

# TWIGWORTH NEWS

*Planning | Bus Shelter | Councillor Reports | Parish Assembly*

**WE WISH EVERYONE A HAPPY EASTER!**

## Land at Chestnut Tree Farm Planning Appeal Decision

Following the Planning Inspectorate Inquiry held in December 2023, the planning appeal has been allowed and outline planning has been granted for the erection of up to 85 dwellings with open space, landscaping and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).



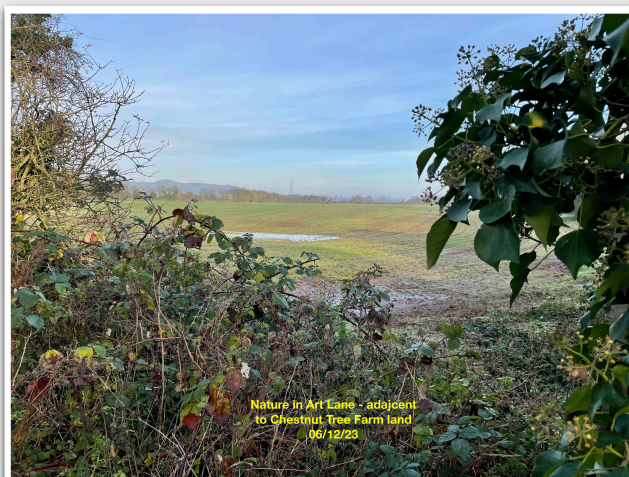
All matters reserved except for means of vehicular and pedestrian access from Sandhurst Lane and pedestrian access on to the A38, at Land at Chestnut Tree Farm, Twigworth.

There are many pre-occupation conditions that have been stipulated by the Planning Inspector, not least, that no houses there may be connected to the public sewer until the existing sewerage system has been upgraded.

The granting of this planning application on appeal has now unfortunately set a precedent, in

so much as an application for a new housing development has been allowed outside the "Settlement Boundary", which in effect is to the west of the A38 road corridor.

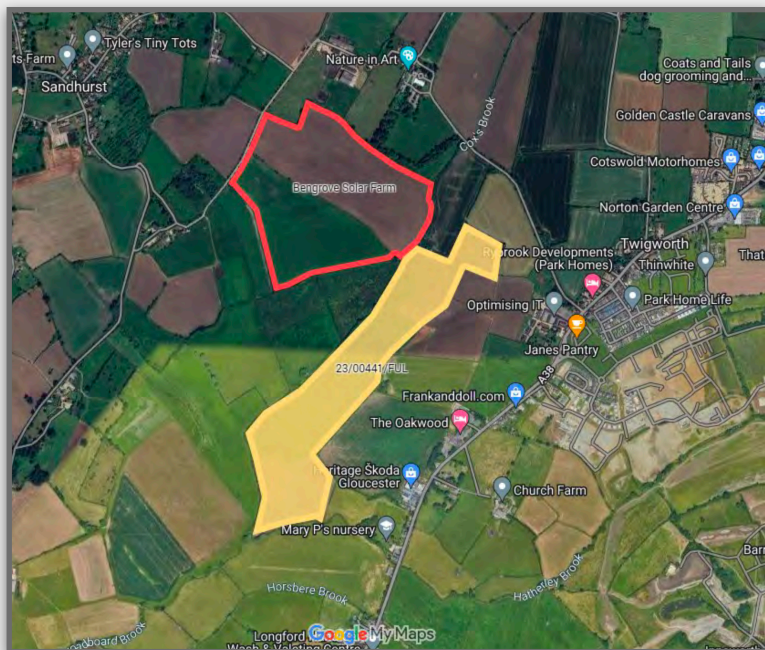
There is another planning application currently out on appeal, which is for the proposed Solar Farm on Land to West of Court Farm, which again, outside the "Settlement Boundary", if this goes the same way, there will unfortunately be very little green spaces left within the Twigworth Parish, which is a significantly growing community.



## Solar Farm - Planning Applications

The following Planning Applications below, were submitted to Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) in 2023 and are both currently being considered, Twigworth Parish Council had objected to these applications and this can be viewed on the TBC Planning Portal.

### Planning Application 23/00441/FUL - Cox's Brook Solar Farm Twigworth



The application is for installation of ground mounted solar farm to export up to 16MW (AC) electricity, comprising of 38,000 photovoltaic panels and associated infrastructure and works, that would be used to generate electricity for export to the regional electricity grid.

The proposed size of the Solar Farm development is 23.5 hectares (see map area shaded in yellow) but the overall proposed land ownership is considerable larger at 26 hectares (approx 64 acres or 48 Football pitches) and is totally inappropriate for a site so close to residential properties in the rural village of Twigworth.

### Planning Application 24/00050/FUL - Bengrove Solar Farm

The application site is located on land between the settlements of Sandhurst and Twigworth in Gloucestershire's Severn Vale (see map area within red lines)

The site consists of two arable fields bounded by established hedgerows and woodlands with a total area of approximately 25.1 hectares, along with around 1.3 hectares of existing farm access tracks.

The proposed solar farm will have a generating capacity of approximately 15MW using solar panels fixed to the ground using metal piles and supporting infrastructure.

The visual impact of such large Solar Farms would fundamentally change the tranquil character of the open green fields with far reaching views would turn into a semi-industrial, utility-grade power complex, with fields of 4-6m high dark solar panels, shipping containers containing electrical equipment, CCTV and security fencing.

Both proposed sites claim that they are temporary for a period of 40 years, which is a considerable period of time. The construction of a Solar Farm, the size of the proposed development at Bengrove Farm and Cox's Brook will cost millions of pounds and it is very unlikely that the site will ever be returned to its current agricultural use, therefore there is no weight to any claims that the development is temporary and can be reversed.



## Cllr Graham Bocking on the Strategic & Local Plan



The combined Tewkesbury Borough, Cheltenham Borough and Gloucester City Councils Strategic and Local Plan Review has identified potential future development sites for our area (see map), despite the fact that the Parish Council and Councillors have raised concerns/objections.

The points we have raised are:

Infrastructure shortages are currently chronic in the urban extension areas (including Twigworth) from JCS1 (the previous plan) along with flood protection issues - these need to be addressed prior to allocating further urban extension sites

Also the plan proposes target numbers for new dwellings, we question the calculation methodology as there are no official government targets as they were abolished in 2022 and use of the standard method will just generate numbers for Cheltenham and Gloucester that would require considerable work to find within their areas most of which would be below strategic level sites and not deliverable within the timescales, this in turn would almost inevitably lead to the easy option being taken and a large part of the calculated need for Cheltenham and Gloucester being dumped in Tewkesbury.

This in turn exasperates the chronic infrastructure shortages created by JCS1 where even if funding were found immediately would take years to deliver

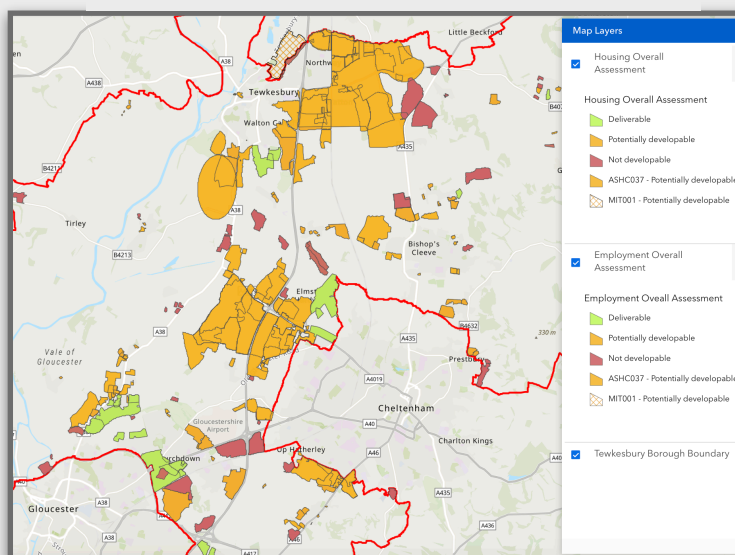
Key essential infrastructure requirements needed include: Schools, doctors, dentists, roads, flood protection, community centres, shops, buses, cycle and other transport options and green spaces

In summary

The urban extension options have proved to be very problematic in JCS1 due to flooding and lack of basic services and infrastructure this will take years to deliver up to the standards required now let alone future needs even before more sites are added. The outstanding services and infrastructure from the original plan need to be delivered for communities prior to considering future urban extension options being considered as the new suburban areas are severely short of basic services provision and infrastructure

*Editorial Footnote:* With regards the recent Planning Appeal, the Planning Inspectorate approved the Chestnut Tree Farm housing development despite local objections, this has set a precedent, in so much that it disregarded the DHN&T Neighbourhood Development Plan H2 Policy for Twigworth and other Parishes, this decision implies that future planning applications will be approved regardless.

Housing and Economic Land Availability



## What have your Councillors been up to?

### Cllr Rick Harris - Chairman



The Mid Counties Co-op have a policy of helping the communities where they operate and Cllr Harris has been in discussions with the local management team at our Co-Op to explore areas where they might be able to help.



Cllr Harris has now been informed by the Store Manager (Sharon) that the Co-op will shortly be starting a brand

new in-store service, that of a Royal Mail package drop off/pick-up facility which could be progress into a full mail facility after some in-store reorganisation at the Co-op are completed.

The Co-op staff have completed their Royal Mail checks, which will allow the completion of the process in a timely manner.

Cllr Harris has also confirmed that discussions have been held with the Co-op for a Parish Council Noticeboard for the community and is currently with the Co-op senior management to consider the funding of this.

### Cllr Elaine Watson



Cllr Watson has been busy assisting residents who were affected by the recent flooding events in January and February.

With other Councillors, Cllr Watson has also been reviewing Council Policies for adoption.

### Cllr Mike Davies



Nothing to report

### Cllr John Redfern



Many of you will know, that on behalf of Twigworth Green residents, I have been embroiled in communications with the Royal Mail for a new (Red) Post Box at Twigworth Green for nearly a year now.

Now, after two applications, countless communications, weeks of waiting for replies, two appeals to the Postal Review Panel, writing to our MP, who has also contacted the Royal Mail on our behalf and finally a Residents Petition, the Royal Mail have still refused to accept that there is a need for a new a Post Box at Twigworth Green!

It would seem that our last opportunity rests with our MPs involvement with RM and we are waiting for their response.

If the residents of Twigworth Green still wish to pursue a Royal Mail Post Box, the only advice that can be offered, is for



residents to submit their own applications en masse (it has to be made by residents), the Royal Mail may then recognise that there is a genuine need!

The residents of Twigworth Green may soon have another alternative at our local Co-op for postal service requirements, which is great news, see opposite.

That all said, we are also fortunate to have the best Postie (Rob) in Gloucestershire looking after us with our mail and our pooches with biscuits!

Rob has always offered to accept residents outgoing post if approached... thanks Rob!

Cllr Redfern has also been involved with some residents and with the local authorities in dealing with local Anti-Social Behaviour issues.



## Bus Shelter for Twigworth Green!



Ironbridge Road Bus Stop

The Parish Council have welcomed the much improved Stagecoach No. 71 Bus Service, 7-days a week for local residents, with earlier and later buses but isn't it about time that provision was made for the poor passengers who have to wait in all weathers without shelter?

The Ironbridge Road Bus Shelter has funding allocated under the S106 Agreements for the development, which were drawn up between the Developers and Tewkesbury Borough Council; but we also understand that Gloucestershire County Council are required to adopt the road before this is purchased and installed.

That said, it would appear that other Bus Stops have been installed on unadopted roads by developers, like the new Innsworth Spine Road, which strangely has no passengers or bus service!



Innsworth New Spine Road

## Ash Die-Back Scheme

Last Autumn, following an invitation from the GCC, the Parish were offered an opportunity to support the Ash-Die Project by planting saplings. We contacted the main housing developers and communicated to residents, to enquire if they would be interested in supporting this project. It is fair to say, that we had a varied response but not a great deal of interest overall.

In the end, the only trees that were planted in support of this scheme, were on the Orchard Park site.

The project is now closed.

## Dog Waste & Fly-Tipping



It has been observed that dog waste bags are being thrown into the hedgerows down Brook Lane and judging by the colour of the bags, it would suggest that this is being carried out by one person.

There has also been evidence of fly-tipping too, both of these offences have been reported.

What makes people think that they can treat our community like a garbage tip?

It is not acceptable and steps will be taken to catch those responsible.

## Quiz - Fancy a date?

*What are the dates - answers on back page*

1. Battle of Waterloo?
2. World Wide Web (Internet)?
3. Apollo 11 Moon Landing?
4. Death of Princess Diana?
5. The Great Fire of London?
6. King John sealed Magna Carta?

## The Local Centre

With the Twigworth community growing significantly, there doesn't seem to be any interest in any retailers occupying the vacant units at the Local Centre... why?



Perhaps the rental being asked is too high by the owners Robert Hitchens, maybe its time to review this and give the residents of Twigworth access to other retailers, like a Pharmacy, Hair Salon or Fast Food Outlet?

## Nature in Art Lane

Those of us who have taken a walk down the Nature in Art Lane in wet weather, will know that at the entrance you have to negotiate the large pools of water and all the potholes in the road.



Work in early March saw heavy equipment removing dead trees, shrubs and deepening the ditch, to allow the water to run back towards the Cox's brook.



Hopefully this will reduce the pooling of water at the top of the lane which is badly affecting the nearby property.



## Drainage & Sewage Survey

We have been attempting to understand the extent of any drain and sewage problems in Twigworth but we have had a low response to our website on-line survey.

This could be due to a number of reasons but if you or anyone that you know has suffered any problems, we would really like to know.

Please visit our website for more details.

All survey responses are treated with confidentiality and remain anonymous.

- Answers to Quiz**
1. Battle of Waterloo? 1815
  2. World Wide Web (Internet)? 1989
  3. Apollo 11 Moon Landing? 1969
  4. Death of Princess Diana? 1997
  5. The Great Fire of London? 1666
  6. King John sealed Magna Carta? 1215

## Parish Council Assembly & Annual General Meeting

The next meeting will be held on

**Thursday 9th May**

Twigworth Parish Council will be holding both its Parish Council Assembly and Annual General Meeting and at the Down Hatherley Village Hall.



### Parish Assembly Meeting

**From 19:00 - 20:00**

The Annual Parish Assembly is an opportunity for members of the public to learn what activities the Parish Council have carried out during the year.

It is also an opportunity for members of the public to raise any issues with the Parish Council.

### Parish Council Annual General Meeting

**From 20:00 - 21:00**

This is a more formal meeting, where members are still welcomed to attend but not speak.

The business is formal and existing Councillors have the opportunity to elect members to the offices of Council.