



# WEST CLANDON PARISH COUNCIL

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## **Newlands Corner Development Proposals** **Shere Road, Guildford, GU4 8SE**

West Clandon Parish Council is writing to register its very serious concerns over development proposals at Newlands Corner, Shere Road, GU4 8SE. Newlands Corner lies only a short distance from the West Clandon parish boundary and is a popular amenity used by West Clandon residents among many others.

The current visitors' centre, cafe and toilets are relatively unobtrusive, set well back from the lip of the ridge and partly screened by the existing woodland. They do not impact on the uninterrupted views to the south from the top of the ridge. By the same token they do not impact on the views towards Newlands Corner from the lower land to the south.

However the development proposal that we have been shown indicates that there will be a large café with terrace, staff parking and loading bay at the very highest part of the ridge, right on the lip of the slope to the south. This will block a large part of the existing viewing frontage making the views less accessible to visitors whilst at the same time ruining the view of those looking towards Newlands Corner from the South and from other parts of the site. In particular the buildings will be immediately obvious to people entering the site from the A25, blocking their views.

The proposals will be significantly damaging to the openness of the Green Belt both as a result of their prominence within the site itself and the fact that they will be highly visible for miles from the south. We understand that in planning terms very special reasons would be needed to justify such a development in the Green Belt. Whilst there may (or may not) be a case for upgrading and enlarging the current facilities there must surely be a way of doing it without doing this without ruining the surrounding and the beautiful views that are obtained from this very prominent site.

As to the detail of the proposals the buildings seem to be badly positioned within the site for other reasons. The current access from the A25 is not easy because it is at the top of the ridge and on a bend. Much of the traffic turns across the A25 to access the site but having made the turn there is a clear run straight ahead to the car park. As drawn, the proposed layout will force visitors to make a sharp right turn immediately after leaving the A25 so as to pass behind the buildings to the main car parking area. This will very likely cause entry to the site to be slower than at present with the potential for queuing on the A25. At the same time the service area, coach parking and staff car parking by contrast would lie straight ahead on entering the site, placing these service areas in a very prominent positioning and skylining the parked coaches at the top of the ridge. These service areas would be better placed away from the most prominent part of the site.

From what we can see at this stage the proposals (incorporating a cafe which will presumably be leased out commercially) would represent a commercial development in the Green Belt which had it been proposed by a private landowner would have been rejected out of hand. The fact that it may be proposed by a County Council should not alter the matter.

In addition the proposal to introduce parking charges is likely to generate considerable local disquiet. Many people visit the site daily to walk their dogs and many may find charges difficult to afford. This may lead to off site parking which will only lead to increased traffic congestion on the A25. It is not clear that there will be continuing provision for horse owners who park horse boxes in off peak times while riding on the bridleways.