



*St James Church  
Old Milverton*

6455

24<sup>th</sup> July 2012

By e-mail to: [newlocalplan@warwickdc.gov.uk](mailto:newlocalplan@warwickdc.gov.uk)

Dear Sirs,

We write as the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St. James the Great Church Old Milverton to express our opinions on the local plans to build on the Greenbelt within our Parish in Old Milverton and in Blackdown. At a recent regular PCC meeting, there was a unanimous objection to the plans in their current form and a decision taken to submit a formal response from the PCC to Warwick District Council.

As a Christian church, we have five 'Marks of Mission' that we try to live by, both within our church and within the wider community. Of these five marks two or three values seem to be particularly relevant to the new local plan.

The first one is 'To safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth'. This includes stewardship of the environment. Clearly building on the Greenbelt does not sit well with this value. Being located in the middle of the Greenbelt, as we are, we are in the best position to view the immense beauty of this local environment. It is a very special place, made more so by the character and beauty of the countryside here. We are also in an ideal position to observe the excellent amenity value that this area provides. This really cannot be underestimated. It is visited by great numbers of walkers and cyclists throughout the year, both visitors to the area and people from all over the towns of Warwick and Leamington. We are very concerned that the plans to build so many houses on the Greenbelt will be very damaging to the natural environment, will ruin the character of the area and its natural amenity value and will lead to the permanent loss of very productive farmland. We are particularly concerned about the devastating environmental impact that would be caused by building a road through the valley. This we feel would really ruin the beauty and tranquility of the area and would be the start of a building process which would inevitably lead to the merging of the towns of Kenilworth and Leamington.

The second value is 'To seek to transform unjust structures of society'. To build in areas against the wishes of local peoples who have very genuine objections appears to us unjust. The land proposed for the build areas is of very high agricultural value and its loss would be permanent. We are therefore very concerned about the effect on the farming community, with which we have close links. A just system should endeavor to provide appropriate housing at affordable prices and in suitable places. We do not think that the local plan will achieve this as developers will be targeting these areas for high value/profit layouts owing to the value of the land. Even if regulation can enforce a degree of affordable housing, we are doubtful that this is a suitable location relative to local amenities, facilities and employment opportunity. Furthermore, we have concerns that insufficient public transport will be included in the proposals.



The third value is 'To respond to human need by loving service'. We very much appreciate that there is a need for affordable and social housing, however, we do not see how the present proposal will serve this need. Overall the impact of building to the plans as they stand would, we feel, be a significant negative influence on quality of life in the area.

In addition to the above, our members and congregation at St. James have voiced many different objections to the plans and concerns, including:

- Unjust circumstances for Greenbelt development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework
- Removal of previously earmarked alternative non-Greenbelt sites from the plan.
- Traffic issues in the town centres and increased congestion.
- Concern that the Local Authority will not represent the opinions expressed in the public consultation in their future submissions and dealings with central government.

Alarming, it would also appear that the quantity of housing proposed in the plans overall is largely based on what the Council feel will be acceptable as a 'growth' level when the plans are submitted to Central government. This is clearly not a sound basis for planning and we feel it imperative that this fundamental issue of properly assessing the numbers that are likely to be required and clearly setting out the thinking behind what is a sustainable increase in population for the area is addressed.

We would be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt of this letter and would ask that our opinions are considered in reassessing and revising the current plans.

Yours sincerely,  
For and on behalf of St. James Old Milverton



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