



KEEP THE MILLPOND GREEN

This is not a public meeting. It is a public relations exercise by Green Tops Ltd.

The residents and community objecting to this proposed development have chosen to attend this meeting because we are concerned by Green Tops plans for the Millpond site in Hebden Bridge.

By attending tonight we are not giving our approval to this meeting or Green Tops proposals.

The residents will listen to their publicity but it should be noted by all that **this is not the independent, consultative meeting that we have been trying to arrange for over 12 months.** Tonight is designed to look as though the developers are listening to the community - but clearly they are not.

Many councilors and other interested parties cannot attend because Green Tops have chosen to organise this meeting without any consultation.

Green Tops have invested time and money in this project. **Their plans have already been submitted to Calderdale Council.** Are they really going to change their plans at this stage?

Green Tops could have consulted us many months ago when they were in the process of formulating their plans but they chose not to do so and, as stated above, **have already submitted their plans for the site without any consultation with the community.**

The Community's Position:

- We fully support environmentally friendly housing, but not at the expense of valuable green spaces not designated for housing, such as the Millpond site.
- The history, location and topography of the site means it is structurally unsuitable for development.
- We want to see the Millpond returned to the green space it was prior to Green Tops destructive actions on 6th and 19th October.
- We welcome full consultation on remedial work that is required on the retaining walls on the site.

Our questions for Green Tops tonight include:

1. What exactly is open for consultation with Green Tops given that their plans have already been deposited with the Council?
2. It has been stated by Francesca Turner of the Hebden Bridge Times that **Green Tops is a consortium of 5 members:** Richard Broome, Phil Bradby, Mark Clyndes, Kevin Kennedy and David Fletcher. Can you confirm this information?
3. Can Richard Broome explain his relationship to Phil Bradby and Mark Clyndes with respect to Green Tops? Are they his employees and therefore accountable to him and he, in turn, responsible for them?

If not, with what authority and accountability do they act when on

site or in deed in correspondence with residents, the council, police and press?

4. Can the representative of Green Tops please clarify their relationship with Green Tops? Are they a direct employee and therefore accountable to and for the company?

If not what then is their status for the purposes of this meeting in terms of accountability and the reliability of any statements made on behalf of the company?

5. Green Tops has described its project as 'eco-housing'. How does this notion of 'ecologically sustainable building' sit with the destruction of a wet woodland site used as a habitat for birds, small animals and bats, clear felling of the land, massive proposed construction upheaval as well as the very unsustainable actions of complete contempt for and alienation of a local community?

All this in addition to the structurally precarious elements of building anything on this site. Surely the huge ecological deficit already incurred will leave any 'ecological design features' in massive negative equity for the entire lifetime of these houses?

Access To The Land

6. **Can Green Tops clarify their position with regard to access to this land,** given that there is no vehicular access to it, the only right of way being a footpath, and the land being bound on all sides by privately owned property?

This especially in light of Green Tops repeated failure to provide written requests to any owner of the private land adjoining theirs when they have sought access to it for tree works, and in light of the obvious trespass of their privately contracted and unregistered security personnel along Windsor View on the 19th October?

Can they give an assurance that any future works conducted by Green Tops will be preceded by the necessary paperwork of both request and permission, given in writing?

Previous Planning Applications

6. Are Green Tops aware that, during the planning process for Spring Grove in 1988, there was a condition placed on the site in by Calderdale Council declaring that the Millpond "shall be retained as landscape, amenity, garden area and shall not be developed"?

7. Are they also aware that in a further planning application for the site the same year, planning consent was refused and the refusal upheld on appeal due to "overdevelopment of the site bearing in mind the existing trees on the site which contribute significantly to the visual amenity of the area" and "an unacceptable intensification of an existing access which is unmade, unadopted, narrow and lacking in footways"?

8. Green Tops should also be aware that the same planning application made specific reference to the trees on the site, none of which "shall be lopped, topped, uprooted, felled, wilfully damaged or destroyed without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority." Why then have Green Tops made it a priority to decimate the trees on the site?

9. The same planning application provided that "no development shall take place affecting the public footpath No.4 within the site until legal procedures for its closure/diversion have been completed." Why have you tried to prohibit movement on the site along this public footpath?

Structural Issues

10. Given that this site at its apex with Windsor View is already structurally unstable, having been reinforced by a concrete beam between the walls at this point, and the houses at this end having already been underpinned due to subsidence as a direct result of the instability of the structure at this end, how do you intend to deal with the issue of absent load bearing capacity at this point and the desire to create an access point for machinery and later vehicles, without seriously endangering the structural stability of houses on Windsor View, Windsor Rd and Spring Grove?

On this point also, perhaps you can tell us why an attempt was made to breach the wall with sledge hammer and angle grinder without any structural props or notification to home owners at this point so that they could commission independent structural engineering reviews concerning the likely impact of any intended work?

11. This site is composed of a considerable depth of river silt and bounded by two elderly retaining walls how do you intend to develop this site in a safe manner?

12. What tests do you intend to conduct to ensure that the site is capable of bearing the weight of machinery [see report by John Newton] prior to any works being carried out on the site?

13. If Green Tops intend to build with the aid of pile driving equipment, please can you answer the following:

- How do you intend to get the pile driving equipment on site given the legal and structural access issues?
- How do you intend to deal with the noise levels created by the use of this equipment given its very close proximity to neighbouring houses?
- How do you intend to address the serious problems created by the vibrational forces and ground heave given that you are operating within two elderly but crucial retaining walls?
- How do you propose to guard against the very real and potentially catastrophic danger of liquification given that you intend pile driving into waterlogged river silt?

14. If Green Tops intend to clear the site and build conventionally, given that the site is composed of large quantities of river silt (some estimated 3,000 to 5,000 tons – based on previous engineering reports) which will have to be removed, how do you intend to access the site with the 300 to 500 lorries necessary given the structural and legal access issues?

How do you intend to deal with the consequent massive increase in heavy construction traffic to and from the site through Hebden Bridge and the Calder Valley?

Attitude to the Community

15. The issues regarding the condition of the walls and the necessary remedial work were known prior to purchase. The lack of access and unsuitability of the site for development were also known [see reports commissioned by estate agents Eddisons from planning consultants John Rose and detailed conversations between potential purchasers and Grant Thornton receivers].

Why have Green Tops sought to instil fear into residents regarding the state of the wall and then hold them to ransom with statements indicating that repairs will only be conducted if Green Tops are allowed to proceed with their development plans?

16. One of Green Tops strategies has been to not only denigrate the physical environment but to also attempt to denigrate and discredit a local community of ordinary people - nurses, doctors, teachers, social workers, home workers, artist and writers, college and university educators - what undertaking can they give that their word is to be trusted?

- Will they stop using their threat of force and physical violence to intimidate and control the residents?
- Will they cease their campaign of lies and misinformation to attempt to damage residents and their reputations?
- Will they enter into a proper and meaningful dialogue with residents as has been repeatedly requested and constantly treated with contempt?

For more information on the Keep the Millpond Green Campaign, phone Michael on 843 378, email greenmillpond@yahoo.com, or log on to www.hebdenbridge.co.uk.