



Solihull
METROPOLITAN
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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2 April 2014.

Dear Julia,

Re: Shirley Golf Club - application 2013/1126

I wish to make formal representation in objecting to the planning application by Shirley Golf Club; application no. 2013/1126 which relates to 'development of a golf academy with specialism for disabled golf with enabling residential development comprising up to 57 dwellings, construction of new access road to Creynolds Lane to serve residential development and retention of existing access from A34 Stratford road to serve the golf course and golf academy'.

The basis of my objection relates to the following grounds:

- Green belt land
- Lack of consultation
- Highways issues (vehicle and pedestrian)
- Housing needs/Local Plan
- Lack of special considerations
- Lack of affordable housing

Green Belt:

The land in question, whether the creation of the golf academy or for development of housing, is green belt land. However, it might seem contradictory but if an academy building can be created within land owned by Shirley Golf Club then I feel this could be agreeable - as long as it was screened from public view and access to it was via existing routes to the golf



club. The land shown for housing development is open green farm land that regularly accommodates sheep for grazing. This would be lost, never to return.

By developing on the green fields Creynolds Lane will stop being a country lane, becoming another urban road meeting a main dual-carriageway. Visitors to Cheswick Green will not notice any difference between Monkspath development and Cheswick Green - there will be a reduction in the green space between the two developments; two will then become one and the character, especially of Cheswick Green will be lost; forever.

This land in question is not shown within the Local Development Plan (LDP) as designated for housing development within the life of the plan. It seems absurd that the plan was developed over several years and this land was not offered up for development. To do so now seriously affects the LDP, especially in relation to Blythe ward, which has as many as 1000 new homes identified within the life of the plan. Some 800 new homes are identified in the LDP and are within one mile of the proposed Shirley Golf Club development. The plan was adopted to allow for sustained development, taking into consideration the phasing of development to accommodate local services over the life of the plan. We are now in a position where we are expected to add another 57 houses so the golf club can pay for a luxurious driving range.

Lack of consultation:

The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) specified developers must consult with the local community when submitting planning applications. This has not occurred.

A public meeting, arranged by Cheswick Green residents association did occur in 2011, after a previous application was submitted by the golf club. Representatives from the golf club attended the meeting but this can not be confused with consultation. In fact, following that meeting, the 2011 application was withdrawn.

The latest (2013) planning application has been made without any consultation with local residents. Yes, a meeting was arranged with local elected representatives, but again, this should not be confused with consultation taking place. There has never been a meeting to allow local people the chance to give their views to the applicants or their agents.

Highways Issues:

Creynolds Lane is a country lane; it remained so after the village of Cheswick Green was built and even though there is more car use today, it still retains its character.

There is a footpath on one side of the road only, where existing houses are. Then lack of any footpath will be a serious road safety issue for pedestrians who wish to walk to the schools and services in Cheswick Green. The shops are quite a distance away, probably meaning any journey will be via motor car, defeating the object of sustainable transport for new developments. Journeys to the nearby school (which may not have existing sufficient spaces to accommodate new pupils) could be made on foot, but here again, pupils would have to cross a busy 'country lane' at very busy times of the day. At peak time Creynolds Lane is extremely busy with the route being a 'short cut' from the Redditch and M42 areas towards Solihull centre. Traffic is 'backed up' along Creynolds Lane during peak times.

No footpath will mean an unsafe road for pedestrians leaving the proposed new development.

Housing needs/Local plan:

The LDP has several sites within Blythe ward allocated for development over the time period of the plan. Sites at Tanworth Lane (220 homes) and Blythe Valley (600 homes) are within one mile of Creynolds Lane/Golf club. Tanworth Lane site is phased for release from April 2023 but is subject to an appeal. Notwithstanding the appeal, local housing need is identified through the phase one release in nearby Blythe Valley. The local plan, as mentioned previously, was found to be sound, with phasing of specific sites soundly based. This allows for sustainable development - the proposal for an extra 57 homes will affect the balance for the sustainable provision of house in Blythe ward. In addition to the two site mentioned the LDP identifies three sites in the nearby village of Dickens Heath, making a total of about 1000 new homes within a short distance of each other.

Lack of special considerations:

The golf club does sterling work with vulnerable young people, especially disabled youngsters. However, the development of an academy and first class golf driving range is not a special consideration for use by children from special needs schools, one of which I am a governor. A 250m long driving range, with floodlighting, is not intended for children of special schools; it is intended to help promote the golf club and increase membership. It is a commercial venture/decision and the work the club does for children from special schools is exaggerated for this planning application. A smaller driving range could easily be developed within the grounds of the golf club (as many other local clubs do) and the need for an extravagant driving range (to be funded through development of building on green belt land) avoided.

There are driving ranges within a short distance of Shirley Golf Club. These exist at Four Ashes, in nearby Dorridge; Widney Manor Golf Club, Monkspath, and Becketts Farm, Wythall. Therefore, I submit there is no need for an additional floodlit driving range on green belt land between two housing developments (Monkspath and Cheswick Green).

I humbly submit that 'material considerations' to justify building on green belt land to enable the development of a golf academy and driving range are not present in this application and arguments to support their need to support children with special needs is over exaggerated and nebulous.

Lack of affordable housing:

It is interesting the covering letter, accompanying the application, makes fleeting reference to the lack of provision of affordable housing in the proposed development. My interpretation of their reason is 'they can not afford to provide affordable housing so there will not be any'. This, to me and residents, sums up the application since the original one in 2012; there is little care for the local residents and local council policies, wishing to build houses which will

pay for their extravagant golf academy and first class driving range. This is not about facilities for disabled people, this is an application to fund top of the range facilities by building on green belt land and seeking to use 'special material considerations' as a ruse to justify the application.

I ask the planning application be refused.

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

**Ken Hawkins,
Councillor - Blythe Ward.**

A long, thin, diagonal line drawn in black ink, extending from the lower left towards the upper right.