

Save Jealott's Hill Newsletter

7th April 2020



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” (Margaret Mead)

Introduction

Greetings, everyone. As we head into the Easter holiday weekend the Covid-19 lockdown is continuing and the news remains pretty bad on the virus and its impact. We hope that all of you and your extended families are well and healthy. Obviously the loss of life globally and here at home is tragic, and the efforts of medical staff the world over are heroic in the extreme.

Out of respect to the current Covid-19 situation, the campaign committee made a conscious decision to lower the volume on our Save Jealott's Hill communications for the time being. With the pandemic's disruption to lives and businesses and the prevailing uncertainty and anxiety, we felt that it would be inappropriate to be over active publicly.

This Newsletter issue is, however, an update on what has been going on behind the scenes and what is coming up in the future. Once life begins to return to normal we will be able to say more publicly but, for now, rest assured we are still here and still working even if we are not “seeing” as much of each other as we were.

Where are we now

Website/Twitter launch - During February and March we have been busy on both the Media front and in developing the Save Jealott's Hill website (www.savejealottshill.com) and the Save Jealott's Hill Twitter handle (@saveourhill). Both of these "channels" launched during the first half of March. Please visit the website, which is going to be our principle repository of information and news going forward, and follow us on Twitter. Please encourage your friends on Twitter to follow us and retweet our tweets to your followers.

Media coverage: We were active with both Bracknell News and the Maidenhead Advertiser during the month and you will find examples of press coverage of the campaign at www.savejealottshill.com in the Press section.

Banners: These are up at several locations - thanks to everyone who volunteered to host one or two. We have more to put up after things relax a bit on the social distancing front for Richard Stok and myself, but just to reassure those who volunteered and have not yet had one set up we have you on our list and will be in touch at the first opportunity.

Responding to Bracknell Forest Council (BFC): On 6th March BFC published their "Summary of Responses" to the initial consultation on the Draft Strategic Growth Review which took place late last year. We helped quite a few people with responses where they felt the summary either did not include their response or did not fully and accurately reflect a response. The time for responses is now closed but see the "Next Steps in the Planning Process" below for more on future consultation opportunities.

We continue to work on the development of points on which to challenge the Council and to secure the services of legal Counsel for the next stage of the process. We are also in close contact with our neighbouring councils and residents associations. We have also been in touch with the local MPs and with Theresa May MP for Maidenhead.

Social Media: We held a teleconference towards the end of the month with an expert in Social Media advertising to obtain advice on how to establish a campaign leveraging the "reach" of online channels, which we will begin working on this after the Easter holiday weekend.

Constitution & Campaign Committee

During the month, and before the lockdown, we held a meeting to formally adopt an operating Constitution for the campaign and to formally confirm the Campaign Committee Officers in their roles. This process is a very formal one as it establishes us as an unincorporated legal entity. We can now open a bank account and begin fundraising activity.

The Committee Officers and members are:

Patrick Kennedy (Warfield). Communications & Fundraising and Chair.

Charlie Griffiths (Malt Hill). Technology & Social Media and Treasurer.

Richard Stok (Warfield). Membership Secretary and Secretary to the Committee.

Jane Lumley (Moss End). Committee Member.

Richard Lumley (Moss End). Committee Member.

Rebecca Murphy (Hayley Green). Committee Member.

Zoë White (Warfield). Committee Member.

Next steps in the planning process

Some people have asked us the eternally challenging question “What happens next?”. Here is an attempt to clarify how the Planning process will go from here towards the adoption by BFC of their Local Plan which is in the “drafting phase” at present. The draft Plan now contains the “Land at Jealott’s Hill” proposal sometimes known by its reference as “LP7” following the publication of the Summary of Responses on 6th March 2020. The steps going forward from that point are as outlined here:

1. Invite Comments on the Summary of Responses to Consultation.....Now closed.
2. Produce the “Submission Draft” of the Local Plan.
3. Publication stage consultation.
4. Consideration of representations.
5. Submission of the Plan & representations to the Planning Inspectorate.
6. Public Examination.
7. Publication of the Inspector’s report
8. Final Plan adopted.

We knew that the process was running a bit behind schedule when the Summary of Responses was published on 6th March (probably 6 to 8 weeks behind). At the moment we have no idea what impact the “Covid-19 lockdown” is going to have. We assume it would not be much if it was confined to 3 weeks but we expect an extension to the end of April (at least) and this could add further delay. It is hard to know timings in all this beyond saying that there is normally a period of, at least, 6 weeks between step 5 and step 6. The length of time required to complete step 6, and any associated legal challenges arising from the inspector’s report, is currently unknown but it is safe to assume we will still be in this process in the first quarter of 2021. All we can really say right now is that we know the steps to be taken but the timeline is very unclear. A best guess on all this is that while the Council’s original timeline ended with the adoption of the Plan in January 2021 with all steps complete (Page 8 of the Strategic Revised Growth Strategy document published in October 2019) this timeline is most unlikely to be met

The BFC has recently issued an update on their progress with the draft Plan which can be accessed from the link below. This update indicates that they do not expect to be ready to

deliver the next draft for further consultation with the public until the end of August. This would be 2 months later than originally intended.

<https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/planning-policy/development-plan/draft-bracknell-forest-local-plan/background>

Upcoming Events

Once travel restrictions and social distancing rules are relaxed we will issue a further update on events at that time.

We will continue to interact with local media as opportunities arise during this period.

Warfield Parish Council have an award for “Outstanding Contribution to the Parish”. Please consider nominating the Save Jealott’s Hill Campaign for the award at info@warfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk. Reason for the nomination can be for “activities aimed at protecting the green belt at Jealott’s Hill” and please include your name and postal address.

We are still desperate to recruit volunteers to play a role at committee level. If you have a little time available and are familiar with Law, Accounting or Social Media we would love to hear from you as we are in need to those areas of expertise to add support.

We are planning an area-wide leaflet drop once restrictions are lifted and to re-energise the campaign. We are looking for area level coordinators to set up teams in their local areas. If you are willing to take some of this on, then please email us at info@savejealottshill.com and we will contact you when the time is right.

Fundraising activity will commence when we have set up our banking arrangements in the next couple of weeks and look out for a separate announcement about this in the near future.

And, finally we wish you all a happy holiday weekend and hope that you and your families remain safe and well and healthy in these difficult days.