

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Statement of Objection against the Applicant Boningle Homes' planning application 24/02108/OUT has been produced with input from Albrighton Village Action Group (AVAG) committee members and volunteers who are all residents of Albrighton and Boningle.

Further information on why the Group was formed and how it has represented the community are explained in the Introduction and subsequent sections. Resident surveys have been undertaken and their findings and conclusions are detailed.

This document sets out the details of AVAG's objections to the Applicants' proposals; which can be summarised as below:

Outside of the Emerging Shropshire Local Plan

The Shropshire Local Plan is a strategic and democratic plan that has been developed by planning experts. It has been thoroughly reviewed on a regular basis and it is evident that current allocations and areas safeguarded for future development meet the housing needs for both Shropshire and the Black Country.

Albrighton is already absorbing over 770 new houses in the Local Plan in the coming years, which we believe is more than our fair share and, importantly, will meet Labour's housing targets.

Planning experts have also continually deemed the Albrighton South site as being unsuitable for more housing, with additional, more sustainable sites chosen in the county.

Protecting Green belt, Countryside, and Open Green Spaces

The proposed site falls within protected high quality green belt land, which serves as a vital buffer against urban sprawl. Development here would result in the irreversible loss of valuable countryside and green spaces crucial for local biodiversity and recreation. There are NO Very Special Circumstances that justify removing the proposed development from the Green Belt.

Destruction of High-Quality Farmland

The site currently supports high quality farmland used for wheat cultivation. This land has won awards for sustainable farming and is recognised as the one of the first farms in the UK to trade carbon. Preserving this farmland is strategically important for local and national food security. Replacing arable land with housing undermines our ability to grow essential crops.

Loss of Wildlife and Protected Species

Development will lead to the loss of habitats for local wildlife and protected species, further degrading the environmental health of the area. This includes bats, badgers, owls, great crested newts, other small mammals, bird species including skylarks and yellow hammers. We also have grave concern over the Biodiversity Net Gains and potential release of nitrates into the River Worfe.

Excessive Scale and Strain on Amenities

The proposed development of 800 houses is disproportionately large for our village, which cannot support such rapid expansion. Existing amenities, including schools, healthcare, and recreational facilities, are already under pressure and cannot accommodate the additional demand.

Poor Location and Division

The proposed site is poorly situated, being considerably distant from the existing village high street and central amenities. This physical separation would effectively split Albrighton, undermining community cohesion and making it difficult for new residents to integrate. The size and location of the development would turn the village into a divided and split centre town.

Traffic Congestion and Infrastructure Strain

An influx of over 1400 cars will exacerbate traffic congestion on our narrow village lanes and roads. This development would also pose a challenge for large farm vehicles accessing surrounding farmland.



ALBRIGHTON VILLAGE ACTION GROUP

OBJECTION TO 24/02108/OUT

Boningale Homes Albrighton South Planning Application



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Increased traffic and insufficient parking would severely impact road and pedestrian safety and quality of life. The proposed closure of three roads would limit the diversity and capacity of roads for residents, and put unsustainable pressure on existing roads in Albrighton and the wider surrounding areas.

Loss of Rural Character

The development threatens to destroy the rural charm and open green spaces that define our village, known across the UK and the world as the 'Home of the English Rose'. The character of our community is at risk of being replaced by urban sprawl.

Visual Impact on Entrance to the Village

The rural approach to Albrighton is characterised by traditional country homes and cottages surrounded by open fields. This will be marred by a large housing estate, detracting from the village's natural charm and appeal.

Flooding & Drainage Concerns

The proposed site and surrounding areas are prone to flooding, with local roads often closed in winter. Increasing built-up areas will exacerbate these issues, leading to more frequent and severe flooding. The site cannot support soakaways and would require pumped drainage outfalls into the head of existing drainage systems with insufficient capacity. This puts unsustainable pressures on the current village.

Unviable Promised Amenities

Proposed amenities such as the secondary school, doctors' surgery, local centre, care home and park and ride appear to be incentives for public support that have insufficient local need, are unviable and unlikely to be delivered. Residents are sceptical and view these promises as hollow. Experts in education and healthcare are equally bemused at how Boningale Homes are going to overcome well-documented nationwide recruitment shortages to resource these amenities.

Profit-Driven Development

Housing Applicants' target green belt areas for profit, neglecting the long-term harm to the local community. The overwhelming detriments of the proposed development far outweigh any economic gains that, at best, are speculative and not reinforced by its earlier development at Millfields.

The Shropshire Local Plan has identified more suitable and sustainable sites for development. There are also many local brownfield sites that lie decaying that should be a priority for development.

Community, Cohesion and Goodwill

It is clear that an overwhelming majority of local residents object to this speculative and unneeded development; with 3724 signing a petition opposing the Applicants' proposal, an estimated 80% of the Albrighton electoral roll. In addition, the community has submitted a significant proportion of the responses supporting the recent Shropshire Council Local Plan consultation and there have been over 900 objections to the Applicant's planning application.

As a community group we have spoken to thousands of residents, and whilst they support the sustainable development proposed by the 771 new houses already earmarked in the Local Plan, they are very concerned by the prospect of the devastating impact on amenities and infrastructure that a further 800 properties would impose.

The proposed development poses significant risks to our village's environment, infrastructure, community integrity and way of life.

We urge the planning authorities to REJECT this proposal in line with housing allocations in the Shropshire Local Plan; which offers more sustainable and community-supported alternatives.



INTRODUCTION

DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

This Statement of Objection against the Applicant Boningle Homes' planning application 24/02108/OUT brings together evidence and arguments gathered by Albrighton Village Action Group (AVAG) up until the date of this document's submission to Shropshire Council on 25th August 2024.

The structure of this document can be seen in the Contents page; and collates Ground For Objection in 9 key topic areas. Detailed responses to some of the Applicants' submissions are also included in the relevant topic area. AVAG considers that many of the Applicants' planning application statements contain a significant amount of misrepresentation and therefore need to be corrected.

A key element of AVAG's work has been to conduct surveys of Albrighton and Boningle residents; including those of the Applicants' current Millfields new build estate. The findings and conclusions are explained in the last topic area and Appendix 1A & 1B; and these provide additional evidence to support many of the Grounds For Objection.

Photographs, screenshots and figures are provided in the report to better illustrate the objections. Some elements of the report refer to more extensive pieces of work which are included as Appendices.

Note that if additional planning application material is published by the Applicant, then these will be responded to as addendums to this Objection Statement.

FORMATION OF ALBRIGHTON VILLAGE ACTION GROUP

The Applicant, Boningle Homes announced their proposals to build 800 houses, a secondary school, an 80-bed care home, a local centre, drive through and a park and ride facility on green belt land in Albrighton South on 29th February 2024.

AVAG was quickly formed in March 2024 following an overwhelming and highly emotional negative response from villagers, who felt that a co-ordinated and unified approach was the best way to object to this huge unplanned development – a development that would enact irreversible damage to lives of existing and future generations of residents. AVAG has since campaigned tirelessly to stop the Applicants' overdevelopment Green Belt grab proposals.

ACTION GROUP STRUCTURE AND PRINCIPLES

AVAG has sought to collaborate and soak up knowledge and expertise from other local community organisations and national bodies seeking to protect the countryside and rural way of life.

We have sought to act in the most professional way possible and, as a result, a committee, a group Charter, policies and several sub-committees have been established to work on activities ranging from planning and fundraising to community outreach, media and press engagement.

For transparency the current AVAG committee members names and roles are shown below:

- **Co-Chairs:** Matt Lakin & Charlie Blakemore
- **Treasurer:** Sharon Barker
- **Liaison:** Dipika Price
- **Press & Media:** Robert Hodges
- **Public Relations:** Russ Cockburn
- **Spokesperson:** Claire Lakin
- **Print:** Gary Pritchard
- Alison Ford

Villagers launch a campaign group to fight housing plan

Villagers have formed an official campaign group as they ramp up their opposition to plans to build 800 houses on local green belt.

Boningle Homes wants to build a housing estate at Albrighton, near Shifnal. The plans between Newhouse Lane/Holyhead Road and Cross Road will include around 800 homes, a new secondary school and a care home.

The proposal will see nearly the entire housing estate built on what is currently green belt and has angered residents.

Albrighton Village Action Group (AVAG) has been launched this week and they are planning to protest outside Albrighton's Red House on Thursday as Boningle Homes plans another consultation meeting with local residents.

Boningle Homes has said the development was "necessary".

Shropshire Star
25th March 2024





- Duncan Reeves
- Kev Thompson
- Maggie Brewin
- Natasha Smith Agüero
- Nick Price
- Nicky Richardson
- Stephen Czira
- Steve Thomas



The AVAG committee has been supported throughout by local Albrighton businesses and 30 volunteers; whose commitment demonstrates the passion in the community against these proposals.

REPRESENTING THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY

AVAG's campaign has involved extensive activities and is explained in further detail within Grounds For Objection 9: Community, Cohesion and Goodwill. In summary, this has included the following:

- Petition** (hard and electronic formats) with 3724 signatures obtained opposing the proposal
- AVAG Website** to share information <https://albrightongreenbelt.co.uk>
- AVAG Facebook Group** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/990889905998818/> with 852 members
- Just Giving** page to fundraise for campaign materials, professional legal fees <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/albrightonvag>
- Posters, placards and large banners** in public spaces to raise awareness throughout Albrighton and Boningale community
- 3 Campaign flyers** distributed (15,000 in total) to explain key information to all households in Albrighton and Boningale relating to the AVAG campaign, Local Plan consultation, and how to respond to the Applicants proposals, aided by many volunteers from our community
- Liaising with local businesses and shops** to display key information leaflets, hold hard copy petition blank forms and display event information
- Two Resident Surveys** conducted to better understand the needs of the community
- Albrighton Village Fayre stall** on 13th July 2024 to raise awareness across the whole community with fun activities for residents of all ages
- Fundraising activities** including Garden & Woodland Open Day on 23rd June 2024, Walking for Health Open Garden event on 17th July, Quiz Night at the Crown on 27th July, Albrighton Players amateur dramatics performance planned for 12th September, and Sportspersons Evening planned for 4th October.
- AVAG Grand Prize Raffle** with 46 prizes donated from the public and local businesses
- 23 Community Drop-In Sessions** arranged to assist the community to understand the key issues and provide guidance to residents wishing to support the Shropshire Local Plan and then to object to the Applicants' planning application. Rooms were hired at the Albrighton Red House, Melville Club and Scout Den. Given the demographics of our community this was a crucial activity and well received by those who attended
- AVAG Action Room** set up at The Crown public house - used to display planning application documents, Local Plan information, guidance on how to object to the proposals and provide a laptop for residents without IT devices, accessible 7 days / week
- AVAG Information Table** set up at Keith Gibsons Cars garage - a longstanding business central to the village to help residents understand the planning application and submit objections
- YouTube Videos** created including this video using drone footage showing the farmland which would be destroyed by the proposals: <https://youtu.be/z0w5coSjdwY?si=Hc5zmBUmbGRanb4>