

From: Tim Jeffries, 2 Fordham Terrace, The Causeway, Therfield, Royston, SG8 9PP

I wish to lodge my **objection** to this development.

I ask the Planning Department to refer to local knowledge, either directly to residents or through the Parish Council, in a manner similar to the discussions held with developers as noted from the application. Local residents can be a beacon for the truth.

Whereas some improvement to the Hillcrest site is necessary there is no valid reason to build on the Tussocks site without changing the character of the village forever and also creating traffic issues with unintended consequences.

I would ask the Planning department to consider the following truths:

- Therfield is characterised by open space within the heart of the village. Sadly, Grange Meadow has been lost but there is an opportunity to retain the space at Tussocks. A former meadow, Tussocks has one large house at the rear while the remainder of the site is open space which gives to the character to the village.
- The site is in the conservation area. Conserving the open feel of the village proper conserves the village character. Conservation is not just about buildings.
- I cannot understand how the Conservation Officer can accept an over development of the site of Tussocks which previously he objected to. Therfield has met its building targets and the Grange Meadow development will add above this. Changing an English village character forever should not be at the whim and drive of developers and the proposal for Hillcrest/Tussocks will do just this in Therfield.
- If building is permitted there will be a major road safety issue. The Transport Statement dated June 2024 within the proposal is a poor attempt to overcome Highways Department objections.
- The Causeway is already a busy road at certain times of the day. Not just as a school drop off but the village is a cut through between the A505 and A10. The recent new building in Royston, especially the 230 houses near McDonalds, has led to a much greater level of traffic in the mornings and evenings as the route through Therfield avoids Royston town centre.
- Four of the existing terraced houses on The Causeway do not have off-street parking. This causes the road to be single lane at the northern end. Busy times such as school drop off, events, chapel services, walking at weekends, busy pub activities etc produces parking from the school to Hillcrest thus making the majority of the road single lane. There are no passing spaces and there is already "an accident waiting to happen." Factor in the large farm contracting vehicles that use the road from the two contracting sites in the village and the road isn't passable. See the attached image from Sunday 29th July. (Other images were provided against the original proposal)
- There are only the bare minimum parking spaces within the development at 2 per house. Four-bedroom houses will require more than that and with only 2 visitor spaces, cars will spill out to park on The Causeway to park for lengthy periods of time. This will cause a blockage and reduce visibility at the access point.
- It is noted parking for the terrace proposed for Hillcrest is at the rear. However it is likely, through human nature, that owners will park on the street at the front for all or large parts of the day to access via their front doors. This is also where visitors will park. It is currently

where visitors to the existing terraced houses park as there is no room outside the existing terraces due to no off-street parking. More inevitable on street congestion.

- The provision of cycle spaces in the properties does not mean people will use cycles! The Transport Statement suggests residents may cycle to connect with local services (as there are few in Therfield) which is ridiculous. No one does it now and we all know vehicles will be used. The geography is such that it is a 3-mile hill from Royston along a fast road – not a leisurely commute to the shops or station on a cycle.
- The wider transport statistics used drawing on the wider transport network are irrelevant, not locally specific and also reflect data from the covid period. The key thing is the proposed development will lead to greater risk.
- The number of vehicle movements is grossly under predicted as cycles will not be used and cars will access the myriad of services not available in Therfield – middle, secondary schools, shops, GPs, restaurants, library, rail, bus and more.
- The access point will be made onto a road which often has cars parked from school to Hillcrest causing them to nose out onto the road – an accident waiting to happen. Note the road is blind from the northern approach for this access after 4 The Causeway as the road slopes down the 3-mile hill to Royston. Hillcrest is so named for a reason. Cars move quickly over that hill rise and by adding more vehicles accessing onto The Causeway, often through parked cars, will add greatly to accident risk.
- The Transport Statement correctly states it is a 30mph limit through the village. As the Parish Council has noted, probably 50% of vehicles do not obey the limit on entering the village from a long straight road from Royston or speeding up past the school to exit Therfield. Speeding traffic on The Causeway (and elsewhere in the village) is a problem known to the Drive Safe team, District and County councillor and local police. This increases the hazard of the entry/exit site for the new development.
- I note the provision of a footway at the Tussocks development. This will stop at school house so pedestrians will need to move onto the road at this point – often children going to school.
- The footway will encourage parking along it whether school drop or walkers. That will increase parking and ensure lack of visibility to the Tussocks development.
- Plot 5 effectively opens a new building line which is at odds with the linear housing on The Causeway and thereby not in-keeping.
- Tussocks has Great Crested Newts in residence which have been seen as far as 1 The Causeway. Pipistrelle bats are also resident.
- Sewage discharge is a major issue in the village with regular discharges into a chalk stream from the treatment centre – within the top 10 polluting areas in the region. No provision for improvements is made in the current 5-year plan. Although I noted from the Grange Meadow hearing that sewage discharge should not be part of the planning decision as the water companies have a statutory obligation to provide adequate services, they do not do so in this area. It is not good enough to ignore this and a level of social responsibility has to be adopted. That is what individuals would expect from a planning department.

I trust the Planning Department will attempt to understand the local conditions and reject this proposal.