

From: Nigel Newman
Sent: 06 February 2013 11:16
To: Programme Officer
Subject: Housing plans for Thornbury

Ms Thorne, I should first declare a slight vested interest - living for more than 20 years at 65 Swallow Park, we're lucky to have the streamside walk on one side, and the fields on the other side of Morton Way very close as well. That said, any realist must acknowledge (a) that the town needs new blood, and that (b) sooner or later the Morton Way 'boundary' will have to be breached if UK population continues to grow.

I won't repeat all the arguments you've already heard about opening floodgates (though the word is very apt) to further development between Morton Way and the A38, because you've heard those many times I'm sure. However, I would point out the likely impact for drainage if substantial amounts of farmland and open ground are 'concreted over'; already if you look at the standing water in lower fields and the drainage streams on Crossways Lane and Clay Lane after heavy storms you'll see the risks - at the minimum, the flood risk to housing in this area will increase significantly. I would remind you that several springs rise in the hillside between the A38 and Morton Way, many eventually becoming part of the streamside walk network through Thornbury. Housing anyway near this hillside, including its lower flatter area is bound to increase the levels of water in all these streams flowing through the town. In the recent wet weather, on Gloucester Road about 50 yards from its junction with Morton Way, I'm sure you'll have been aware of the 20 yard stretch of standing water that prevented all but 4x4's and trucks getting through. I'd like to see a clear answer to questions about such flooding risks - and the recent experiences in Cannington should make everyone wary of accepting bland assurances from any one agency - an integrated plan will be essential.

You're in a difficult position because higher powers are urging the building of more houses than can be achieved at the Park Farm development, so they've got to go somewhere, and it's your job to see it's done fairly and properly. I'm aware of how large housing developers can wheel in the big guns and top barristers to make life very difficult. If I were in your position, I'd neither rule in nor rule out any development beyond Morton Way, but I would ensure Park Farm was completed and allowed to fully integrate for at least 5 years after completion of the last house. I'd then take soundings or even some formal assessment about how successful this has been in terms of effect on the town, flood plain risks etc etc. Only then would I consider giving any green light to Morton Way development, which should proceed only if lessons from a review of Park Farm's impact are built into development plans.

Good luck!

Nigel Newman

A genuine message from Nigel Newman