

COLD ASH PARISH COUNCIL

(Constituted 4 December 1894)

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(Please address all correspondence to the Clerk)

David McFarlane,
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Dear David,

I am responding to your email of 13th January 2022, on behalf of Cold Ash Parish Council.

We are unclear as to what has initiated your communication, but assume that it's in response to the letter from Laura Farris', MP for Newbury, letter to Lynne Doherty, Leader of West Berkshire Council, requesting that West Berkshire Council take another look at the proposed 'NE Thattham Development' (SP17) and consider other options which 'would avoid the serious impact on the rural character of this part of the constituency'.

In your communication, you link the Henwick Park and Colthrop proposals. We see no reason for doing this as the two sites are distinctly different; partially since they're geographically separate, but also because Colthrop is a brownfield site and distinctly less disadvantageous to the parishes of Bucklebury and Cold Ash, whereas Henwick Park retains all the shortcomings of the 'NE Thattham Development' site. If anything, Henwick Park is less advantageous than the 'NE Thattham Development' site; it would seriously impact on the rural character of the parish of Cold Ash, would result in coalescence of the parish with Thattham and would have the same serious impact on traffic through, what is, a rural parish. I will not repeat what Laura has written but contend that all that she says about the NE Thattham Development applies equally to the proposed Henwick Park development.

West Berkshire Council also highlighted the importance of maintaining the separation between Thattham and Cold Ash, and the gradation between urban settlement and the countryside, in its rationale for rejecting the site for development, stating:

West Berkshire LCA (2019) - the site lies within the Cold Ash Woodland and Heathland Mosaic LCA. The decreasing separation/coalescence between Cold Ash and Thattham, increased suburbanisation and the loss of gradation between settlement and countryside have been identified as key detractors in this area. The landscape strategy is therefore to retain the distinction between and individual identity of settlements such as Thattham and Cold Ash and to conserve elements that mark a transition between settlement and countryside. Development over the whole site is therefore not considered appropriate in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character of the landscape.

In addition to this, as part of the review undertaken by the Cold Ash NDP Steering Committee, in developing its evolving NDP, it concluded that the site was not one that would be selected to house our allocated number of dwellings. Since arriving at that conclusion, and through further negotiations with West Berkshire Council, our allocation number was reduced to zero; so, our NDP is now non-allocating. This however does not preclude the fact

that the conclusion that Cold Ash Parish Council, in representing the views of its parishioners, had come to is that development of Henwick Park is not what is desired, and should be actively opposed.

As you state on your website, this site has previously been subject to a planning application that was refused following determination by the Secretary of State. We would expect this to still be the position.

Taking all these points into account, we strongly oppose development of the Henwick Park site and believe that we will get full support from all the parties involved.

Finally, we note that you have been engaging with Thatcham Town Council on your proposals. We are unclear as to why this is the case, as the site sits fully within the parish of Cold Ash.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marie Fenner', written in a cursive style.

Marie Fenner
Chair of Cold Ash Parish Council