

23.4.15

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A Neighbourhood Plan

A recently reported case (Winslow -v. Gladman Developments), reported in the Times on 21.4.15, emphasises the value of neighbourhood plans in determining where homes are built and how land is developed in a neighbourhood.

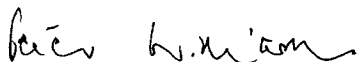
While we in Old Marston are not in an immediate sense threatened by an aggressive developer seeking to build land on green field sites, we nevertheless face the prospect of:

- * Overdevelopment (Landlords extending properties to the detriment of locals)
- * In-filling (again, increasing the density of occupation as well as adding to traffic congestion)
- * New development on land not hitherto used for housing.

A neighbourhood development plan for Old Marston would attempt to establish planning criteria for the development and use of land in our area and help the Parish Council in being consistent in the way we deal with planning applications.

Neighbourhood planning is a growing movement with over 1400 communities known already to be preparing planning statements.

Is it not worth giving thought to such a plan? Something that extends beyond the village conservation area (which already has a statement) to the entire parish? Money and help may be available to us in formulating such a plan.



Peter Williams

Landmark victory for residents in the battle against building sprawl

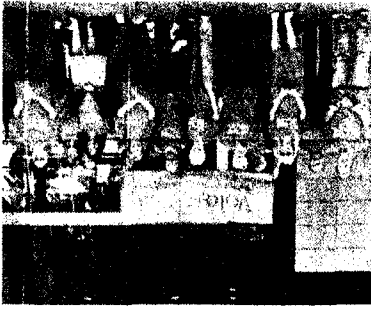
that the company had recently removed statements from its website in which it described itself as "obsessed with winning consents" and said it was expert at obtaining "residential planning consents on edge-of-town green field sites".

The Times revealed last year how Gladman had sent a letter to landowners in another area advising them to "move quickly whilst the local authority is vulnerable".

Neil Sinden, policy director of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, said: "Hopefully now other communities will stand up to bullying developers. However, there is a need for much clearer legal status for neighbourhood plans."

"We are pushing for a community right of appeal against speculative development in areas where a neighbourhood plan has been prepared. This is intended to level the legal playing field between developers and local communities."

Gladman declined to comment.



Residents of Winslow have drawn up their own housing development plan

built. Gladman initially tried to prevent the residents from voting on the plan by seeking an injunction to prevent a local referendum from taking place.

After losing that case, Gladman challenged the legality of the plan at the High Court. A judge dismissed the case in December, but last month the company made an appeal against that decision. The developer has now withdrawn the appeal, meaning that Winslow's plan will be used to decide where new homes should be built.

Uncertainty over the legal status of neighbourhood plans, which were introduced under the Localism Act 2011, has deterred many communities from adopting them, with fewer than 50 completed to date.

At least 1,400 communities are understood to be preparing plans and Winslow's victory may encourage them to complete the process. Lew Monger, a Winslow councillor, said that the case set a precedent that could be used by other communities fighting developers. "This is perhaps

the dawn of more localism and much less legalism in relation to neighbourhood planning, which will hopefully encourage many other communities to embark on developing a neighbourhood plan," Mr Monger said.

Roy van de Poll, another Winslow councillor, said that Gladman appeared to have given up boasting about its aggressive approach to obtaining planning permission for housing. He said

Towns and villages will have a better chance of resisting unwanted new housing after one of Britain's most aggressive developers lost a test case.

Gladman Developments has withdrawn its legal challenge against a "neighbourhood plan" drawn up by the residents of Winslow, in Buckinghamshire, who wanted to determine where new homes should be built in the town.

The residents' victory over Gladman is expected to encourage many other communities to fight proposals by developers by adopting their own neighbourhood plans.

Gladman, which uses weaknesses in local planning policies to target greenfield sites, had tried to block the adoption of the residents' plan. The Cheshire-based developer said that the case set a precedent that could be used by other communities fighting developers. "This is perhaps