



Dear Residents

When we started our campaign to prevent a mass housing development in the village, we had no idea how involved it would become. We began with a single focus and challenged all issues which threatened the village and contravened Chesterfield Borough Council's Local Plan. What we didn't bargain for was that, in terms of planning, the Local Plan would be ignored or re-written to suit, thus circumventing many of our original objections. Consequently we have had to broaden our strategy and keep abreast of all new Council developments, so that we are in a position to lobby our cause. The re-writing of the Local Plan, redefining sites and boundaries, funding cuts, government schemes and interventions are just a few of the things which are influencing local planning decisions and we are determined to stick with it throughout. It is impossible to list all the letters written, meetings attended and campaigning and lobbying which we have done but I can assure you that we remain vigilant in all issues that may compromise the village and continue to lobby and engage in consultations, wherever and whenever we can impact on decisions. "We are a voice and are being listened to". That being said, we do need more of your support. Many new proposed developments threatening our village may have a direct impact on your family and your house – we are no longer talking about developing a couple of fields. Let's work together and if we can't stop the projects, then at least we can try to minimise the impact. The group usually meets on Thursday nights, every fortnight, in The Albert Inn and we would welcome your input and support.

### **Mass Housing Development**

We have challenged Chesterfield Borough Council's plans for mass house building around the village throughout the past three years, engaging at every stage of consultation relating to local issues and wider Borough issues, which might impact on the village in the future. The main thrust of our campaign is to stop any further developments, which will expand the village boundaries. To secure this in the long term, we are pressing for a dedicated green wedge around the village, to prevent future developments encroaching on the boundary limits. We have established that Woodthorpe neither needs regeneration nor expansion. Building around the village would extend Woodthorpe, not Mastin Moor, which was the Council's stated intention so we are working closely with Mastin Moor Eventide Group, who shares our concerns about the placement of new homes around Woodthorpe. Collectively, we have put forward suggestions for alternative sites for development and are keeping involved in the 'Sites and Boundaries' debate, with Chesterfield Borough Council (CBC), before their final decisions are made.

### **Village Planning Applications**

A number of applications, to develop sites on Bridle Road, have been submitted. These include: four 2/3 bedroom dwellings adjacent to Woodthorpe Grange Farm; a goat house to the rear of no. 23; a residential caravan dwelling to the rear of no 8. Details of submitted applications can be seen on public notices posted on Bridle Road or from CBC's website – [www.chesterfield.gov.uk/planningapplications](http://www.chesterfield.gov.uk/planningapplications). A public notice in the Derbyshire Times reveals a developer's intension to seek permission to build a further eight houses on Bridle Road.

### **HS2**

The unexpected announcement to build a high speed train through our region has put many of Chesterfield Borough Council's plans in jeopardy and until the definitive route has been announced, there is some uncertainty about local developments. We do know that if the proposed route goes ahead, it will have a massive impact on our village, so we have responded to the consultation document, highlighting the detrimental effect that HS2 will have on peace and tranquillity; green spaces; agricultural land; wildlife and house prices, to say nothing about having trains running at the bottom of the garden! The biggest threat to the village is noise pollution. If current plans go ahead there will be 18 – 20 trains an hour passing directly adjacent to the village. The track will be raised, to cross the A619 and will be higher than the houses, so there will be no natural buffer to absorb the noise. We are campaigning for compensation for those houses directly affected so that residents are in a position to move should they choose to do so and for trees to be planted to act as a barrier between the track and the houses. HS2 will not enhance our village, or benefit the residents. In fact it will have the opposite effect.

Objections to HS2 and its proposed route have been submitted by Woodthorpe Village Community Group (WVCG), Mastin Moor's Eventide Group, Natascha Engel (MP for North East Derbyshire) and Chesterfield Borough Council, whose response referred to the impacts on Woodthorpe, Mastin Moor, Markham Vale and the Canal.

## **Markham Vale**

A £4 million government grant to develop the former Seymour Colliery site at Markham Vale secures its development. This brings employment development to the boundaries of Woodthorpe and introduces additional threats to the preservation of the village and the surrounding area. CBC has argued that proximity to employment at Markham Vale makes house building around our village sensible, although CBC's Core Strategy does not refer to extensions to Woodthorpe. If HS2 impacts Markham Vale and building land is lost to the HS2 project, replacement land might be sought, thus encroaching further into the green spaces around the village. We have written to CBC, stressing these new threats to the identity and character of our village and calling for strategic gap boundaries to be drawn tightly around its perimeter before Markham Vale plans are brought into fruition. Some clearance work has already started beyond the bottom of Seymour Lane. In fact development of Markham Vale is a particular threat to residents of Seymour Lane as well as those of Bridle Road. A local resident has aired her concerns to CBC, with a request for an intervening Country Park, between Markham Vale and the village, to safeguard the green spaces and wildlife that residents currently enjoy. We need to support this viewpoint and watch this development!

## **Local and Neighbourhood Developments**

**Housing developments** are planned for Clowne, Barlborough and Bolsover. A site of particular interest is the former Coalite site at Bolsover, near to the recycling plant, which has the capacity for numerous dwellings. WVCG supports the development of this site on the grounds that it is a Brownfield site; it will clear up a long standing eyesore; it will rectify the problem of odours and pollutants emitting from the site, which affects our local environment and wildlife and it has the potential to fulfil Chesterfield's housing needs.

## **Staveley Works Site**

We attend the Staveley Council Planning and Environmental meetings to keep abreast of local issues. At this month's meeting Saint-Gobain revealed their intentions to develop their landholding on part of the old Staveley Works Site. The plans include 550 houses, a neighbourhood centre, community green space and possibly a lake or Country Park. Other major landowners of this site include Chatsworth Estate. CBC has regeneration plans for the area and has identified the site as a strategic priority for development (for up to 2000 houses) in its adopted Core Strategy-July 2013. We do not have exact details, timescales or land requirements but are aware that this number of houses could fulfil CBC's housing needs and negate the necessity to build on Greenfield or agricultural sites.

## **Crime Prevention**

Woodthorpe is now part of the East Community Assembly and we ensure that we have a representative at each meeting. At the last one, an item relevant to our local area was Crime Prevention, a police priority. Shoplifting shows the biggest increase, including handbag thefts from supermarket trolleys in Morrisons. Stores and shoppers need to be aware. Vehicle crimes and shed break-ins have increased. Rogue traders, targeting elderly people and scrap metal dealers are still causing problems in Woodthorpe and Mastin Moor. In recent weeks residents have reported seeing early morning flashlights in the fields bordering Norbriggs Road; bogus canvassers knocking on doors and men acting suspiciously in Mastin Moor, which led to an arrest. We need to be vigilant; watch out for vulnerable neighbours and properties and report anything suspicious that we see to the police. To report a crime: Call 101 (non emergency) or 999 (emergency).

## **Fund raising**

We have been so busy keeping all the plates spinning and meeting consultation deadlines that we have not planned any fund raising events. We are fortunate that we have experts in the village who are able to steer us through the minefield of national and local documentation, which has meant that we have not had to 'buy in' consultants as many other communities have had to do. As a group, we absorb stationary and printing costs ourselves, and we are so grateful for the continued support that June and Russ give us, by letting us use The Albert for our meetings. However, we would appreciate any donations, no matter how small, to help us offset costs and welcome suggestions for fund raising events that you would like to support.

## **Contact Us**

Our campaign to protect the boundaries and preserve the identity of our village has been all consuming; however we would like our Village Community Group to be about more than lobbying and fighting bureaucracy. If you have any village news, forthcoming events, queries, need support with any village issues, or have suggestions to support and improve our community, please call us on 01246 476640 or talk to one of the team.