

Forge Field

On Thursday June 13th, Mr Justice Lindblom handed down his long-awaited judgment on the 2nd Judicial Review concerning Forge Field.

He decided that The Forge Field Society were correct to challenge Viscount De L'Isle, Sevenoaks District Council & West Kent Housing Association with a JR of their planning consent to develop Forge Field, and found for the Society. In his words '*It follows...that the [Sevenoaks District] Council's assessment of alternative sites in October 2013 was deficient.*'

Given that the overwhelming majority of JR requests do not even make it to the courts, to win two such cases is remarkable, and shows how misguided this scheme actually is.

It is testament to the faith placed in the Forge Field Society by so many of you in the village, with both incredibly generous moral and financial support. Many thanks for the large number of emails we have received with your comments. An edited sample of some of them will also be on this website. Interestingly enough, we have also been contacted by a number of other villages who are undergoing similar problems, more than a few where SDC is the relevant council. It seems that this is not just a local problem!

The Society was successful on two Grounds of Claim; the planning officer's failure to properly address both the relative harm to Listed Buildings and the lack of proper consideration of alternative sites. Somewhere as highly protected as Forge Field can only be developed if no alternative exists that would cause less harm. Importantly, the issue of evaluation of alternatives which is at the core of our arguments against Forge Field was also at the core of the judgment against the developers.

For two days in the High Courts of Justice in The Strand, we heard arguments that we have made for the last four years to the Parish Council, Lord De L'Isle, Sevenoaks District Council and WKHA presented afresh and in a respectful, hushed arena. In court, arguments have to be backed up by fact and evidence.

Full costs will be returned to the Forge Field Society and we urge the stakeholders above not to waste even more public funds promoting a political desire to defeat the opposition at all costs, over the sensible and agreed need to find the right site for the homes.

We look forward to a positive dialogue with the stakeholders above to ensure the affordable homes are built soon - and on the most suitable site.

Thank you for your unstinting support.

The Forge Field Society