

4 HMS Ganges - NOT THE END OF THE ROAD !

The fight against Ganges goes on! Babergh's perverse decision on June 8th to approve the massive development at Shotley is NOT the last word on issue. The overwhelming majority of us still believe this scheme is too big and in the wrong place and there is still plenty we can do to stop it.

The Development Committee had clearly made up their minds long before the meeting and did not listen to our views on the day. They made inane comparisons of the Shotley development with schemes in Hadleigh, Sudbury and Gt. Cornard - some of which have yet to be built! They totally ignored the character and geography of the area and the key fact that Shotley is at the end of the longest cul de sac in Suffolk. They were blinded by the word "brownfield" - thought they could build all over it and to hell with the consequences.

I think we all came away stunned, incensed and incredulous. We all felt we had been the victims of a stitch up. And, of course, we were. But that is NOT THE END OF THE ROAD (our new slogan) for our protest. They won't get away with it that easily.

Suffolk South MP Tim Yeo has said he is "appalled" by the outcome of the public meeting. He is backing us all the way and has pledged to do all he can to help us reverse the decision. He has written to the Government Office for the East of England to get the plan "called in" - this means there would be a full public inquiry with the final decision made by the Secretary of State. Our local district and county councillors are also right behind us. We all agree that something must be done to develop the Ganges site but 325 homes is not the answer. So the bad news is Babergh's reckless decision was environmental vandalism but the good news is they can be called to account at a public inquiry. Their decision is not final and can be overturned but it is absolutely vital that we keep up the pressure.

Remember Babergh chose to ignore national planning policy, the advice of Suffolk County Council and the recommendation of their own head of planning. What Babergh wants is outside the County Plan and against planning policy because it's not sustainable and would lead to a huge increase in traffic. Everyone living on the new development would be driving their cars up and down the peninsula to go to work, school, shops and entertainment. This means Babergh's decision must, as a matter of course, be referred to Go East - the Government Office for the East of England. It is our job to make sure that the decision is "called-in" - that there is a public inquiry and that the Secretary of State has the final say. We must all make our voices heard and our views known to the people who can reverse this rogue decision. Show them you care. Write now to our case officer, Lynn Caudrey at Government Office for the East of England, Eastbrook, Shaftesbury Rd., Cambridge CB2 2DF or e-mail lcaudrey.go.east@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk - making the following key points.

1. Babergh's decision was based on an inadequate assessment of the environmental impact of this scheme.
2. The development is contrary to national and regional planning policy.
3. The decision goes against the County Council's recommendation to limit the development to 200 homes and also the recommendation of the district's head of planning.
4. Babergh has failed in its duty to "preserve and enhance" conservation areas e.g Chelmondiston and Woolverstone.
5. Babergh has acted unreasonably by granting planning permission without enforceable controls over many of the proposed mitigation measures.
6. This decision has provoked huge local controversy and ignores the wishes of the overwhelming majority of local people.

Getting the Ganges decision "called in" is our priority but it is not our only course of action. We are currently getting expert legal advice from a barrister on whether we have a case for getting Babergh's decision judicially reviewed. We are also checking to see that officers and councillors involved in the decision acted properly and within their codes of conduct. If we think they may have failed in their duty we shall be referring the matter to the local government Ombudsman and to the Standards Board. There is already a lot going on but if you have views and ideas you'd like to contribute please get in touch - we want to hear from you.

At a public meeting on 17 June at Freston The Peninsula Parish Alliance set up a 5 member action committee to co-ordinate the continuing protest. Members are Graham Steel (787757, Shotley) Cathy Crouch (780674, Chelmondiston), Simon Ross Pearce (780009), Nick Parker, Laurie Mayer (780168, Woolverstone). If you need, or would like to offer any help, advice or information on our continuing campaign please don't hesitate to contact us. Make your views known and your voice count. If we pull together we can stop this plan and come up with a better one. As the slogan says it's NOT THE END OF THE ROAD!

Laurie Mayer
PPA Action Committee, 25 June 2005

GIRLS IN SCOUTING

For many years scouting was confined to boys. However, in recent years the Scout Association has felt that this is denying an opportunity to girls. With effect from January 2007, all Groups will be required to accept girls as part of the Association's co-educational programme. With effect from September 2005 girls will be accepted into the 1st Shotley Beaver Colony. If you have a daughter aged between 6 and 8 years old who would like to join the Colony, please contact Jenny Mullan on 787725.

1ST SHOTLEY SCOUT GROUP SCARVES

If you have a Group scarf you no longer need, please either phone 787725 to arrange collection or pop it through the door at 7 Stour-side. Many thanks - Jenny Mullan

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