

# YORKSHIRE LAND

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Our Ref YLL/IG/10.01

26 OCTOBER 2015

[www.Oxspring-Fields.co.uk](http://www.Oxspring-Fields.co.uk)

Ian Goldthorpe  
Chairman of Oxspring Parish Council  
Malydon  
Bower Hill  
Oxspring  
SHEFFIELD  
S36 8YE

Dear Mr Goldthorpe

## **OXSPRING NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

I write to you in your capacity as both a long standing resident of Oxspring and also as Chairman of Oxspring Parish Council.

As you are aware, we have held development interests in Oxspring since 1989, first purchasing part of the Mill Farm complex from Hypromel Foods PLC (an animal offal and by-product business). You will no doubt recall the derelict state of the site, and I hope you will agree that the current award winning 'Millstones' development is a considerable improvement and now forms an asset to the village.

During the 1990's we pursued through the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) a parcel of land under our control, located adjacent to Toll Bar Close, now known as 'Fox Fields'.

You may recall the strong opposition we faced to the development of both the Mill Farm and Fox Fields sites from a number of local residents who were opposed to any new residential development or change in Oxspring. Many existing residents, who themselves had moved into the village in the early 1980's, when the previous Toll Bar development was completed on rolling Greenfield pasture, claimed that the village could not sustain any more new development.

During the UDP process our planning consultants presented detailed evidence to the UDP Inquiry. At that time, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) was opposed to the development of the Fox Fields site, however, the senior UDP Inspector commented in his report (paragraph 13.4.219):

***"I consider that Oxspring is well located in the community Area for additional housing development. This is particularly so in light of its relationship to Penistone and the proposed allocation of land for employment development at the former Oxspring sidings."***

In light of the Inspectors comment, the 'Fox Fields' site was subsequently brought forward for development and again, I believe you will agree that this attractive David Wilson Homes development has become an integral part of Oxspring. Indeed, key members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering committee and the Vice Chair of the Parish Council reside within it

At the time that Fox Fields was constructed, BMBC did not have an affordable housing policy and therefore, no affordable homes were required or provided as part of the development mix

In 2002, we purchased the former Oxspring sidings (another Brownfield site) and brought forward a development with Barratt Homes featuring a mixture of new homes and the delivery of the Marrtree business park.

In 2004, the late Gladys wood came to see us at our offices in Penistone, and pleaded our help in finding a suitable developer willing to purchase and redevelop the former village garage site, which had a number of known construction difficulties to overcome. We introduced a reputable local developer 'Eastwood homes' and assisted in the design of a very sensitive scheme which we felt would fit well and enhance this prominent part of Oxspring. We again hope you will agree that the former derelict garage site has been substantially enhanced with what is now another asset to Oxspring.

We can genuinely say that, like yourself, we sincerely care for the village and do not wish to destroy its character, hence the choice of location for the Oxspring Fields site, which will be contained within Strong, Logical and enduring boundaries, yet located within very close proximity to the historical centre of Oxspring, which is centred around the Waggon and Horses public house.

As a former local businessman yourself, you will understand how the proprietors of the Local 'Waggon and Horses' / 'Travellers Inn' public houses and the Post office/General store, would welcome new local custom to help sustain and continue their operations. In fact, we believe that had our developments not taken place, then there is a real possibility that these essential community services may have long ago ceased trading due to a lack of custom. Furthermore, as you will be aware, the village primary school has in the past faced closure on two separate occasions and this may again have been considered, had our developments not proceeded.

We are aware of your continuous efforts for Oxspring's wellbeing and acknowledge that you, alongside John Wade (a former Parish, Town and Borough Councillor), have always put the Parish first and foremost, voluntarily giving up a great deal of your time for the village and the community.

Repeatedly, we have witnessed how people who have moved onto the new developments which we have enabled in Oxspring, subsequently try to prevent others from doing so, by opposing further development!

We feel sure that if run properly, the Neighbourhood Plan will be a success for all, however, we are concerned that Members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group have on a number of occasions aired false statements including that 'Oxpring does not have the infrastructure to accommodate further large scale development' (Note - without developments of 15 dwellings or more, much needed affordable housing will not be delivered), members have never provided any evidence to substantiate this spurious claim, and to the contrary, paragraph 4.12 of the adopted Barnsley UDP (Volume 13 – Western Rural Community Area) an adopted evidence based document, states clearly that:

***“Oxpring is one of the locations in the Western Community Area for additional development because of its physical relationship to the Penistone Urban Area, and because it has the infrastructure capacity to accommodate some further development without serious detriment to the quality and character of the Green Belt....If, in the long term, there is a need to release further land for housing, then there is the scope to accommodate additional development....”***

In addition to this statement made in the UDP, earlier this year we commissioned a reputable consultancy 'Pell Frischmann' to compile an independent sustainability and Accessibility study. This study was submitted to both the Parish and Borough Councils, and confirms that Oxspring is located in a sustainable location and does have the infrastructure capacity to accommodate further

development. A copy of this document is available to read on our Oxspring Fields website ([www.oxspring-fields.co.uk](http://www.oxspring-fields.co.uk)).

During 2014, Planning Aid England on behalf of Oxspring Parish Council commissioned consultants URS, to undertake an independent housing needs study for the village. The Parish Council are therefore well aware of the requirement to deliver a mix of new housing to meet the identified needs of the parish.

You, as a long standing member of Oxspring Parish Council, will be well aware of the Parish Councils desire to deliver the Community/Sports pavilion upon the village sports field and the associated funding difficulties; the only factor preventing its successful delivery .

Oxspring Parish Council has also discussed on a number of occasions the problems experienced with standing water which appears on Sheffield Road after prolonged heavy rainfall caused by surface water runoff from the Oxspring Fields site. Interestingly, whilst the section of Sheffield road affected is technically located in Hunshelf Parish, it has always been an issue for Oxspring Parish Council, not Hunshelf ! Our proposed Oxspring Fields development would along with many other benefits, alleviate this particular problem at no cost to either the Parish or Borough Council.

It is a fact that many key members of the Oxspring Neighbourhood Plan steering committee are personally opposed to new residential development in Oxspring. Indeed, one member in particular is responsible for the 'Oxspring against Development' Facebook page. This is wholly wrong and contradicts the statement featured in the spring 2014 Parish Newsletter:

*"A NP cannot set an agenda against development and change. There is a housing crisis across the Country, let's not turn it into a crisis for our village or for our Parish. We will not turn the tide against housing growth set by Central and Local Governments, but if we work together we can find a solution that could improve all of our lives young and old, now and in years to come. The challenge is for us all to create our NP."*

The Governments Planning Minister Brandon Lewis MP has recently acknowledged that some Neighbourhood Plans are being used as a tool to thwart development. Such an approach is wholly in conflict with the whole concept of Neighbourhood Planning.

***Unless members of the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan are prepared to compromise; how can the identified housing needs of the village ever be delivered ?***

There is so much more that could be written here, however much of it has already been set out in great detail in previous correspondence to the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan Group. Nevertheless , we would urge you in your capacity as chairman and the elder statesman of the Parish Council, to consider in conjunction with this letter, the contents of our consultants (PB Planning) latest letter of 7 October 2015 to Kirkwells, and in addition, our letter of 23 October 2015 to the joint Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee.

We sincerely consider that an amicable solution is possible. As set out in our letter of 7 October (referenced above) we would welcome the opportunity of a meeting between ourselves and our respective consultants, to sit down in a calm and constructive manner to discuss how a phased development could be the solution to delivering the identified housing needs and other long desired aspirations of the parish.

It is our belief that this matter is getting out of hand. If we can all pull together, instead of pulling in opposite directions, then Oxspring will receive a substantial number of much needed affordable homes along with many long desired benefits, including the promised Community/Sports pavilion. When delivered, these assets will be of immense benefit to existing residents, helping to sustain the

community whilst also providing the opportunity for others to move into the village and contribute to its vitality and wellbeing, like many others before them

We do hope that a sense of calm can now descend and that Oxspring parish Council and its Neighbourhood Plan Group members will agree to the meeting that we have suggested. Indeed, if the meeting is postponed until after the publication of the draft Neighbourhood Plan (as Mrs Walker has suggested in her reply to our letter of 23 October – enclosed), then the Neighbourhood Plan Group runs the risk that further unnecessary consultation may be required upon any additional changes which may take place following our meeting. This scenario will ultimately add a further time delay to the Neighbourhood Plan process and moreover increase the risk that the recently obtained public funding, may run out prior to the next important stages of the plan preparation.

Finally, Mrs Walker's reply of 23 October also states:

*" I have noted the comments in your letter but personally feel that a meeting between ourselves at this stage of our planning process would not be appropriate." (Our Emphasis)*

Neighbourhood Planning Guidance seeks to encourage meetings with key stakeholders in the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans, and we therefore do not understand why Mrs Walker personally feels a meeting to be inappropriate ?

We hope you have found this letter helpful and that you will consider the points we have raised prior to the next Parish Council meeting on 2 November 2015 when, as set out in Mrs Walkers email, we understand that this issue will be discussed.

Yours sincerely  
**YORKSHIRE LAND Limited**

**Steven Green**  
Managing Director

Cc Ms Steph Tolson - Clerk to Oxspring Parish Council

Encs Letter of 7 October 2015 from PB Planning to Kirkwells  
Letter of 23 October 2015 to Chair of Oxspring Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee