

# South West Cambridge Action Group

Launch Zoom Meeting, 16 Dec 2020, 6-7 pm

# Agenda

- ▶ Introduction: *Susan van de Ven*
- ▶ Current status of South West Cambridge: *Sebastian Kindersley*
- ▶ What are SWCAG's objectives: *Peter McDonald, Nigel Cathcart*
- ▶ Next steps and what you can do: *Aidan Van de Weyer, Deborah Roberts*
- ▶ Closing - *Susan van de Ven*

# Governance

## **Steering Group:**

We are the local District and County Councillors representing the nine villages named by South Cambs District Council (SCDC) in relation to the Thakeham proposal for a new town.

We have invited the Parish Councils for each of the nine villages named by South Cambs District Council to nominate a representative to join the Steering Group.

***SWCAG will seek to work with all villages and communities impacted by the proposal.***

# Introduction: District & County Councillors

- ▶ (Indicating the nine villages named by SCDC)
- ▶ Nigel Cathcart - District Councillor for Bassingbourn-cum-Kneesworth
- ▶ Jose Hales - District Councillor for Melbourn, Meldreth, Whaddon, Shepreth
- ▶ Sebastian Kindersley - County Councillor for Barrington, Orwell, Wimpole
- ▶ Peter McDonald - County Councillor for Shepreth, Foxton
- ▶ Deborah Roberts - District Councillor for Foxton
- ▶ Susan van de Ven - County Councillor for Bassingbourn-cum-Kneesworth, Whaddon, Meldreth, Melbourn
- ▶ Aidan Van De Weyer - District Councillor for Barrington, Orwell, Wimpole



# Website, Facebook & Contact email

- ▶ Website: [www.swcag.org.uk](http://www.swcag.org.uk)
- ▶ Facebook (545 members)  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/southwestcambridgeactiongroup>

Contact: [info@swcag.org.uk](mailto:info@swcag.org.uk)



# Media success so far



## 25,000-home development plan sparks fury

Developer's shock proposal 'would destroy villages and ecosystem' say campaigners



## Anger at 25,000-home development plans



Liberal Democrat councillors Sebastian Kinderley, Susan van de Ven and Pitar McDonald will fight the plans

Continued from front page  
Cambridgeshire County Council for the Lib Dems, said: "This development company has been proposing their environment is fast becoming the number one national priority, along with ensuring that we continue to build

## Tories urged to return £400,000 in donations

The Conservative Party has been urged to return £400,000 in donations from Thakeham Homes. Ian Soliman, the Liberal Democrat parliamentary spokesperson for South Cambridgeshire, said the government needs to make clear its judgment is not impacted. "I and all the residents of South Cambridgeshire are shocked to discover that a major property developer has spent the last two years putting together a plan for an enormous new town in our countryside," he said. "That the developer seems to have attempted to get the support of central government rather than going through the council's Local Plan process is an insult to local communities and local democratic scrutiny."

"The proposal will do terrible environmental damage to the countryside. Covering an area nearly the size of Cambridge and with inadequate transport links, the town will fail to meet the government's own climate change targets. It will be impossible to mitigate the ecological damage to the Cam valley and its precious

the proposal immediately and end the blight that dozens of villages will suffer from until it is defeated." He added: "The Conservative Party has accepted over £400,000 in donations from Thakeham, the property company behind this proposal. I call on our MP, Andrew Browne, to join me in demanding that the Conservative Party return Thakeham's donations."

"Our residents need to know that decisions about the future of our area are not tainted by suspicions of financial links between those who make the decisions and the property companies that stand to make a fortune in profit."

Mr Soliman also asked whether this had any relation or reference to a development company for Cambridge in the Budget. "We still have no clarity from the government. Are Thakeham's proposals the development company vehicle?"

On its website, Thakeham - which has a significant number of sites in Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire - reports that it attended the 2020 virtual Tory party conference, and was visited by



# Current Status of South West Cambridge



- ▶ A West Sussex speculative development company is proposing to create a new town sprawl of 25,000 homes between and encompassing the villages of Shepreth, Melbourn, Meldreth, Whaddon, Bassingbourn, Wimpole, Orwell, Barrington and Foxton.
- ▶ The new town, dubbed 'South West Cambridge,' would be half the size of Cambridge and would profoundly change the hinterland of a multitude of villages and eradicate the rural nature of much of South Cambridgeshire.
- ▶ The developer, 'Thakeham,' has missed the deadline for the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan's 'Call for Sites,' in spite of having spent the past two years preparing its scheme, during which time it will have been fully aware of the South Cambridgeshire Planning process. It now proposes a late submission in the Call for Sites.
- ▶ While it has contacted relevant landowners, Thakeham has made no contact with local residents or their elected representatives.

# Who are Thakeham?

- ▶ Property developer based in West Sussex.
- ▶ Built Homes all across South East of England.
  - ▶ 50 sites
  - ▶ 5,500 acres
  - ▶ 60,000 plots
- ▶ Very well connected to Government.



# Why do we think 'South West Cambridge' is inappropriate?

- ▶ The proposal has not been properly submitted to the South Cambridgeshire Local plan process.
- ▶ 25,000 houses equivalent to entire Local Plan (base scenario).
- ▶ Doesn't align to the long-term strategic planning hierarchy and planned infrastructure.
- ▶ Carbon benefits not properly quantified.
- ▶ Would mark the end of existence for a multitude of villages and put unworkable pressure on others.

# What are SWCAG Objectives?

## ***To prevent the proposed Thakeham development***

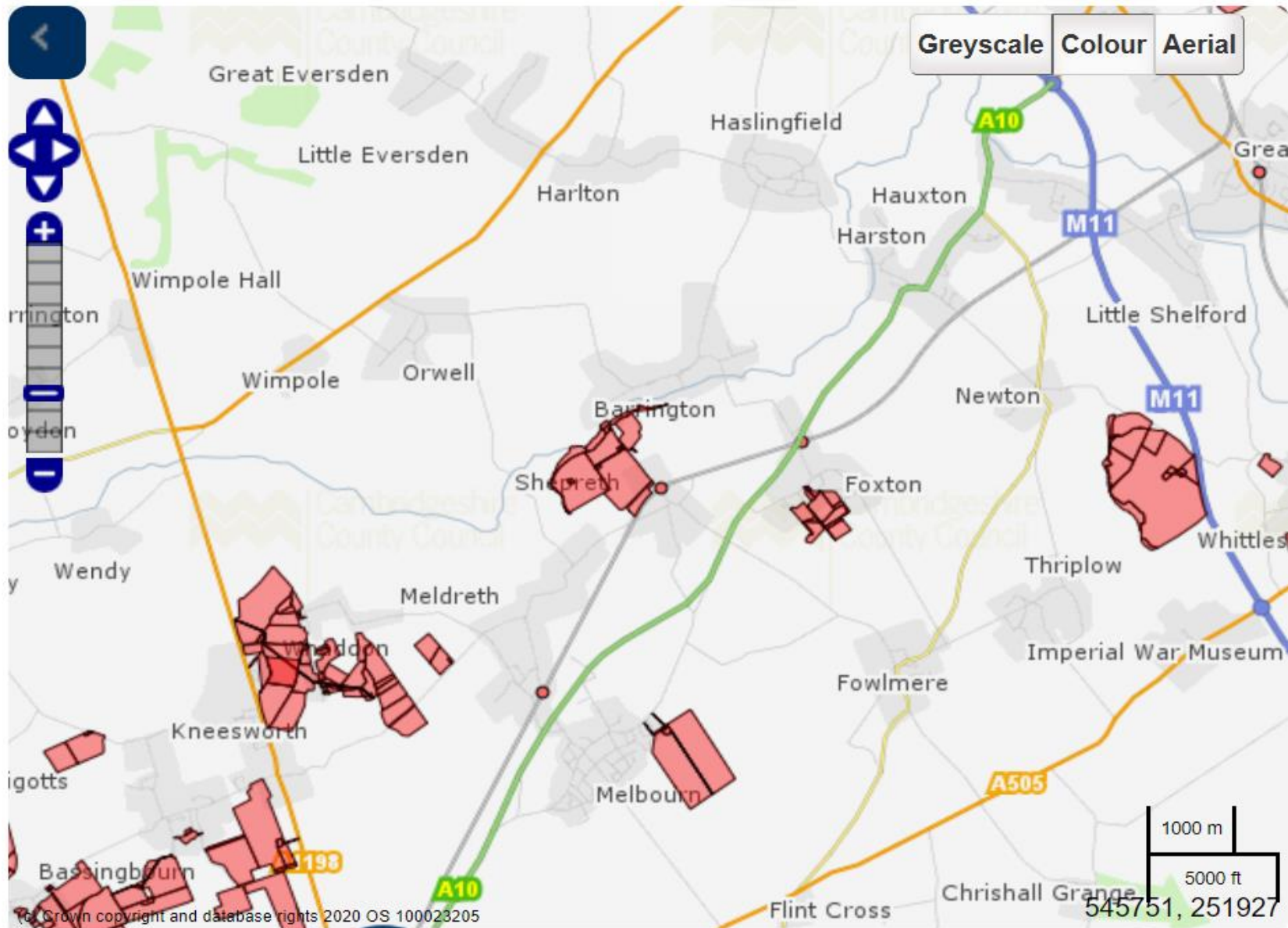
### Internally

- ▶ Bring together knowledge/skills to fight the proposal.
- ▶ Establish effective and coordinated communication including press and media.
- ▶ Work effectively with parish councils and residents.

### Externally

- ▶ Compile a case against the proposal to put to decision makers.
- ▶ Influence ministers in government not to support the proposal.
- ▶ Monitor East/West Rail proposals.

# Cambridgeshire County Council Farms Estate Land



# Information gathering

## **Confirmation that no discussions have taken place with Thakeham:**

- \* Chair, Cambridgeshire County Council Commercial and Investment Committee
- \* Chair, 'This Land' (Cambridgeshire County Council property company)

## **Freedom of Information requests in progress relating to engagement with Thakeham in Cambridgeshire:**

- \* Homes England
- \* Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
- \* Cabinet Office
- \* East West Rail

Meetings requested with

Anthony Browne MP

Rob Broughton, Thakeham CEO

# Next Steps

## Capacity Building

- ▶ Bring together experts from the community.
- ▶ Village action networks.
- ▶ Possible crowdfunding for specific advice/expertise.

## Timelines

- ▶ Updates will be published on rolling basis - FAQ following this meeting.
- ▶ Meet again virtually late January.
- ▶ Parish councils to input formally after their January meetings.

# What can you do?

1. Engage with your local parish councils and tell them what you think.
2. Lobby our MP to ask Ministers not to meet with Thakeham: ***Anthony.browne.mp@parliament.uk***
3. Volunteer to help distribute information leaflets in your village, or if you have a specialist skill please get in touch us via [info@swcag.org.uk](mailto:info@swcag.org.uk)

# Further information - whom to contact

- ▶ **East West Rail and infrastructure issues:**
- ▶ *Sebastian Kindersley*
- ▶ **County Council Land ownership:**
- ▶ *Peter McDonald, Susan van de Ven*
- ▶ **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan:**
- ▶ *Nigel Cathcart, Deborah Roberts, Jose Hales,*
- ▶ *Aidan Van de Weyer*
- ▶ **Resident & Parish Concerns:**
- ▶ *Your local Councillors*



# Thank you

- ▶ Any questions?  
Please write to:
- ▶ [info@swcag.org.uk](mailto:info@swcag.org.uk)

*Happy Christmas, and stay safe*