

## **Appeal Fund**

Firstly we should say that the response of the local community against the appeal being approved has been impressive. Over 160 people have signed a petition against the proposed development. More than 50 households have dug deep into their pockets to contribute to the fighting fund enabling us to engage professional consultants to fight off this blot on the landscape. The contributions to the fighting fund have exceeded all expectations but with the rash of planning applications we have seen over the last 12 months (if you've forgotten these include recycling plant in Kingsclere, Gladmans 165 home in Bishopswood Lane, Gladmans care home in Bishopswood Lane, bungalow in field adjacent to Oak Cottage, glamping site in Browninghill) to have money in the bank to employ professional consultants is no bad thing. Not only have households in Baughurst contributed to the fund but also those in Wolverton, Axmansford, Browninghill to name just a few.

## **Consultants**

Secondly, having achieved our objective with the fighting fund, we have engaged professionals in the form of Aaron Smith of Fowler Architecture & Planning Ltd (Chartered Town Planner) and David Wiseman from Stuart Michael Associates (Highways Consultant) to put together a case for rejection of the appeal.

## **Appeal Hearing Notes**

The appeal hearing was held in the Basingstoke Council Offices last Wednesday, 5th April, in front of the Inspector Mr John Papworth.

The objective of the appeal hearing was for the inspector to satisfy himself that he was in possession of all the facts, to verify their accuracy, and to engage with representatives of those in favour of and those against the appeal. Prior to the hearing the Inspector had reviewed all the documents submitted, using the hearing to ask detailed questions on items he did not understand or that he felt required clarification. Responding to his questioning were the appellant, BDBC and ourselves (Baughurst Society represented by Aaron Smith of Fowler Architecture and Planning, David Wiseman of Stuart Michael Associates, and Martin Slatford). This took all day from 10:00 to 14:30 in the council offices, this was then followed by a site visit that lasted until 17:45.

During the session in the Council chamber a number of points were clarified.

Aaron was very clear and competent in his presentation to the Inspector and David covered the traffic issues in a poised and professional manner. We could not have had better representation for our investment.

The representations on behalf of the appellant were less coherent.

Issues raised included anticipated traffic numbers put forward by the appellant. The appellant's figures were based on "similar" sites such as a retirement mobile home site and traveller sites near bus routes. David took issue with these examples and worked with the inspector to arrive at a more realistic figure with the result that he anticipated double the traffic suggested by the applicant's team.

We clarified that in the most recent West Berkshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment there were 10 vacant pitches in Sites on Paices Hill, within 4 Km of Violet Lane. The value of this information was low according to the Inspector as they were in a different Planning authority area. The appellant lodged a letter from one of the Traveller sites to say that they now had a waiting list for sites.

