

Jackie Wren: comments on Heads of Terms for Ancient Woodland Management

1. As explained in my evidence, I do not believe access to the Ancient Woodland or the buffer zone can be restricted. It will be impossible to prevent people climbing fences or breaking down hedges. It will also be impossible to maintain a buffer zone that meets the guidance requirements. Heads of terms 4 and 5 are unenforceable.

The landowners made numerous complaints about people accessing the land after it was fenced off with hoardings and barbed wire in 2013. There is no reason to think that there will not be similar incursions into the Ancient Woodland.

Domestic pets will get into the woodland causing harm and destruction of wildlife. General principle 5 states the fencing will allow "the passage of wildlife", but does not clarify how it will prevent the passage of cats.

In addition, pesticides used by residents of the proposed development will inevitably affect the Ancient Woodland.

2. The Heads of Terms do not identify the person who will be responsible for implementing the management and monitoring commitments, which are onerous and will need to be complied with in perpetuity. If it is a management company, the Appellant has failed to explain how this will be funded and what safeguards will be put in place to ensure there is not a repeat of what has happened at a neighbouring site where the management company charged high fees and then disappeared leaving residents to do what they can. This area of woodland has now gone to rack and ruin.

3. There is nothing in the Heads of Terms which would stop residents of the proposed development flytipping over the fences/hedges into the woodland as happens elsewhere. The appellant has provided evidence of this at the Chalkpit Wood SNCI: see CD11.8, paragraphs 4.2.7- 4.2.8.

4. The appellant has stated that to achieve the necessary reduction in light pollution, there will be "dark corridors". These will be a magnet for anti-social behaviour and drug dealing which is already a considerable problem in this part of Oxted. There is nothing in the Heads of Terms which would address this.