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Development of land at Warish Hall Farm north of Jacks Lane, Smiths Green  
Takeley

As a resident of Smith's Green, Takeley, I am greatly dismayed by the plans to build 40 new homes on land adjacent to Jacks Lane and Warish Hall Road. The land from Smith's Green to the A120 which includes the grade 1 listed Warish Hall and various other listed buildings, is perhaps one of the last historically important areas of our village not yet covered in bricks and mortar. If these new plans are agreed it would seem that this relatively unspoiled area of Takeley will soon be surrounded by future building up to the A120 and also to the east towards Priors Green.

Jacks Lane is a narrow protected lane. All traffic into this proposed development will use the road through Smith's Green for access. The road through Smith's Green and alongside Warish Hall Road is in places no more than 25 feet across and the protected greens and verges on either side are constantly being damaged by the existing lorry traffic to Warish Hall industrial site. Larger lorries cannot pass each other side-to-side but one needs to back and give way, which often adds to the damage of the village green. The road has many deep and dangerous pot-holes. If 40 new homes are built as proposed this will result in over 100 additional private cars using this road plus all the delivery and commercial traffic movements servicing the new houses. This is surely not sustainable. The road through Smith's Green has no street lighting, grass verges but no pavements and is not suitable, from a safety point – of – view, as a busy access route. The same comments apply to Jack's Lane itself. The B1256 is already over-burdened from the new developments along its route. The traffic density is now similar to the situation before the A120 was opened.

An earlier proposal by this developer to build 190 houses on the fields to the west of Warish Hall Road was twice dismissed. The comments made above were relevant to the earlier proposal and are just as relevant to this new plan, so should be turned down as before. I am given to understand that Takeley has exceeded its quota for new housing and that UDC has nearly got 5 year surplus of supply of new houses. The minister Michael Gove is advocating more say from local residents as to where new housing should go.

This area is rich in wildlife. There is a deer sanctuary adjacent to the field under consideration. We have a healthy bird population. However, the following species currently thriving across the area in question are on the RSPB's Red List of vulnerable birds:

Fieldfare, house sparrow (a long established colony on Bulls Field has disappeared this year due to brutal hedge thinning by the developer), grey partridge, kestrel, lesser spotted woodpecker, mistle thrush, skylark, song thrush, starling and yellow hammer.

Birds also on the RSPB's Amber List include: bullfinch, hedge sparrow, tawny owl and willow warbler. Another threatened species, the greenfinch, was present in Jacks Lane for the first time last year for many years. Buzzards, red kite and sparrow hawk frequently seen.

According to a report in *The Times* (30/6/21) "The government is failing to back its 'grandiose statement' on protecting wildlife with action to fulfil its pledge to improve the environment within a generation, MPs say in a report....the UK has lost more of its biodiversity than any other G7 country. More than two fifths of species including mammals, birds and butterflies have declined significantly in Britain because of damage to their habitat, according to the 2019 State of Nature reporter."

The presence of so many species, including those under pressure, is due to the mixed environment comprising well-established fields and hedgerows, woodland and villagers' gardens. There are several herds of deer in the area and a few muntjac. Hare and badgers sometimes seen.

The road through Smith's Green leading into Warish Hall Road is an unlit country lane, 25/30 feet wide with protected greens or grass verges on either side, and is not suitable for commercial lorries, such as those visiting the Warish Hall industrial site at the moment. Larger lorries cannot pass each other side-to-side but one needs to back and give way, which often adds to the damage to the village green and verges. Any increase in commercial traffic will cause more damage in addition to the threat to pedestrian safety.

Takeley, which has been under pressure from major airport development, increasing traffic densities and a seemingly un-ending period of new house building on green field sites.

In the face of this current proposal for the land adjacent to Jacks Lane to be developed the residents of Jack's Lane and Smiths Green are united in their

opposition to what they consider wanton destruction of an area of historic interest and value to residents and wild life. They also regret the loss of viable agricultural land and the recreational importance of the countryside in which they choose to live.

Residents are dismayed and disappointed that a company which has made Takeley its home should be the one who sees fit to damage an environment on its doorstep, the value of which to the local inhabitants should be obvious. On behalf our environment, our health, the safety of our children and pets and of our village roads, and so much more that we all value, we hope and trust that planning permission will not be granted for Weston Homes development nor to any future developer.

**Let us preserve the little that is left of that which is historic in our village.**

Michael Letchford, 