

Save Jealott's Hill Newsletter

15th July 2020

Which would YOU prefer at Jealott's Hill...

THIS?

or

THIS?



“Evil needs no more for it to triumph than that good people stand by and do nothing.”

Introduction

Greetings to you all. The little “quotation” under the pictures above came from the political economist John Stuart Mill in 1867, but shown here in slightly updated wording to meet the social norms of the present day!

That said, it is as true today as it was when he said it just over 150 years ago. This is why we still believe it is crucial to block the Syngenta proposal and to have the entire community engaged in fighting to preserve the Green Belt status of the site. Things have moved on a bit since the last Newsletter which went out just before Easter. Business remains disrupted by the tragedy that is Covid-19 and that has slowed us down in some areas that we are trying to accomplish.

We have, however, made some progress and we will outline that in the next section. For now, let's just say that in the coming weeks we will be re-energising the campaign at a pace appropriate to the gradual relaxation of pandemic restrictions and we sincerely hope that there will be no need to see any reintroduction of what we have all had to endure since mid-March.

Where Are We Now

- We are in discussions with one of the High Street Banks to open a Community Account. The Bank is working on this but everything is taking a long time due to their having to prioritise the Rescue and Bounce Bank Loan programmes for businesses impacted by the pandemic and the fact that many staff are working from home. We hope to have this in place soon.
- We are getting ready to go back on the road with the Banner campaign and we will be in touch with people who had volunteered to take one before the lockdown hit in March.
- We are working on a Facebook advertising campaign and that will be launched later in July.
- The next steps for the Petition are to hand in copies of the Petition to the Council, to our local MP, to the Syngenta offices at Jealott's Hill, and mail a copy to the Syngenta CEO at their HQ in Switzerland. Finally, as Syngenta is now owned by a combine of two Chinese Government owned enterprises (ChemChina and SinoChem) we plan to deliver a copy to the Chinese Embassy in London. More to say on this in a couple of weeks as we will need supporters to come out in force for the BFC and Syngenta deliveries and anyone who can, to come to the Embassy.
- We will continue to develop our media relations locally and hope to get some national coverage from the Embassy event.
- We are looking for volunteers to help with the leafleting campaign so look out for a separate email on this and the Petition.
- We continue to work on preparation for the next draft of the Plan. No new update on progress has been received from the Council since its announcement of the initial delay until after the end of August.
- Very soon we will launch the fundraising campaign to raise the money to pay for legal representation and planning consultancy advice for the BFC Draft Plan Public Inquiry later this year or early 2021.

Syngenta News

A merger has been announced between two major Chinese State Owned Enterprises (SOEs), ChemChina which owns Syngenta, and SinoChem Group. This is a long anticipated step on the road towards a flotation of Syngenta on the Shanghai stock exchange. To put this in perspective, ChemChina is an entity which is ranked 144 on the Fortune 500 global companies list with worldwide sales in 2019 of \$67bn and a net asset value of \$116bn. It employs 160,000 people worldwide over half of whom are outside China. SinoChem Group ranks 88th of the Fortune 500 global companies list with Sales revenues in excess of \$85bn, profits of \$700m and net assets of \$71bn. SinoChem also ranks 23rd on the list of Top 500 Chinese Enterprises. These are not small or financially weak companies.

Considering that Syngenta AG itself, in 2019 (according to their full year results announcement in February 2020), generated earnings before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortisation (EBITDA) of \$2.9bn, free cash flow of \$1.39bn and Net Income of \$1.45bn on sales of \$23.2bn there is absolutely no need nor justification for any of these companies to be seeking an enabling development to fund the improvement of their facilities at Jealott's Hill. It will be hard to see them creating any "exceptional circumstances" on a scale to justify the lifting of the Green Belt on grounds of their own inability to pay.

See also:

[Press release: Syngenta 2019 Full Year Results](#)

[Press release: Launch of Syngenta Group – Creating a Global AgTech Market Leader](#)

Next Steps in the Planning Process

The Council re-issued the summary of responses to the December consultation in June. Many thanks to all of you who challenged the version published in March. It is clear from the new version that a number of comments on the late 2019 Consultation had been missed because an incorrect email address had been publicised in some materials associate with the process. It is also clear that in a significant number of cases, resident comments were published in an incomplete and truncated form. This has now hopefully been corrected but it shows what can happen.

The next version of the Draft Plan has been delayed. We were informed by the Council that the new publish date would be after the end of August 2020. That draft will be the one which forms the basis for the public inquiry. We will have 6 weeks in which to submit further comments which will go to the Inspector and will be included in the Inquiry considerations. The quality of objection will be important and we will only have 6 weeks in which to submit them. We will look to see how quickly we can arrange some drafting sessions to provide support for those who might feel they need it. More on this in due course.

The link below will take you to the Council page which shows the next steps, but as a summary here is what happens in the rest of the process:

1. Produce the "Submission Draft" of the Local Plan.
2. Publication stage consultation.
3. Consideration of representations.
4. Submission of the Plan and representations to the Planning Inspectorate.
5. Public Examination.
6. Publication of the Inspector's report.
7. Possible legal challenges to the Inspector's report which could take an indeterminate amount of time.
8. Final Plan adopted.

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

Future Events

Now that restrictions have been lifted a bit and, we hope, continue to be relaxed, we will be “out and about” more, but hopefully you have already seen that we have raised the level of Social Media activity.

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

We are planning a targeted leaflet drop once restrictions are lifted to re-energise the campaign and better inform people about the issue. We are looking for area level coordinators in Whitegrove, Warfield and Binfield to set up teams in their local areas to carry out leaflet drops to resident’s houses. 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. This is important as it still seems like many people know very little about this issue. When this is all over, we don’t want to hear that people did not know and would have come forward had they known. Remember John Stuart Mill’s words.

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 via the email.

Please, write to your Councillors and MP about the financial strength of Syngenta and its Chinese owners. You can safely use the numbers quoted in the SYNGENTA section earlier. All the figures are facts and are public records in the public domain. You can find your Councillors details at

<https://democratic.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1>

Also please write to your MP.

We have 2 MPs covering the area:

Adam Afriyie MP Conservative member for the Windsor Constituency. His email is adam.afriyie.mp@parliament.uk

James Sunderland MP Conservative member for the Bracknell Constituency. His email is james.sunderland.mp@parliament.uk

To find out which one represents you go to <https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP>

In all cases of writing to public representatives either Parliamentary or Local, please make sure you mention you are a constituent and include your address and post code. If you do not include these your comments will not be noted. You should also ask for a reply telling you how they plan to represent you in this matter.

Thank you for your ongoing support for the vital campaign to Save Jealott’s Hill.