

## 8. Great Wolf Appeal

I'm sure you know that there has been a lot of activity in the objection to the Appeal by Great Wolf to build a huge resort complex down the road from our village. I was approached by the group leading the campaign to join the core group with the specific job of bringing other villages on board with objections. I've reached out to over forty villages and expect that twenty-five of them will object. There is still a misconception that the hotel/resort will be good for the local economy and supply lots of jobs. My simple answer is that it will mean the end of many local businesses who need to get around the county quickly. Our roads will be so congested that traffic on rural roads in and around Bicester and Chesterton will be unbearable. As far as jobs are concerned, we are aware that the target age group for staff will be around twenty years old and wages will be at the minimum wage level. That is not a salary that will afford housing in this costly area or even support a young family. So, we need to be clear that while development can be good for the economy, Great Wolf's development will be a blot on the landscape, a huge consumer of energy and a drain on our one of our precious resources – water.

Thank you if you have written a letter of objection for the Appeal. **We've asked villagers to write a letter even if they wrote one to the initial application.** We've been working against an impossible deadline, during lockdown when lots of services are closed that we could have used to prepare materials. But we have managed. You will have a leaflet and we've requested as many posters in windows as possible. If you can't download a poster from the **Stop the Wolf UK** facebook page, drop me an email and we'll see that you get a few! The Inspector will be driving around the area to get an idea of the location of the proposal. We want him/her to be impressed with the local resistance. So please help by getting as many posters up as possible. I note that Chesterton and Kirtlington have really been busy with this project! Once lock down is over, have a drive around the area and see the campaign!!!

The deadline for objections is November 27<sup>th</sup>, so by the time you get this newsletter, the chance may have gone. However, you can still sign a petition – Change.org – is hosting one.

**The objection to the appeal will cost a fair amount of money.** Cherwell District Council will be leading the defence. But the local team has hired Sasha White QC to represent us alongside three consultants. Our next major project will be fund raising and every penny contributed will help. We know money is tight and there are a lot of worthwhile demands on our pocket. But this campaign is to protect the future of the area. Please give some thought to contributing to the **GoFundMe** page – give a donation as a Christmas gift!! If you wish to give a donation **via cheque or deposit**, check our website or contact me and I'll give you the details. Thank you to those who have given and to those who are just about to!!

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The Parishes Against Wolf team is very grateful that WOTG has acted quickly and donated £500 to the fighting fund. Also, the letter of objection held a robust argument and again we have appreciated the time taken to write it.

What next:

- We are putting together a list of businesses in the area who will be contacted and asked to sign a business petition identifying how Great Wolf will impede on their work ie. Causing continued difficulty in getting staff, traffic, house prices, actual business success – loss of customers etc.
- We will ask businesses to consider donating to our fighting fund

- Raffle tickets are now on sale and I need to figure out how best to sell them around the village whilst not clashing with other projects (great prizes)
- Calendars and wreaths are for sale (again we don't want to clash with WOTG projects). I just bought both!!

What happens next:

1. The Statements of Case by all parties was due on Nov 27<sup>th</sup>.
2. Administrative meetings by lead groups in December.
3. Consultant prepare the Evidence Case due in January. This is the actual evident which will be used to substantiate the Statement of Case submitted earlier.
4. Inquiry begins: Feb 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021. It will be a virtual inquiry and public will be allowed to attend. Not sure how this will work, do we sign up early. It is expected to take 5-7 days and will be intense.

What is the commitment of your Chair?

I am leading the stakeholder planning work involving parishes. Once we see the list of objections to the appeal, I will be contacting parishes and asking for a donation. Hopefully the twenty-one parishes who said they would write a letter have done so and will take the next step and contribute to the fighting fund.

The team meet regularly via Zoom and then sub-groups meet. I have about three meeting per week.

This is a huge commitment in terms of time and energy. The good news is that it is short and sharp, over by February.

Diane Bohm Dec 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020