

FAO Alex Howard, NHDC

Alex.howard@north-herts.gov.uk

Re: 25/01766/OP

Dear Mr Howard,

We wish to register our support to the proposed development and would like to clarify some of the misconceptions about the site that we have read in previous comments or read about in the leaflet that was distributed around the village by opponents:

1. Green Belt policy:

New Labour government policy on Grey Belt (December 2024). The concept of Grey Belt aims to identify land within the Green Belt that is more appropriate for development, potentially easing housing shortages while still maintaining the overall integrity of the Green Belt. For clarity, whilst this field is and will remain Green Belt land, we feel it falls under the definition of Grey Belt within the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

2. "Recent quarry application rejected due to land being on Green Belt sets a precedence":

The proposed development off Cowards Lane does not "strongly contribute to the Green Belt's primary functions such as preventing urban sprawl or preserving the setting of towns" (per Grey Belt guidelines). The quarry application had no "Grey Belt" claim so is very different.

3. "This site is not in the NHDC Local Plan which already meets its 5-10 year housing supply targets" :

Correct it's not in the current Local Plan but NHDC has carried out a further "call to sites" (this field included) . NHDC's 5 year housing supply position has a requirement for 5590 dwellings. The deliverable housing identified is 4631, a shortfall of 1359 dwellings over the 5 year period (i.e. they have 3.9 yrs worth of housing supply against the required 5 years supply). This is a small site that has minimal impact on the majority of villagers.

4. "The new houses are unoccupied and not selling":

The claim is incorrect.

As of 8/8/25:

The Vale - 97% sold

The Heath (Phase 1) - 100% sold

The Heath (Phase 2) - 80% sold

Weaver's Gate - under construction; 4 already purchased off plan

5. "The school is at capacity":

This claim is incorrect. The local primary school is not at capacity. The school has recently been extended and its capacity doubled to 60 per year group. The September 2025 intake has risen from 30 to 45 (so is still not yet at its capacity of 60). Four of the six year groups are still in single classrooms of 30-32 pupils and therefore have capacity for another 30 pupils in each

year. The other two year groups are already up and running with 2 classes each but still have room for 10 or more pupils in each year before reaching capacity. The fact of the matter is that the school is ready for, and needs, additional pupils to fund the additional teachers required.

6. "Cowards Lane is an oversubscribed single track lane":

We have lived on Cowards Lane for 15 years now. It is still a very quiet lane with passing points and the level of traffic has not changed in the time we've lived here, even with The Heath development. A new 20mph limit has also been recently introduced which helps reduce speed throughout the village.

7. "There is no pavement for pedestrians yet 2 of the 3 entrances to the Rec are on Cowards Lane":

One entrance to the Recreation Ground is on Cowards Lane (junction of St Albans Road). The other two are on Poynders Meadow and lead directly to pavements.

The proposal includes a 2 metre wide pavement from the new development all the way to St Albans Road and the Recreation Ground. This can only improve pedestrian safety. We have never seen elderly residents of Poynders Meadow walking along Cowards Lane as they have safe pedestrian access to all village amenities already through Dollimore Close and/or the Recreation Ground. In fact this new footpath will provide additional safe access to the Recreation Ground, the public footpath and neighbouring walks across fields.

8. "Traffic congestion in village":

Majority of congestion in the High Street is during rush hour period caused by traffic coming off the A1(M) because it reduces to 2 lanes between junction 6 & 7. We've experienced this for the 30 years that we've lived in the village (17 years of which we lived on the High Street). It's no worse now than it was in 1995. Villagers might be better placed to petition for a third lane on the A1(M) which would help alleviate any congestion.

9. "No additional provision made at local doctors' surgeries":

It is our understanding that Section 106 payments of £164,500 have been paid by Taylor Wimpey to reconfigure Bridge Cottage Surgery to provide an additional consultation room. In our opinion getting a doctor's appointment is no harder than it was 30 years ago. Further, it is our understanding that the NHS/ICB is entitled to make a reasonable request for a contribution towards care facilities, potentially to be secured via a S106 agreement.

10. "The Public Footpath across the site will be closed for 2 years":

Our understanding is that there will be a temporary stopping-up of the public footpath, which is to be agreed via the necessary channels, but this temporary closure will be kept to a minimum. Once completed the new footpath (approx 100 m) will be accessible all year round providing access to neighbouring fields and footpaths all year round. This is an improvement as the current path becomes impassible during the winter months. Removal of kissing gates will improve access across the footpath for the infirm / disabled / pushchairs (leading to an additional play area).

11. "Wide variety of wildlife (bats, mandarin ducks, pheasants, birds, deer, foxes, newts, frogs, insects)":

The Ecological Impact Assessment dated July 2025 confirms that the field does not meet the criteria for designation as a "Local Wildlife Site" (LWS).

In the 15 years we have lived beside the field we have never seen any badgers, newts, frogs or ducks (let alone a mandarin duck!) on the field as some objectors are claiming.

12. "Electricity supply in village suffers regular outages":

In our 30 years in the village we have seen a considerable improvement in the number of electricity powercuts. Nearly all of these powercuts only last a couple of seconds. I am sure that data from the power companies will back up our experience that these are far fewer now than they were 30 years ago.

13. "Adverse impact on the social life of the village":

We have already lost one of our 3 pubs in the village. The increased population can only help the remaining pubs, sports clubs, restaurants and shops to survive. We welcome the newcomers to the village and frankly feel uncomfortable with the attitude of some of the existing villagers to our new residents.

Yours sincerely,

Stuart and Rebecca Rose

Field House, Cowards Lane, Codicote, Herts SG4 8UW

21/08/2025