

Clifton's Choice Campaign statement to MHDC Planning Committee: 4 Dec

The issue is simple. Most of us who live in Clifton accept that some future housing development is inevitable, if not necessary. But not on the Hope Lane site... Why? Because there are two other smaller sites where approximately 15 houses can be built on each which we believe are better and more desirable for the village.

Applications for those two sites have already been submitted and will probably come before you at your next meeting. So, at the very least, we ask that no decision is taken on the Hope Lane site tonight until you have at least had an opportunity to consider all three applications together on their relative merits. But given the overwhelming technical objections to the Hope Lane site on visual, environmental, ecological, highways, consultation and other grounds, we urge you to refuse it altogether.

Our Parish Council raised a number of these material technical points in their letter to you yesterday. There have been a huge number of amendments to the scheme since it was first submitted including a very recent substantial extension of the site to accommodate drainage works, for which there should now be full consultation.

Our concern is what is best for the village as a whole. We have been told that because the Hope Lane site is in the SWDP nothing can be done to alter that. But the SWDP is not yet a done deal.

To us, the choice is simple. We have on the one hand a benevolent local landowner who has the best interests of our village at heart and who is prepared to listen and respond to the wishes of the local residents. On the other hand we are faced with a monolithic developer intent on building some unattractive houses down a very narrow lane next to the sewage works. Even the newts on the site there are in danger.

You would think it's a no-brainer... But your planners seem intent on ignoring the wishes of those of us who live in a particularly beautiful part of Worcestershire. Last night's headline in the *Worcester News* described it as a 'Travesty of local democracy'.