



Land South of Kingfield Road and East of Westfield Avenue,

Westfield, Woking, Surrey, GU22 9PF.

Appeal by Goldev Woking Ltd

LPA Ref: PLAN/2019/1176

PINS Reference: APP/A3655/W/20/3265969

South Woking Action Group

Proof of Evidence of Mrs Katie Bowes

## **1.0 Introduction and Scope of Evidence**

1.1 I am Katie Bowes, and have been a resident of Acer Grove, Willow Reach, Woking since July 2016.

1.2 After living in London for 10 years and renting flats, my husband and I were looking for our first family home in 2016. As we wanted to have children we were seeking plenty of living space, a garden and off-street parking provision, none of which were within our budget in London.

1.3 We were attracted to Kingfield/Westfield in South Woking due to its established 'village' vibe, outside of the town centre, with close proximity to the Surrey Hills, abundance of amenity

space (Woking Park 5min walk) and leisure facilities (David Lloyd club opposite) and a 20min walk to Woking station.

- 1.4 As someone who grew up in Hove (East Sussex) backing onto Brighton & Hove Albion's Goldstone ground, I had experienced first-hand how much spirit and value a community football club brings to an area and was therefore very happy to be living opposite Woking FC and to support the club.
- 1.5 The Willow Reach development was especially attractive to us, due to its well-balanced offer of superior quality 3-4 bedroom houses, in a curved landscaped form and newly-built 63 acre wetlands behind it, with playground facilities within easy walking distance. Crest Nicholson's brochure referred to the development and locale as a 'tranquil rural enclave'\* , blending country and contemporary in assured style. Having welcomed our first child in 2018 we are very happy with our choice to purchase our first home in Willow Reach. Living in a development with plenty of amenity space, with lots of other young families away from the overdevelopment of London suits our needs and has provided us with what we were seeking for our first family home.



CONTEMPORARY 1 & 2 BEDROOM APARTMENTS AND  
3 & 4 BEDROOM TOWNHOUSES FROM CREST NICHOLSON.

Whether you're settling down with a family, downsizing or buying your first home, it is the ideal combination of choice, design and above all, location.

Bordered by a gently flowing stream and with the key feature of the newly restored Hoe Valley wetlands and wildlife habitats next door, Willow Reach might be in the depths of the countryside. And yet, it's less than 1½ miles from the popular commuter town of Woking and only 28 miles from central London.

Rural outlook, good connections, the attractions and services of the town: Willow Reach could be just perfect for you.

- 1.6 I first became aware of the Goldev Woking's Woking Community Stadium proposal due to a leaflet I received a couple of days before a meeting for 'supporters' was being held at Woking FC in July 2019. The leaflet was entirely about a new football stadium, with no mention of

1048 flats with inadequate parking, 40 houses and re-location of David Lloyd to Greenbelt Egley Road site.

- 1.7 I attended this meeting in person only to find boards of visualisations of a new 10k 'Woking Community Stadium' taking centre-stage. The stadium investment was seemingly being funded by the construction of an unprecedented and overbearing housing development (in fact there was no mention of the number of flats or houses proposed in any of the literature) all of which were entirely out of keeping with the character of the prevailing area.

**Meet the Team**

Woking Football Club are inviting supporters to attend public consultation events on the proposals for the new Woking Community Stadium at Kingfield. Join us on:

**Thursday 18 July, 4pm to 8pm**  
- Mayford Village Hall, Saunders Lane, Mayford, Woking

For more information contact [info@wokingcommunitystadium.co.uk](mailto:info@wokingcommunitystadium.co.uk) or call 0800 038 5850

**We hope to see you there!**

**CLICK HERE TO SHARE YOUR VIEWS**

**CLICK HERE TO SHARE YOUR VIEWS**

**A NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD WITH WOKING FC AT ITS HEART**

Woking Football Club, in partnership with GolDev Woking, is bringing forward exciting proposals for a modern stadium for professional



## A NEW HOME FOR WOKING FC

### OUR CLUB, OUR VISION

- **A Sustainable Future**  
Help Woking FC become financially sustainable and secure their long term future
- **Create a Social Hub for the Whole Community**  
Create a social hub multi-purpose facilities for business, community and leisure activities
- **Create Opportunities for All**  
Expand and enhance the sport, education, health and wellbeing programmes offered by the award-winning Carols in the Community charity
- **Compete in the EFL**  
Provide the foundations to compete in the English Football League
- **Improve Matchdays for Supporters**  
Improve matchdays for our supporters and attract a new generation of fans
- **Be at the Heart of Woking's Future**  
Ensure Woking FC to match the ambitions of our growing town and secure our future in the heart of the community

Find out more at [wokingcommunitystadium.co.uk](http://wokingcommunitystadium.co.uk)



Our proposals concern the two sites highlighted in red above: Woking Community Stadium and Cardinal Court are proposed for the Woking Football Club site. The David Lloyd Health and Racquet Club and additional homes are proposed for the Egley Road site. We are holding consultations at Woking Football Club and Mayford Village Hall, see the front page for details.

#### ONLINE CONSULTATION

Following the public consultation events, you will have the opportunity to give us your feedback at [cardinalcourtwoking.co.uk](http://cardinalcourtwoking.co.uk)

#### FEEDBACK BY POST

You can also give us your feedback using the form attached to this leaflet. Simply fill in the form and post it back to us for free.

Find out more at [cardinalcourtwoking.co.uk](http://cardinalcourtwoking.co.uk)



## A NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD WITH WOKING FC AT ITS HEART

- A new community stadium for Woking FC
- A vibrant retail and leisure destination
- A social hub for the whole community
- New homes for a growing community
- Affordable housing for local people first
- New & improved David Lloyd Health and Racquet Club

### PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

Lalthwaite Community Stadium, Kingfield, Woking, GU22 9A  
**Friday 12 July 2pm to 8pm**      **Saturday 13 July 10am to 12pm**      **Tuesday 16 July 2pm to 6pm**

Mayford Village Hall, Saunders Lane, Mayford, Woking, GU22 0NN  
**Thursday 18 July, 4pm to 8pm**

Come and meet the team and have your say. We hope you can join us.

Find out more at [cardinalcourtwoking.co.uk](http://cardinalcourtwoking.co.uk)

## HAVE YOUR SAY

Fill out and detach this short form and send it back to us by freepost. If you would like to leave further feedback, please visit our website [cardinalcourtwoking.com](http://cardinalcourtwoking.com)

#### About you

Name:

Address:

E-mail:

Postcode:

Do you support the Woking Community Stadium proposals? (Circle as appropriate)



Do you have any other comments on our proposals?

- I am happy to share my contact details and a copy of my responses with Forty Siblings, acting on behalf of GoDev Woking.
- I would like to be updated on the progress of this application.

\*How will we use your data? Forty Siblings, acting on behalf of GoDev Woking will use it to work on your submission and use the aggregated data for strategic purposes. We will not share your personal data with any third parties or the public. Data for comments, our plans.  
 \*\*If you do not wish to provide the progress of this application, Forty Siblings will contact you later on behalf of GoDev Woking to see if you would like to provide feedback on the proposals.  
 The wider Regulation 192B, Woking Local Plan 2016-2026 will be used to assess the proposals of this project. You can report any concerns or queries to [info@cardinalcourtwoking.co.uk](mailto:info@cardinalcourtwoking.co.uk)

- 1.8 The immense scale of this proposed development concerned me, we have no intention of leaving Willow Reach but if a development of this size, scale and density was allowed to proceed the very characteristics of the area we were drawn to as a young family would be irreparably harmed. I was not prepared to let the future of a thriving community of 7k residents be irrevocably harmed, or to allow this proposal to set a precedent for this scale of development in other non-town centre locations in the Borough for the sake of an opportunistic developer, proposing to 'save' Woking FC.
- 1.9 I wrote a petition to Woking Borough Council outlining a litany of planning-based objections to the scheme in July 2019, which secured 400 signatures in a month, enough for me to close it and request it be addressed with full council. I presented this petition to full Council on October 17th, which resulted in an unanimous full council vote to support ward Councillor Will Forster's motion to 'for Woking FC, WBC and Goldev Woking to reassess their plans to develop the Laithwaite Community Stadium and surrounding area in light of the petitions and concerns of local people'. \*\*This included a re-assessment of the viability and business case, the justification for 10k stadium and a review to assess the most respectful and appropriate housing density and type for the area. The appellant did not make sufficient re-assessments nor did the appellant engage adequately with the community until after final plans were submitted for planning.
- 1.10 In my professional life, I have a MA Hons from Oxford University in Geography and have been a Marketing and PR Manager for the last 15 years. I specialise in brand communications and recognised immediately that a third party PR/communications agency had been employed to drive a campaign of propaganda in relation to this proposed development which focussed entirely on Woking FC fans, to enlist their support for a new stadium, as opposed to engaging

local residents by providing policy relevant justification for what represented the largest housing proposal in the entire borough, and still does to this day.

1.11 The extreme bulk and mass of this housing development was being intentionally over-shadowed by visuals and rhetoric on the benefits of an entirely new stadium and the creation of a new 'community'. We didn't ask or need a new community. The formation of South Woking Action Group (SWAG) came out of a local resident's meeting where there was widespread concern amongst those in attendance about the detrimental impact this proposed development would have on the local community. I offered to become involved in SWAG because I shared these concerns and wanted to take action to work towards channelling investment in South Woking in a respectful way, not via such over-development. More and more local residents became involved as supporters of SWAG as a result of the flagrant disregard for transparency from Woking Borough Council/ Woking FC and Goldev Woking in relation to the proposed development and due to the realization that should this proposed development succeed it would completely alter the character of the local area.

1.12 In this case I am presenting evidence as a local resident, on behalf of SWAG. In this evidence I address the following matters of concern to this Inquiry:

- a) Willow Reach: well-balanced development with quantifiable community benefit versus the appeal proposal.
- b) Disproportionate development of Kingfield/Westfield to date
- c) Willow Reach development parking learning insights
- d) Formation and role of South Woking Action Group

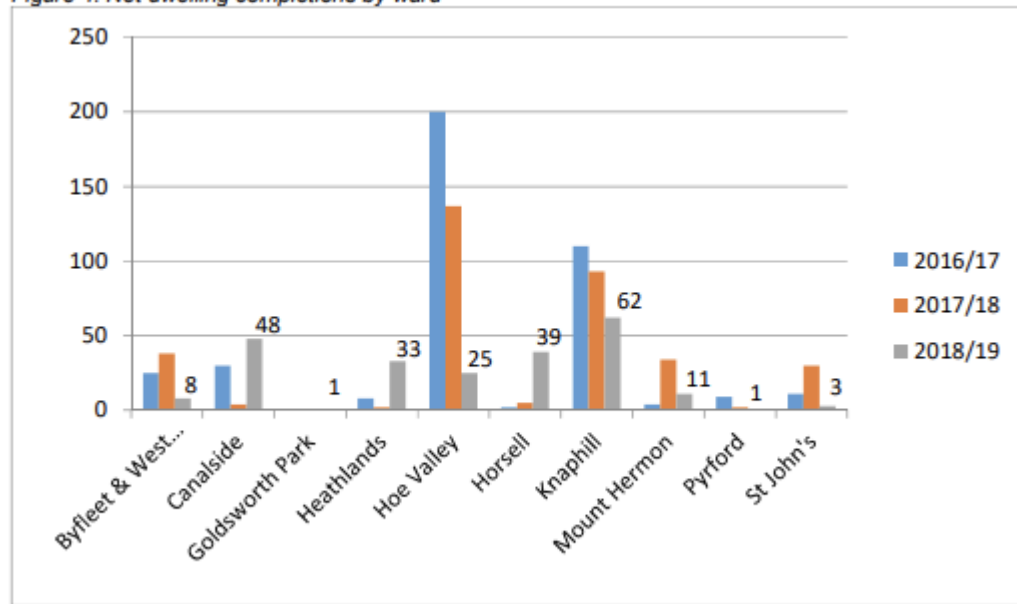
## **2.0 YES TO INVESTMENT – NO TO OVERDEVELOPMENT**

2.1 Willow Reach is a Crest Nicholson housing development on Westfield Road, opposite Woking FC which launched early in 2016. It is a development comprising 149 homes, the majority of

which are 3-4 bedroom homes (82 houses) and also 1/2/3 bedroom apartments accompanied by 223 car spaces.

- 2.2 The site was a contaminated landfill tip site as well as housing some community and residential buildings.
- 2.3 The regeneration and remediation of the Westfield Tip site provided a wealth of community benefits such as de-contamination and flood mitigation for Hoe Valley, the creation of a 63 acre Wetland Reserve, two new footbridges and a significant contribution (1/2) towards WBC's housing provision requirements for the year (292 dwellings per year). Woking Borough Council's Planning Committee's approval summary concluded that Willow Reach provided 'a high quality residential environment that makes best use of urban land without detriment to the character of the area, neighbours amenities or the wider environment'.
- 2.4 Unlike Goldev Woking's proposal, which would dramatically change the character of Westfield/Kingfield into an intrusive, high density and high rise 'walled' commune, seemingly 'justified' by the perceived and unquantifiable 'community' benefits of a larger 'private' football stadium, the Willow Reach example serves to demonstrate the concept of balance.
- 2.5 In urban design terms Willow Reach 'represented a balanced approach to resolving the issues of funding remediation of land contamination and flood protection against the need to provide a high quality residential environment'. Furthermore, the site is 'sufficiently large and sufficiently separate from surrounding residential'\*\*\*\*\* with a site area of 14.73ha (including the linear park) or 2ha (for the housing area alone) which contributes to it's more 'breathable' and spacious appeal unlike that of Goldev's high density proposal which taking into account the land area of the proposed housing is a density of approximately 400 DPH.

Figure 4: Net dwelling completions by ward



2.6 Woking Borough Council’s latest Local Development Document shows an imbalance however in the relative housing development of the Hoe Valley ward. As figure 4 clearly demonstrates, Hoe Valley has been the consistent focus for housing development since 2018/19 and Goldev’s proposal only seeks to significantly heighten this imbalance.

(<https://www.woking2027.info/allocations/sadpdexam/annualmonitoringreport1819.pdf>)

2.8 The Willow Reach development example also seeks to reiterate the character of the prevailing area, whilst it deviates slightly as the terraced homes are 3 storeys and there are blocks of apartments (the tallest being 6 storeys), the design of the development respects the local area with the terraced homes being adjacent to the existing dwellings and the apartment blocks located in an area where the impact is mainly felt by the Willow Reach development as opposed to the existing neighbours. Woking Planning Committee’s report says that the ‘adjacent residential character on Westfield Avenue is predominantly of bungalows’. There have been a number of planning refusals in the Westfield/Kingfield area over the past year for extensions and one storey additions as they are not in keeping with the character of local area and height policy. Pictured below (excluding Willow Reach) is an example of the tallest private development which has been approved in the past couple



of years in the local area. How then could 11 storeys and 1048 dwellings be compliant and considerate of the local area?



### **3.0 WILLOW REACH PARKING - WHAT CAN BE LEARNT**

3:1: Goldev's proposal assumes that not all flat owners will possess a car. I thought it pertinent to share car ownership and parking insights from the Willow Reach development. As someone who has lived in the development for 5yrs, it is virtually impossible to exist in this location without a car. Aside from a convenience store 15mins away, I use my car for food shops and daily to take my son to his nursery, which is a 10min journey. Christopher Robin nursery, which is one of two within walking distance, had a waiting list of 12months, which demonstrates current and sustained levels of demand already.

3:2 In Willow Reach the terraced homes have 2 parking spots allocated whereas the apartments only have 1 parking space. Most residents have **more** than one car, with over 60% of the houses possessing two cars (car ownership survey conducted March 2020 by Willow Reach residents). For those flat owners who own more than one car, they have simply resorted to lining the pavements in the development. This then means that pedestrians can't walk on the pavements and it has restricted access and ease with which you can drive around the development, due to creating visibility issues and the narrowing of the road.

3:3 Particularly at the end of Sycamore Avenue and Westfield Avenue (where there are two apartment blocks located) vehicles are often parked on both sides of Sycamore Avenue, creating poor visibility for other drivers and potentially impacting emergency vehicle access.

3:4 With lack of parking for residents creating issues these parking issues are further exacerbated on match days when football fans park in Willow Reach. If this appeal is successful, residents of the proposed development who own more than one car, those visiting the medical centre or attending football matches will likely use Willow Reach to park their vehicles thereby creating more issues for the residents of Willow Reach.

3:5 These insights show the very real and current demand for car use in this area and how it is imperative to provide one or two spaces per dwelling plus sufficient parking for the medical centre and football stadium otherwise there will simply be a surge of cars, lining already choked local roads.

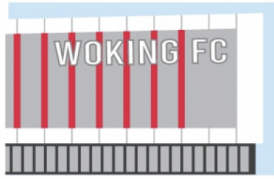
3:6 As mentioned above on Woking FC match days, fans use Willow Reach as a car-park, blocking the entrance, and using all of our nominated visitor parking bays. It is already a source of much contention, so much so we are now investigating parking permits and alternative solutions to control this intermittent but high traffic and parking chaos. With a significantly larger football stadium proposed, local residents are perplexed to understand where all incremental cars will park, especially as the proposal itself does not provide **increased parking for fans, coaches, etc.**

**SEE PARKING PICTURE ATTACHED**

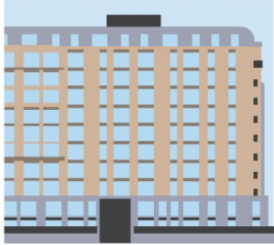
## **4.0 SOUTH WOKING ACTION GROUP**

4:1 We formed South Woking Action Group in August 2019 in response to the overwhelming negative response to the public meetings held in Maybury and at Woking FC from local residents and within the borough at large. We wanted to form a focused committee who could effectively update residents on the status of the proposal, collate feedback, proactively engage with all stakeholders to share residents feedback and get access to all the relevant information that residents needed to form a considered opinion. Formal contracts between Goldev Woking, WBC and Woking FC had already been signed before public consultation (we established this by a series of Freedom Of Information Requests) and residents were outraged by how much information had been hidden and continued to be hidden from the public in terms of the justification for the scheme, rationale for a 10k stadium, due diligence performed on private developer, rationale for proposing to loan them £250m and economical viability and sustainability of the business plan for Woking FC. Our meeting with Ray Morgan and David Bittlestone at Woking Borough Council only served to confirm our fears that this project was driven by personal agendas, dating back to the 1990s and they were now outdated and even more so in this pandemic climate which has changed the world of work and demand for 'commuting', threatened the future of large scale sporting events and tightened Council and government lending facilities.

4:2 Through the creation of a website, social media pages, printed literature, oversized banners, two official residents meetings, petitions, Executive Questions and FOI requests, proactive engagements with all stakeholders including all of Woking's councillors and local press, SWAG were effective at mobilising local residents, listening to their concerns and sharing them, along with recommendations to all relevant parties, even during the pandemic. SWAG's impact was testimony to the depth and temperature of opposition both in Kingfield/ Westfield and at Egley Road against this vast and utterly inappropriate and unsustainable scheme, as supported by the planning committee's rejection.



**YES** to investment in  
Woking FC ground



**NO**

- 5 x tower blocks up to 11 storeys at Westfield
- 36 houses and David Lloyd on Greenbelt



**OBJECT BEFORE MARCH 16TH**

<https://southwokingactiongroup.org.uk/>

## 5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### 5:11. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5:1 In summary and to conclude, the current proposed development that is the subject of this appeal, which represents the biggest housing development proposal in the entire Borough, faces significant amount of objections from local residents and now also has lost the support of Woking Football Club itself and Woking Borough Council. The effectiveness of South Woking Action group in listening to and engaging with local community of 7k residents, our local councillors and Woking FC is testimony to the strength and validity of the objections to the scheme. If it were to proceed the impact this development would have on the local area and on other out of town centre locations within the Borough of Woking would be substantial and also detrimental to the sub-urban character and sustainability of the area. The proposed scale, height and density of this development is not suited to the area in which it is proposed to be located as it is completely out of character to the surrounding area. Even Willow Reach, which was a departure to the character of the area, still

respects the local area by focusing more on terraced homes than large apartment blocks. The height of the apartment blocks in Willow Reach blend in with the rest of the Willow Reach development and do not overpower the character of the surrounding area. Willow Reach is an example of a 'balanced' new development in terms of housing and also its quantifiable and far-reaching community investment and value through the decontamination of the Westfield tip site, flood defences and construction of 63 acre Wetlands area, as well as footpath/bridge investment. The proposed development would overpower the character of the surrounding area, create more congestion on the roads and potentially lead to more parking chaos for those residents neighbouring the site. This proposed development is more suited to a town centre location, it is not suited for an out of town centre location where the predominant style of dwellings is 1 to 2 storey family style homes with gardens.

5:2 This appeal should be refused, the potential negative impact of this proposed development on the local area far outweighs any perceived benefit of a new football stadium and is no longer supported by Woking FC itself. We would welcome a Willow Reach style family housing style development, respectful of policy compliant densities, with sufficient parking, offset by necessary investment in local highways, local education provision and local parking solutions.

#### **SOURCES**

\* Crest Nicholson brochure

[https://media.rightmove.co.uk/121k/120571/brochure\\_PDF\\_00.pdf](https://media.rightmove.co.uk/121k/120571/brochure_PDF_00.pdf)

\*\*Minutes Of A Meetings Of The Borough Council Of Woking 17/10/2019 Item

<https://modern.gov.woking.gov.uk/documents/g689/Printed%20minutes%2017th-Oct-2019%2019.00%20Council.pdf?T=1>

\*\*\*[https://caps.woking.gov.uk/online-applications/files/509A8FBFD493FFA39FBDFC24DC47F76C/pdf/PLAN\\_2006\\_1237-20\\_March\\_2007\\_Planning\\_Committee-87707.pdf](https://caps.woking.gov.uk/online-applications/files/509A8FBFD493FFA39FBDFC24DC47F76C/pdf/PLAN_2006_1237-20_March_2007_Planning_Committee-87707.pdf)