trowbridge, the route to Frome, the route to Westbury by North Bradley are all difficult precarious roads two of which have the national speed limits and associated risks and the other is a 40 mile an hour limit. Walking distance out of the village within the region of 45 minutes in any direction to any other urban area again improbable for village residents, particularly due the existing infrastructure and amenities.

The proposals for use of public transport with vouchers and visits from local travel experts are fanciful and nonsense, again it is paying lip service to the real issue that more cars than the road can handle comfortably will be introduced to the village. This is a sad truth that cannot be ignored.

Monitoring and reviewing travel plans again like some of the other suggestions is pointless given that once the damage is done it'll be irretrievable. You will not be able to enforce people who have cars and living in that area not to have cars and living in that area and the idea that you can on a review of the travel plan is nonsense.

It has been identified previously the congestion and parking on Blind Lane has been problematic for residents and vehicular traffic. There is no getting away from the narrow nature of Blind Lane and the other local feeder roads making traffic passing very difficult at times. This issue is exacerbated during peak traffic flow and periods of high vehicle numbers. There will be significantly increased levels of transport pollution resulting from the extra vehicles on the road, extending beyond atmospheric particulates, smoke, and fumes to include increased noise levels. There will be an immediate localised effect on Blind Lane as there will be a significant uplift in the level of traffic, exacerbated in time. I also don't believe the figures that suggest for 90 new homes there will be little uplift in peak traffic flow and local traffic numbers and think it is a significant underestimation.

Lighting

As with all other applications that have been made in the village those from sensible housing numbers to the ridiculous Blind Lane proposal, all will impact the local Bat strategy; as you know there are several species of bats that are known to frequent this area of Wiltshire and across the Somerset border. The light impact has the potential to be damaging to this population there feeding and behaviours. Lighting during the building process no doubt will be excessive to protect the site from theft and damage impacting on local residents, wildlife and shining through windows and over bright.

Habitat destruction

The proposed level of habitat destruction with removal of 80 plus metres of hedgerows for visible access to the site access and the removal of hedgerows to provide pedestrian footpaths and repurposing of land can do nothing other than damage the local environment and habitat, no matter how it is communicated. The hedgerow provides a wildlife corridor and a barrier around the field, it accommodates many bird species, it provides much needed greenery to the edge of the village and sits alongside the village boundary (note - should not be exceeded). The hedgerow clearly is being grown specifically by the farmer, assumedly for various reasons including reduction of overlooking exiting properties from both directions. Therefore, it can be assumed there is a considerable benefit in growing and maintaining a hedge like this.

The streams, the hedges, the grass verges on the farmland provide a rich and varied habitat for local wildlife this will be lost with one of the biggest impacts being the removal of large sections of an aged multi species hedge. The immediate loss of this established habitat and environment, despite any attempt to increase bio-diversity plant and nurture growth needs to reflect the protracted time to recover once the existing habitat is lost. It will take years to recover and create any kind of established environmental habitat. Once lost it will be very difficult to recover, if at all.

A number of trees are planned for removal, which is unacceptable, leading to inadequate solution. From the biodiversity net gain and assessment, it is clear the hedge running along blind lane is considered a good hedge with diversity in that the size is significant, any damage or human impact appears to be from overzealous pruning or lack of countryside stewardship, of which any motivation for is unclear.

With correct management this could be a significant asset to the boundary of the site and village, which also means if the development goes ahead the boundary of the site cannot reach the point proposed where this splay for visual access to the junction eradicates a good portion of the hedgerow. This further suggests a separate access point required, as identified earlier by the Island at the top of Blind Lane. Therefore, the design of the build does not consider the long-established existing flora in the environment.

The logic of building housing estates on an existing area of agricultural land does not demonstrate a progressive approach to wildlife habitat maintenance. As you will be aware from many other residential communications there are many sightings of existing animals, mammalian, avian and amphibian and so on, it could be argued there has been lack of decent farm stewardship over the years leading to depletion of the rich environment it could be. One might question motivation? Perhaps this could have been the desired outcome given the length of planning application and determination of the landowner to ensure as many barriers to developments are eradicated. Great farming practise, regenerative farming and ecological farm stewardship would have improved the local environments however apathy seems to have won in this area.

With some sensible thinking, the current habitat could be protected and replanting is not necessarily an acceptable recourse. The development will damage the local ecology through the displacement of the existing flora and fauna (particularly); this will result in pressurising the surrounding ecology and animals migrate to alternate areas, creating a ripple effect with an unsupportable population density. This will result in loss of some of the animal population through starvation and lack of harbourage. The extensive hedge row provides harbourage and wildlife corridors where apex predators (i.e. sparrow hawk and other raptors) have been seen hunting. Within the locality there are numerous observations of animals; deer, rural foxes, bats and many bird species including owls and songbirds are a treat for residents. In short these will be lost to the environment depleting the biodiversity and enjoyment of the village residents and the benefit of village life. I suggest the ecological survey revisits the number of ponds surveyed, given the high number in the locality and the feasible movement of the pond inhabitants. The change of habitat from agricultural to housing land is a degradation of environment no matter how interpreted, beyond the structural impact on habitat there will be significant levels of human and noise disturbance for local wildlife, lessening their ability to exist undisturbed. I would suggest that there is an active significant development of maintained wildflower meadows (large borders of 10s of meters across) around the site – all points of the compass to the north, east, south and west promoting the necessary improvement of biodiversity and insect species. This will reduce the number of proposed dwellings, but would be a significant statement of intent to promote biodiversity and sustainable ecology.

Farming

Rural agricultural areas within the southwest and the wider UK are under increasing pressure to continue to feed the nation, as the population grows, obviously more food is required, complexity, cost and disruption become more apparent and this overlaid with global economic disruption requires the UK has to be more self-sufficient. Here again we are seeing the loss of farming habitats and Greenfield sites due to development with housing further pressurising the habitat and the farming community.

Within the local environment, Trowbridge, Westbury and Frome there are many brownfield sites that could be developed and supported by local authorities these are not exhaustively explored due to cost. These brownfield sites would provide significant areas of development to address housing challenges particularly in Wiltshire area. This would help protect local farming, greenfield sites, environments and local food sourcing.

The development will result in the loss of a large swathe of agricultural land, an industry already under pressure that provides long-term employment for local people. The loss of the farmland is wrong for many reasons, for example economic, socio-economic and agricultural productivity in the local area. There are already huge existing local developments replacing farmland in the Wiltshire area, all contributing to the countryside loss and challenge faced by rural communities. The emphasis should be on reclaiming these Brownfield sites as a priority, not the current plan developing on Greenfield sites, which are naturally the cheaper option, suggesting motivation for development is profit, not village enhancement.

Local resources

The development makes assumptions on a range family and multi-occupancy homes; these will have a direct impact on the local school which is fully subscribed and running at a level that cannot support more than a handful of extra primary students. This would create the need for the children (of primary age) to attend another remote village school or head into Trowbridge which will further clog the existing bumper to bumper traffic on key roads. The secondary school children will have to commute either on foot, bike, infrequent public transport or as car passengers out of the village and back into the village in the evening along the main Frome Road which is a busy and fairly dangerous road with a history of accidents, some severe as well as unreported anecdotal near misses.

The extra demands placed on the village infrastructure for children of all ages beyond the use of local amenities (playing field) for recreational activity will be insufficient. This will not help the situation significantly as it is really window dressing for a village with limited options for outdoor activities for large numbers of children.

Public transport is identified as being good or sufficient to support amongst other things commuting to and from work, the limited bus service may cater for some daytime core employment but there is little or no public transport availability for shift working, night working and late service sector staff working shifts. All of which are reflective of employment modernity and clearly overlooked in this proposal. The development by nature will drive up the number of local vehicles and traffic and this must be avoided.

There will be further demand for utilities and this will pressurise the existing infrastructure, these need serious review and no doubt upgrade and over sizing to cope with the extra demand. Bigger sub-stations, more or bigger gas pipes and sewerage waste pipes will no doubt be required, leading to digging up of the roads, leaving uneven surfaces and other persistent problems.

Within the Trowbridge area there is widespread understanding that emergency support services are stretched; hospitals, ambulance, fire and police response all struggling in terms of numbers, duration and locality. A significant development will pressurise these services further without providing the funding to upgrade these. This could have potentially significant consequences, with possible situations which are injurious to health.

Within the village location there are limited options and facilities for children, beyond the local park with play equipment. It will mean that children with limited mobility will have to head into Trowbridge or alternate towns that support a greater range of facilities for entertainment. This could result in numbers of bored young people, potentially leading to misadventure through high spirits. Somehow, we need to ensure support for these children, especially regarding the stimulation they need at this crucial time in their development. Admittedly there is no direct correlation between this eventuality and the property development; there is however due consideration required to prevent this situation from arising. There have been situations of this kind in the village previously and a higher frequency of events is directly relatable to population size.

The location of the nearest secondary schools is a concern as they are a long walk for students when carrying their school equipment, especially for those children not in a position to either get the bus or lucky enough to get a lift. This will further congest pavements at peak pedestrian flow.

As mentioned earlier the demand on the roads for vehicles at these times will already be high leading to conflict at crossing points -both official and unofficial. This issue will be intensified at periods of inclement weather and during reduced daylight hours.

Build design

From the property development plans there is little evidence to support the needs of the local community regarding design of housing. The village is proud to offer various accommodation for less able bodied and more vulnerable people; from the design information it is apparent that taller properties do not cater for any of the less able groups. There is lack of single-story properties or bungalows. If anything, the housing proposal is looking to increase the property density by making the houses taller by having a smaller footprint. So, it is not in keeping with the established housing variety evident in the village and certainly not supportive in terms of maintaining a representative village demographic.

The taller buildings will overlook the existing properties with clear views into existing windows at all levels and into gardens, a clear compromise of the existing level of privacy enjoyed. The prospect of having someone able to stare into bedrooms is an indignity many local residents currently don't suffer and have no wish to do so.

No consideration is made for the existing population in terms of layout with the taller properties abutting the Blind Lane Road; this will have the effect of creating a more claustrophobic environment for the residents in this area, a clear departure from the existing situation.

Wellbeing of local residents

There is a clear disregard of the wellbeing of the local residents; clearly there is a lot of resentment, anger and bad feeling about this development and I propose that this development will increase stress levels of the local population, in some cases this could lead to long-term chronic health issues and certainly damaged wellbeing. There is a lot of anxiety as a result of this proposal and the residual consequences of the development and the legacy it will leave.

The development will have an adverse impact on noise levels; there will be a greater noise level from the increased numbers of residents.

The proposal to create a stagnant / semi-stagnant pond will generate a pool of water with the potential to smell. It will also in probability provide the warm shallow pond structure typical promoting blue/green algal blooms which are toxic, these could pollute the local streams and directly affect inhabitants and their pets if they are in direct contact with the water. There is also the potential to further support pest populations such as rats, a known carrier of Weil's disease.

I don't believe this development will be in isolation it will be just the start and a precursor to much larger property development across all of the land identified in the surveyed areas along Blind Lane and adjoining roads. The detrimental impact of this development and potential further bolt on developments will roll on and on until there is no identifiable village at all, just another soulless suburb, until the village of Southwick is lost forever.

Based on the data presented in the numerous reports, I would question the strategic intent of the development in that the remedial actions proposed are the minimal to tick the boxes that will

achieve approval of the scheme. I would really like to see a well invested, engaging collaborative plan that far exceeds all minimum standards and genuinely improves the local environment (as referred to in the planning literature). This is not forthcoming at the moment and should be if the proposal is to be taken seriously and accepted.

The exiting Neighbourhood plan

This Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has been prepared by residents and members of the Parish Council, working as part of the Southwick NDP and supported by independent Consultants, Fowler Architecture and Planning and AECOM. The Plan looks ahead to 2036, to coincide with the Wiltshire Local Plan Review (2016-2036). It is readily available for review as needed. It has repeated and sustained full and extensive community engagement programmes, far eclipsing the minimal effort of this planning proposal.

It clearly identifies key resident's requirements (absolutely worth reading and digesting), small developments and all the necessary protected village characteristics.

Identified within the SNP, were two viable preferred sites; two sites already identified to meet the needs of the village; the Helibeds site and Lambers Marsh site – land off Wesley Lane both with appropriate caveats, which met the demands of the SNP and local residents' expectations, unlike this planning application. The land off Blin Lane was considered unsuitable at the time and remains so – nothing has changed during the completion of the plan, now and for the foreseeable future. The SNP has supportive comments from Dr Andrew Murrison MP and Anne Henshaw, Chair of The Countryside Charity, CPRE Wiltshire, which cannot be ignored

It is for these reasons and failures of the proposal I strongly object to the property development identified and remain unchanged in my views

Yours faithfully

Josh Heydon

Local resident