

Wickham Residents' Association News Updates

The Mill Lane Sports and Recreation Site

We attended the Parish Council's Recreation Committee Zoom meeting on the 10th February. A letter, which the WRA had sent to the Council, was on the agenda. The letter set out our concerns and recommendations about the Terms of Reference/ the way the forum (which will inform on the Mill Lane site) will operate. The letter was discussed at the meeting but we came away dissatisfied and will continue to challenge the Parish Council regarding this.

There are two other main issues which we are also concerned about: firstly, the revised Need Assessment and the Draft Master Plan for the site are being drawn up at the same time. We believe that before the Master Plan is tackled, the forum and the residents should see the draft Need Assessment. If it doesn't meet the residents' expectations, then the Master Plan should be revised. Secondly it is proposed that the forum should include not only local people and current users of Wickham Sports facilities but also other stakeholders, which include Infinity FC and the Football Association. These organisations do not represent local needs.

At the meeting Cllr Lorrae Hayes (chair of the Committee) stated that she had good news for us: Infinity and a Wessex League stadium would not be part of the plan. The discussion then moved to our points of concern. Our arguments and recommendations were put forward strongly, but we failed to persuade the Committee to consider them. Wendy Greenish, representing Wickham Society, also urged the Council to reconsider their stated aspiration for a Wessex League standard football ground on the Mill Lane site, and remove it from their Sports Development Plan of July 2021, as this would significantly reassure residents about the Council's future intentions. This was not agreed, at least for the time being.

The Council revealed that the Need Assessment and the draft Master Plan will soon be ready. The Association pressed the Council to circulate a recruitment notice for membership of the forum and to agree a date for its first meeting. This was agreed and the first meeting date was set for March 15th. The Association will apply to be represented and will continue to campaign vigorously on behalf of local people.

Funtley Tip Solar Farm

The Association has checked out the Solar Farm planning application documents in detail. We've looked especially carefully at the documents used to support the traffic impact of heavy goods vehicles travelling along Titchfield Lane to take soil to the tip to prepare for the building of the solar farm. We've sent our detailed report to the Case Officer at Hampshire County Council and looked into the options for creating our own traffic count – this would be costly as can only be done by specific people/companies and not by ourselves.

We've challenged the conclusions of the Traffic Impact Assessment produced on behalf of the applicant because it overstates by between 6 and 32 times the proportion of current vehicles on Titchfield Lane which are heavy goods vehicles! This huge overestimate allowed the applicant to claim that the impact of the estimated 84 extra heavy goods vehicle journeys per day by the solar farm delivery lorries would be "indiscernible".

Our report, highlighting this poor Traffic Assessment and other weaknesses in the application papers, is now with the Case Officer. We will continue to vigorously pursue these, and other issues, linked to the application.

The Association has asked to meet with Cllr Patricia Stallard who represents Wickham on Hampshire County Council in order to make sure she is aware of the facts and to enlist her support in making sure they are properly considered.

Southern Water letters sent recently to some Wickham residents

In the last Parish Magazine we alerted residents to some worrying letters which had been sent to some of our residents by Southern Water. Since then, several more Wickham Residents have told us that they have also received letters from Southern Water and their surveyor Fisher German requesting personal property information.

The letters were sent as part of Southern Water project to install a new pipeline from Havant to Otterborne. They include a request for personal information about the resident's property, land ownership and access to their properties under what is called a "Land Referencing" request. The term "Land Referencing" has alarmed residents as it could be the first step towards a Compulsory Purchase Order.

Getting information and clarification from Southern Water has been very difficult. So, at a recent Wickham Parish Council meeting, the WRA alerted the Council and pushed hard for the Parish Clerk to write to Southern Water requesting individual letters of apology and correction. The Parish Council agreed that the Parish Clerk would do this. The Parish Clerk has recently replied to us and has asked all people, who received these letters, to contact her and she will then proceed. Her email is: clerk@wickhamparishcouncil.org She will need your address, a copy of the letter you have received and a preferred means of initial contact, either phone or email.

The WRA have also found out that you can contact the CEO of Southern Water, Mr Ian McAulay directly (Ian.McAulay@southernwater.co.uk), requesting an apology and clarification. Our WRA Chairman, who himself received the Southern Water Land Referencing letter, did this and received a reply from Southern Water. Here is an extract from that letter:

"I am truly sorry for the dread and anxiety this letter has caused. I fully understand the angst and worry you've felt by the letter making you think that your home may be compulsory purchased. I can assure you we have no interest in purchasing your land/

home. The information provided in the letter was incorrectly sent to a number of households including your own”.

Association Membership

Since the new year we have welcomed 32 new members to the WRA – thank you for joining.

The greater our membership the more effectively we can speak up for what matters to people locally. Membership is free and open to all residents in the PO17 post code. If you would like to join our ever more active association to help influence events and developments in and around the village, please go to our website www.wickhamresidents.org.uk and complete the application form, or drop us an email to membership@wickhamresidents.org.uk

Annual General Meeting, Monday April 4th, Wickham Community Centre

The Association’s AGM will be your opportunity to contribute your thoughts and ideas to the association’s activities. The agenda will include elections to the Committee, reports on current projects (those mentioned above plus others we are actively involved with), adoption of the Association’s Constitution and proposals submitted by members.

All those who have registered as members by March 21st will be eligible to attend and vote on matters discussed at the meeting. More information about the meeting will be distributed to members on that date.

We look forward to seeing our members there.