



## Public meeting sends final 'message of opposition' to plans for 800 homes in Albrighton

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 By Shropshire Live

Over 200 people crammed into the Red House in Albrighton on Friday night to show the strength of opposition against Boningale Developments' plans to build on 48 hectares of green belt.



Over 200 people attended the public meeting

The Albrighton Development Action Group (ADAG), which has been fighting proposals to build 800 homes for nearly two and a half years, used the meeting as a final rallying call ahead of the Public Inquiry due to start on September 15th.

Residents were brought up to speed with how the group are going to act as a Rule 6 participant alongside Shropshire Council and the expertise its legal, planning and transport experts will bring to an already overwhelming argument for refusing the appeal.



Mark Pritchard, MP for The Wrekin, again added his support, reaffirming his long-standing opposition for the development on the outskirts of Albrighton and the importance of protecting more than 119 acres of high-quality farmland and green belt.

"The energy and passion in the public meeting sent a clear message to Boningale Developments that we will fight this speculative green belt grab every step of the way," commented Charlie Blakemore, Co-Chair of ADAG.

"To have over 200 residents turn out on a Friday night, 30 months after we started this campaign, demonstrates the strength of feeling against a proposal that is arguably one of the most significant 'green belt versus grey belt' cases to come before a Planning Inspector.

"Albrighton has already experienced significant development in recent years, with more planned. This proposal would carve additional swathes of beautiful rural green belt and valuable farmland from the area, creating a development of such scale that it would overwhelm local infrastructure, public services and amenities."

He continued: "Residents understand the realities of living here and can clearly see the impact an additional 800 houses would have. Our experts believe these plans would effectively create an entirely new settlement.

"As a community, we have raised £82,000 for the campaign to successfully challenge the plans alongside Shropshire Council and we now head into the final battle at the Public Inquiry. We will continue fundraising and received more than £2,500 in donations on the night and a further £2,600 from a Garden Party held over the weekend.

"The incredible support shown by residents reflects the determination of the community to protect Albrighton from this speculative and unsustainable development."

Local people were also urged to take a 'walk' on the right side of history next weekend when hundreds of people to take part in the 'Great Green Belt Walk' on Saturday, 12 September.

Starting at 1.30 pm, the leisurely 2.8mile family walk will take in much of the beautiful 119 acres of countryside and farmland under threat from the scheme.

It is suitable for people of all levels of fitness and will end at The Crown Public House in Albrighton, where there will be live entertainment.



Sharon Barker, member of ADAG, picked up the story: "The 'Great Green Belt Walk' is designed to bring the community and other nearby areas together to raise awareness of our fight and that we will not stand by and let a greedy developer take our open spaces.

"70 football pitches of beautiful rural countryside and award-winning farmland is under threat. Anyone who has walked around or seen the land asks one simple question...how can this be grey belt?"

Albrighton has 770 new homes being built or planned to be built underlining the important role it is already playing in supporting Shropshire's need for housing.

Local councillor Nigel Lumby joined Mark Pritchard in rallying residents, reminding them that Boningale Developments' 'Albrighton South' is unplanned speculative development and that the new Shropshire Local Plan is being developed to find the right sites for housing.

He also explained that he is leading the update of Albrighton's next Neighbourhood Plan alongside local people and ADAG members.

Charlie concluded: "3,734 residents signed a petition against it, over 1100 residents lodged an official objection, we've had more than 1200 attend public meetings and we're on course to raise £90,000 in support of our fight.

"This underlines the strength of feeling and hammers home the message...Albrighton is green, not grey!"