



Chalfont St Peter Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG)
***working with Thames Valley Police, Buckinghamshire
and Parish Councils and residents for Safer Communities***

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**RESPONSE OF NAG TO PROPOSALS FOR GREEN BELT RELEASE AND
DEVELOPMENT for EPILEPSY SOCIETY LAND IN CHESHAM LANE, CHALFONT
ST PETER**

1 What is NAG and what is its interest?

- 1.1 CHALFONT ST PETER NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION GROUP, (NAG) (formerly Community Safety Group), has existed since June 1999. NAG's were created by Home Office directive. NAG is recognised by local councils and Thames Valley Police. It exists as a stakeholders' forum from which to support the Police and other agencies for a safer community
- 1.2 NAG comprises representatives from residential and business sectors of the community, Thames Valley Police, Buckinghamshire Council, and Chalfont St Peter Parish Council. As a forum for community safety issues NAG has tackled a number of tasks over several years. Of the priorities, Crime and ASB data are scrutinised but the greatest concerns of residents remain very high levels of traffic, parking and speeding
- 1.3 NAG operate parking surveys, and run Community Speedwatch sessions throughout the village
- 1.4 It follows that NAG members have acquired useful local knowledge of the traffic issues which impact on this village. Some members of NAG are also members of their Parish or Unitary Council planning committees and share their experience and share their extensive knowledge of the village streets

1.5 At a meeting on the 2nd November 2022 members approved the making of this Response to the application by Epilepsy Society for outline planning permission to build some 975 homes and a further 75 units care home

2.0 Structure of this Response

2.1 This response will restrict itself to traffic issues and the impact of the proposed development on existing highways infrastructure

2.2 NAG have identified the following issues as likely to have the most severe impact on the community

3.0 Dependency on personal motor vehicles

3.1 The former Chiltern District Council's emerging replacement Local Plan (withdrawn after the creation of the Buckinghamshire Unitary Council) contained a draft policy concerning creation of streets where pedestrian and cycle movement would be prioritised

3.2 The reality is that because of its location the proposed development will create more motor vehicle dependency, not less than typical new developments in the village. The village centre, lying to the immediate West of the A413 (Amersham Road) contains the following amenities

Primary **shopping street** with additional retail outlets in an adjacent precinct, & busy Builders Merchant

Three **medical practices** (Calcott Medical Centre-two gp practices) and Misbourne Surgery,

Chalfonts and GX **Hospital**

Schools (see para 5.2 below)

Community **library**

Community centre

Sports and leisure facilities based at Mill Meadow

Allotments

Chalfont **Leisure Centre**

Several **churches**, two of them in the very centre of the village

A popular **youth centre** lies at the edge of the Greyhound roundabout, approached from the village centre by foot tunnel under the busy A413

Many **opticians, dental practices and similar professionals**

Numerous **coffee bars, restaurants, and bars**

Veterinary practice in Lower Road

3.3 These amenities are most easily accessed, if coming from or crossing the A413 at a junction known as the Greyhound roundabout

4.0 A413

- 4.1 This is the main trunk road from the A40 (London to Oxford) at Denham, some 5 miles south of Chalfont St Peter. Dual carriageway from Denham, access to Chalfont St Peter is via two junctions, (i) the Kingsway roundabout, south of Chalfont St Peter) (ii) the Greyhound roundabout referred to in 3.3 above. The A413 continues northbound to Amersham, Missenden and Aylesbury
- 4.2 The Kingsway roundabout serves the village centre from the South, and also parts of neighbouring Gerrards Cross. An eastern exit from the Kingsway roundabout feeds into the privately owned Chalfont Heights Estate, and a service road leading to the Chalfont Sports Club and Gerrards Cross golf Club
- 4.3 For the avoidance of doubt the roads within Chalfont Heights Estate are privately owned and cannot be used as a through route from either Chiltern Hill, or the Kingsway roundabout to reach Joiners Lane and beyond to Denham and Chesham Lanes
- 4.4 From the Greyhound roundabout northbound the A413 road becomes single carriageway with a speed limit of 30mph
- 4.5 Following a campaign initiated by NAG, Buckinghamshire Council ('Bucks') acknowledged the case for reducing the speed limit on the A413, from South of the Kingsway roundabout to the Greyhound roundabout where, northbound, 70mph becomes 30mph
- 4.6 For this purpose, in December 2021 Bucks conducted traffic monitoring on the dual carriageway between the two roundabouts. The data revealed both frequency and speed. Bucks published a report in summary in which they revealed that average ***northbound traffic vehicle movements amounted to 6,900 between 7am and 7pm on a typical weekday***. NAG have seen some of the same raw data. Using data for 24 hours, not 12 hours, they calculated the daily level of traffic northbound on one weekday to be in excess of 10,600 vehicles
- 4.7 It is important to understand the significance of the A413. Where Epilepsy Society talk of having existed before Chalfont St Peter, they really mean 'before Chalfont Common' (which is simply part of Chalfont St Peter in the same way that Goldhill, and Austenwood are). The village of Chalfont St Peter has existed on record since at least 949AD when it was observed in a Saxon Charter. Centuries later it grew in importance on the road to Aylesbury and beyond, hence the Greyhound coaching inn
- 4.8 The A413 used to take Amersham and Aylesbury traffic through the centre of the village. In 1960 a dual carriageway bypass was built

- 4.9 Northbound from the Greyhound on the A413 a busy junction to the left (West) services: the community centre, the football ground, parish council offices, scouts HQ, tennis club and Mill Meadow. There are no other significant junctions on that side of the road northbound until traffic reaches Chalfont St Giles. The ground slopes steeply down to the Misbourne from the A413
- 4.10 To the right (East of the A413) there are few junctions. Significant feeder routes from Chesham Lane and Denham Lane to the A413 are Joiners Lane, and Rickmansworth Lane, and further North Misbourne Avenue. The area here has become built up with good quality housing and it is not surprising the junctions of these roads with the A413 are witness to significant traffic queues which build up quickly at peak times (peak being not just 'rush hour' but school traffic as well)
- 4.11 Both Joiners and Rickmansworth Lanes, and Misbourne Avenue are steep (see data at para 7.14 below) and will not appeal to other than the keen cyclist or walker as a route from the development to or from the village. Rickmansworth Lane meets Denham/Chesham Lane at a staggered crossroad junction which is frequently congested. Northbound from Chesham Lane the next and last junction is at Gorelands Lane, left to Chalfont St Giles, and right to Maple Cross. This is a winding country road, where traffic has to slow to pass oncoming vehicles, or use passing places. It continues East under the M25, and is completely unsuited to high traffic levels. The Newland Park development will add at least 308 residences to the site, and a major sports and leisure complex is proposed with car parking for 200 vehicles. Adjacent to Newland Park, also off Gorelands Lane lies the Chiltern Open Air Museum which also generates staff and visitor traffic
- 4.12 Traffic data has been collected by or for the Applicant but has not been disclosed so there is no way of being able to comment on that data. It needs to be scrutinised carefully. The daily queues of traffic in and near the village centre tell the reality and should not be ignored. High levels of traffic from 07:30hrs onwards until about 09:30hrs, then from about 15:30hrs-16:30hrs, and again from 17:00 to about 19:00 are unacceptable as they are at present

5.0 West/East side divide

- 5.1 The Applicant portrays a village which has grown up around the Epilepsy Society (see 4.7 above) New housing developments from the 1960's spread across the side of the valley to the east of the A413, pushing the built area of the parish both east and north to where it is has remained since. A primary school (Robertswood, see below) was built at the junction of Denham and West Hyde Lanes which generates high levels of traffic and parking at school times

Robertswood is a primary co-ed school 404students in age group (3-11)

and

A **Montessori School** in Joiners Lane, near the Greyhound roundabout exists, for 'early years, 80 or so youngsters

- 5.2 In contrast, to the West of the village centre (so West of the A413) are the following schools:

Chalfont Community college (2ndary level co-ed)	1415 x (11-18)
Chalfont CofE Academy (village centre)	355 x (7-11)
Level End Chalfont St Peter Infants school	178 x (5-11)
St Josephs RC (Voluntary Aided School),	410 x (2-11)
Maltmans School (Independent Prep.)	325 x (2-11)
Gayhurst School , Bull Lane (Independant)	365 x (3-11)
Thorpe House School (Independant)	299 x (4-16)

The total number of students is 3,347
(figures taken from on line data as at 01.11.22)

- 5.3 In a recent exercise this summer, on behalf of Bull Lane residents and the three schools Gayhurst, Maltmans and St Josephs, NAG estimated the total school roll at in the order of 1,000. All the schools in 5.1 and 5.2 above are day schools, and all generate significant school traffic
- 5.4 The new housing proposed by the Applicant will increase demand for space in those schools, and add to the traffic flowing East>West>East, vehicle movements on which subject the Applicant is largely silent
- 5.5 Much of that school traffic involves vehicles collecting children of different ages from different schools in a round trip twice a day. During school term time the village centre is generally avoided by many who are not involved in the school run. Queues usually form from about 15:15hrs down the hill from the community college and are, often as not, stationary in Market Place. Partly the sheer weight of traffic atn the A413 at the Greyhound roundabout, prevents traffic joining it smoothly at the roundabout
- 5.6 The Applicant stated in consultation they acknowledge '*the need to make improvements to some road junctions*' if this development were permitted. They were not specific. NAG asked them expressly about A413 traffic levels but their prime concern seems to centre on getting traffic away from the development site into Rickmansworth Lane and Chesham Lane, using the three routes down to the A413 described at para 4.10 above. There appear to be no proposals for or even comprehension of what will happen to traffic when it reaches the A413
- 5.6.1 Chalfont St Peter sits in the narrow valley of the chalk stream known as the Misbourne (which runs North to South). The village therefore tends to split into East and West, by virtue of this valley and the A413, which runs North South alongside the Misbourne. Access to East or West of the village, save for the immediate village centre, involves a steep climb. Short distances can be cycled

or walked but the proposed development is well beyond all but the keenest walkers. There is no room for connecting new developments with new roads.

- 5.6.2 Immediate exit routes from the development site will involve Chesham Lane leading north to Gorelands Lane, and its continuation Denham Lane, south to Denham, which is a narrow and winding route. Beyond that traffic will rely on the roads described in paras.4.10 and 4.11 above to the A413. NAG conclude the majority of extra routine traffic will use the A413 not least because that is the only viable route to most of the amenities described earlier, including the six day schools which some 3,347 students attend (see again para 3.2)
- 5.7 Distance by motor vehicle from the Applicant's establishment to Gerrards Cross station is 3.1 miles (the development site will be a fraction more)
- 5.9 This distance far exceeds the recommended maximum for access to the nearest railway station so far as sustainability is concerned

6.0 Car Parking

- 6.1 Car parking has become an extreme problem for the village centre. On-street parking in most residential roads has reached saturation point. Parking has been exacerbated in recent years by the impact of permitted development whereby many shop 'back premises' have been converted for multi occupation with which there is no off street parking
- 6.2 A centre of village car park in Church Lane offers 320 spaces and a one hour's initial free parking (subsidised by the parish council). There is limited one hour parking in the precinct, and similarly for 30 minutes in the Coop supermarket car park. There is no space within the village to build additional off street parking or expand the existing church lane facility

7 Vehicle numbers

- 7.1 It is disappointing that the Applicant has withheld the traffic data they had been collecting earlier in 2022. The applicant offers little idea of expected vehicle movements but it is possible to estimate these using TRICS database
- 7.2 By way of example in 2019, a Transport Statement for the then proposed redevelopment of office blocks for residential use at Chalfont Park set out to draw a comparison of anticipated vehicle movements with those during the building's previous use as offices. On the Applicant's estimate, daily vehicle movements would be 202 for 64 residential apartments.) or 3.156 for each unit)

- 7.3 In that case the residential units were one or two bedroom apartments). Traffic activity for houses rather than apartments will be higher. It will be necessary to draw assumptions on where those traffic activities take the vehicles but joining or crossing the A413 is going to account for a high proportion of the daily traffic movements
- 7.6 Data for the South East (outside London which is different) indicates an average for each household of (3.933) vehicle movements per day. For 975 homes that represents a potential 3,835 extra vehicle movements per day. (incidentally more than half as much again as current northbound traffic levels on the A413 for just 12 hours)
- 7.7 Chalfont St Peter currently has a population of approx. 14,000–14,500, and approx 5,000 dwellings. (this takes into account the 2011 census population base, plus 200 new homes and 38 retirement apartments on the site of the former Holy Cross convent, and 146 or so retirement homes at Audley Dene off Denham La, as well as a 64 unit retirement home. The development at nearby Newland Park promises a further 308 homes (now being developed, and which will bring its own additional traffic problems to Chesham Lane, and to the A413).

The Applicant's proposed development will increase both the numbers of residential units, and residents, in Chalfont St Peter by circa 20%per cent

- 7.8 Access to the A413 or village centre and amenities, (other than to Denham) is by (i) Rickmansworth Lane (ii) Joiners Lane, both currently heavily used at peak times.
- 7.9 As it is now, traffic builds up in both these roads waiting to join the A413, which itself is often at a standstill at the junction points. In Rickmansworth Lane, waiting traffic builds back to the junction with Monument Lane, and in the case of Joiners Lane back to the junction with Royle Close
- 7.10 It is clear that the existing highways infrastructure could not absorb additional traffic of that density. The only solution would be the introduction of new roads but there is nowhere to put them. Ancient settlements like Chalfont St Peter have run out of space for new roads
- 7.11 The traditional two dimension 'map' view of the village does not do justice to the hilly surroundings. The estimated 3.1 miles walk from the Epilepsy site to Gerrards Cross Station is mostly down a steep hill and up a steep hill the other side. The distance on its own is misleading.

Gradient and distance data includes:

Rickmansworth Lane from the A413 climbs up to Chesham Lane over (.4m/.6km) with a max gradient at one point of approx. (.9%) (**Significant on street parking creating queues for downhill traffic**)

Copthall La. From A413 junction to Denham La. Over (.4m/.6km) has a max. gradient at the lower end of approx 9-10%

Monument La. From top, at Chesham La. to A413 via Rickmansworth La, is (.6m/.9.6km)

Joiners La. From bottom at A413 up to Denham La. (.5m/8km) has a max gradient of 11% at one point

Misbourne Av which is a direct route from the Epilepsy site to the A413 over (.3m/.48km) has a gradient at one point of 16-18% flattening out to 10% for the remainder of the bottom half as far as Ridgemount End

- 7.12 NAG will wish to be involved in the planning process, and any relevant examination hearings, and/ or make further written submissions as appropriate

Signed... 

Tony Shinner
Chairman of Chalfont St Peter NAG
02.11.2022