



**The Rt. Hon. Theresa May MP.,**

**The House of Commons,**

**London,**

**SW1A 0AA.**

**13<sup>th</sup> August 2021**

Dear Mrs May

**Initial Proposals for New Homes and Public Open Space on Land to the East of Lodge Road, Hurst.**

I am writing to you as the new Chairman of Hurst Village Society (HVS), which is based in the village of Hurst, Berkshire.

In terms of planning there is both some genuine confusion and concern amongst local residents as we all try and make sense of The Government's White Paper; Planning for the Future which details their "new vision for England's Planning System"; Wokingham Borough's preparation of a new Draft Local Plan; and more locally The Hurst Neighbourhood Plan.

I am aware you have voiced your strong concerns regarding the Government's proposals for planning reform and no doubt will continue to do so, as and when the Bill comes before Parliament.

Like many villages amid all this apparent confusion in relation to planning policy, and importantly, nationally set targets for new homes, Hurst feels very vulnerable to large scale unwanted development. As you know HVS is not a statutory consultee in respect of The Planning Authority but has in the past become a focal point in focussing the views of local residents particularly in respect of sensitive and or larger development proposals. I do know in the past, as our constituency MP., you have offered whatever assistance and advice you can in such cases, and as you will be aware local residents are particularly grateful for that. It is important for you to be aware that in looking to safeguard and enhance the long-term viability and vitality of the village HVS understands it is realistic for the Society to consider that a degree of development is both necessary and inevitable. In such a scenario, the role of the Society is to identify and assist in maximising any opportunities, whilst mitigating the adverse impact of any development proposals.

Against this background I wanted to make you aware, if indeed you are not already, of the online public consultation that has been going on for the past month, by SP Broadway on behalf of the potential developers Mactaggart & Mickel in respect of land to the East of Lodge Road in Hurst.

For your information I have attached a paper copy of the documents and their feedback form. You will see they are proposing 300 new homes and are looking to mitigate the impact of so many new homes by the creation of 7 acres of Public Open Space. This would be an increase of 34.2% to the current size of the village. HVS believes that at this stage these proposals are speculative, and I have also attached a copy of our response to this consultation.

We are in the process of drawing up an Action Plan to actively and positively object to any such proposals as and when they are prepared in the form of either an outline or a full planning application to Wokingham Borough Council.

I understand how busy you are, and how there are controls as to how you might be able to either support or become involved in any such campaign, but I did, at this very early stage, want to familiarise you with all the available background information and HVS' thoughts on the matter. Any comments you may have would be welcome and into the future I hope to be able to keep you up to date of all developments in this matter. I would also like to direct you to our website where you can see under planning all the information – [www.hvs.org.uk](http://www.hvs.org.uk).

On a much lighter note, and knowing of your love of cricket; as part of a village fun day at Hurst Cricket Club on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> February there is a 20 over cricket match between a Hurst Village Society XI and a Hurst Parent Teacher's XI. The match which I am told will be highly competitive (but played in the true spirit of the game) starts at 11.00pm with refreshments provided, and it goes without saying should your husband and yourself feel so inclined you would of course both be welcome. Tickets are available via our website.

Yours sincerely,

Jo Newbold,

Chairman, Hurst Village Society

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