

Skates Lane – The Battleground of the Legacies.

TPRP's understanding of the history. Skates Farm used to be owned and run by Kathryn Mary Conran the Aunty to Nicholas Dennis Crawford Conran. It was a challenging farm holding to run. It had been equally challenging for the previous farmers. Nicholas Conran had to sell the land in 1975 and sold the farm separately 2 years later.

Aunty, or Miss Conran, continued to run the farm until she died 21/04/1958 and title was vested to Nicholas Conran on 28/07/1959. Miss Conran, as she was called by the many people who knew her, was a passionate supporter of farming and the countryside way of life and there are people living in Tadley today who knew and remember her for that. Nicholas took on the farm ownership from his Aunty but had to sell off some of the farmland in 1975. However, as any good nephew would, he recognised his Aunties wishes and sold the farmland with a Covenant protecting the countryside environment. 40 acres of the land was sold (of the 60 acres proposed for housing development by Bewley Homes) on the basis that the purchaser, and all subsequent purchasers or deriving title, were not able to build on the land. - that is **Legacy A**.

About 50 years later, along come a Developer, Bewley Homes. Matt Roberts, Senior Land Manager, said "our reputation is vitally important and as our headquarters are based in Tadley, this would be a flagship development and a lasting legacy for the company and local people". **Legacy B**. It is a private limited company with shareholding held by a Limited Company in the British Virgin Islands and ultimate control lying with a trust based in Jersey. (source Annual Accounts 2022) They have made a public proposal for building 260 dwellings on that land. Over time it is estimated they may make £15-£20 million profit out of the Development. (Source: extrapolated from data in Builder Magazine). They have been made aware of the Covenant, through B&DBC, but may decide it is worth investing perhaps 100's of £1,000's in legal costs (estimate source Barristers) to take a case to the Land Registry of the Upper Tribunal to try and get the Covenant removed.

This land sits right in the middle of the wildlife corridor between Ashford Hill Nature Reserve and Pamber Forest and Silchester Nature Reserves. Literally, abutting this land are two SSSI's, three SINC's and two Conservation Areas. No wonder Nicholas wanted to protect it. It is a haven for and corridor for a wide variety of Ecological systems – many of the species are notable and heavily protected. Housing development would kill most of it and leave a barren new housing settlement in the middle of the Countryside.

The proposal has been removed from the draft Local Plan, but please be ready to object again if a Planning Application is made in the future. We will continue campaigning to protect our countryside and enhance the Ecology it supports.

TPRP (Tadley and Pamber Rural Protection) Group is a group of campaigners dedicated to the protection of our countryside, flora and fauna against inappropriate development, or land use and to increase the Biodiversity in the area. We are seeking new members to expand and undertake biodiversity surveys, heritage surveys, the use of acoustic and visual sampling techniques, data analysis, fund raising and to liaise with other like-minded groups in and around Tadley and Pamber. Please contact us via the website if that interests you.