

Mr and Mrs Tedd

14/01/2023

Evidence to support objection to proposed development site LP_Exmo_09 & Exmo_17

The title of LP_Exmo_17 "Land to the south of Littleham" as it is referred to in the local plan is inaccurate, as it is actually to the east of Littleham, inside the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). As a resident of Capel Lane, Exmouth, I consider myself to be exceptionally lucky that the East Devon AONB is right behind our property, and I can vouch for its beauty. The East Devon AONB covers a very small area of Exmouth and as such, land under its designation should be vigorously defended.

My views

- No benefit for residents or wildlife

Development of EXMO_09 and EXMO_17 will result in more negative impacts for the residents of Capel Lane, Littleham Road and the surrounding Littleham area, than it will actually return positive benefits. Currently EXMO_09 and EXMO_17 form open countryside, along with the John Hudson Way Cycle Path giving easy access to this tranquil location. It will take the positives of a rural setting, instant easy shared access to countryside for those seeking to escape an urban environment, low noise levels, low light pollution at night for star gazing and easy engagement with wildlife; and replace that with urbanising their homes by placing them behind a large building estate, increasing traffic on roads which are not wide enough for high volumes, and essentially reducing or removing all positive impacts that they currently enjoy.

As a current resident of this area, I cannot see any benefits for myself, my family or my neighbours from the development of this green field site set in the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. I would also add that many of my neighbours, now elderly have lived in this location for a large part of their lives, and the negative impact of spending their golden years with a building site at the end of their garden for the next 5 years is not how they envisaged they would live their lives when they bought their homes many years ago.

There are many kilometres of hedgerows within EXMO_09 and EXMO_17, and many trees lining John Hudson Way which stretches from Littleham to Knowle and the Pebblebed Heaths. The wildlife using this habitat will ultimately be displaced through such a large scale development, with zero net biodiversity gain, all taking place inside an area designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

- We bought our property over 5 years ago, because of its proximity / boundary of the AONB and rural aspect. Our ethos is to provide a home for wildlife and limit the impact that we have on our planet. We will be forced into selling our home if planning is allocated for large scale development. The efforts we put into providing for nature will be eradicated by development here. If we, like our neighbours wanted urban living, we would have bought a property closer to Exmouth town.

Many of my neighbours chose to live in this location because of the rural feel given to the location by the AONB directly behind where we live. To have large scale development here would be to take our homes from a rural environment and place them directly in an urban environment. At the time of writing, my family and I are already contemplating moving home based on the speculation that this site might be allocated as a location for housing development. The stress is impacting on our mental wellbeing caused by this uncertainty.

- This proposed site is an AONB. As a local authority, you must make sure that any proposals have regard for the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.

According to Gov.uk [Areas of outstanding natural beauty \(AONBs\): designation and management - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/areas-of-outstanding-natural-beauty-aonbs-designation-and-management) *“An area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) is land protected by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act). It protects the land to conserve and enhance its natural beauty”*, only local authorities or the Secretary of State can give permission of the development in or affecting an AONB.

From the World Heritage Jurassic Coast footpath, you can see directly into this proposed site (please see the pictures at the end of this document). To build in this location will not conserve or enhance the East Devon AONB in Exmouth. The view across the AONB if developed, would be forever changed, replacing the view of rolling green fields and countryside with large scale urban development, which once completed will create a new settlement boundary inside the AONB. When the next round of development is considered in 20 years’ time as part of the 2040 – 2060 local plan, the next green field sites to be built on will be those next to the settlement boundary, pushing the urban development further east across the AONB. By allocating these sites EXMO_09 and EXMO_17, the future of this AONB is at risk at certainly does not do anything to conserve or enhance its current state.

- Impact on environment and aesthetics surrounding St Margaret’s & St Andrew’s Church

Currently Littleham’s Grade II listed St Margaret’s & St Andrew’s Church is surrounded by countryside on two sides. The church is visible from the John Hudson Way mixed use track, and when viewed it sits nicely within its rural setting. The actively used cemetery, benefits from a natural burial ground on the site’s boundary to the AONB and proposed EXMO_17 site. The cemetery has many trees, hedgerows and barn owl boxes. During the spring and summer months, the older parts of the cemetery are left to grow wild and provide habitats for wildlife. This setting makes a great environment for weddings and for peaceful funerals. This historic church, where Lord Nelsons wife is buried, will not benefit from being boxed in by a housing development. Views of the church will vanish from the John Hudson Way and from the Jurassic Coast footpath.

- The interim findings as reported in Appendix 2 do not accurately reflect the impacts on the proposed area

Infrastructure Implications are described as having *“no direct infrastructure concerns”*. That is because there is no infrastructure. The implication is that significant road development on Salterton Road would be required to cope with this development, as well as safety measures needed for John Hudson Way, that runs through EXMO_17.

Landscape Sensitivity describes the northerly parts of EXMO_09 as being *“stark”*. If the site is viewed from Salterton Road I can see how this view could be reached, but if viewed from my back garden halfway down west of EXMO_09, the only view you have is countryside. I would argue that the viewpoint of stark is far from the main character of the site.

Impact on historic environment describes *“that the listed church is of prominence in the view and setting. Much of the site is remote from the church”*. The rest of the site is AONB of which gives the church its character. So, if the church is to remain of prominence, it needs its surrounding to allow it to be prominent, not lost in a housing development.

Ecological impact details *“many local features of interest, notably many mature hedgerows”* and then goes on to say that the *“site is favourable from an ecological perspective, with predicted minimal ecological impacts due to presence of large field parcels containing habitats of low ecological value.”* These fields may not provide habitat, but they do provide food for birds and safe access for wildlife. Furthermore, the notable mature hedgerows and trees surrounding these green field parcels make up the environment used by our wildlife.

Other known site constraints fail to mention that its entirely within the AONB. There is no mention of the multi-use track of John Hudson Way. There is no mention that both EXMO_09 and EXMO_17 are prone to flooding due to the valley like nature of the landscape, with run off going into Littleham Brook, which could ultimately cause flooding for the residence in Littleham village. No mention of the narrow roads surrounding the site. No mention of South West Water infrastructure running across the sites.

Site opportunities state *“Being a large-scale site, if allocated for development, it would be expected that mixed use development could deliver a range of positive outcomes”*. As a resident of the area, there is no positive outcome that could out weigh the negative impacts that development would have on myself, my neighbours or our local residents

- Local road infrastructure not designed for additional load - especially at peak times / season
- Traffic likely to use Capel Lane

Capel Lane, that runs along the west of the proposed site has narrow roads, made narrower by on road parked vehicles, along with the old railway bridge which is single vehicle only. To the bottom of EXMO_17 is Castle Lane which runs for just over mile and links up to Salterton Road. Castle Lane is barely wide enough for the farm vehicles that use this road to access pastoral farmland where cows graze. Cows cross this road twice a day to the dairy. Both Capel Lane and Castle Lane become incredibly busy during the summer months as tourists use these roads to access the Sandy Bay holiday park. It is normal to see traffic backed up Littleham Road, Castle Lane and traffic building up in Capel Lane. Large scale development of EXMO_09 & EXMO_17 will require access roads to be built to allow traffic in and out of the development, and that access would have to go out to Salterton Road, as Capel Lane and Castle Lane are not suitable. The access out onto Salterton Road will come out opposite Liverton Industrial Estate, where there are already traffic issues that need to

be addressed as this junction is extremely dangerous. Improvements to this traffic infrastructure needs to happen before any housing development to the east of Exmouth.

- Capel Lane Service Reservoir located on edge of site

The Appendix 2 document does not mention The South West Water Capel Lane Service Reservoir located adjacent to EXMO_09. Within the EXMO_09 site, there are at least two inspection chambers which appear to come from this SWW infrastructure. There may well be impacts to this if this site is built upon.

Points taken from Devon Wildlife Trust on Planning Applications affecting biodiversity:

Objection Checklist – for planning applications affecting biodiversity (nature) The checklist is based on legislation at the time of publication - February 2022:

source <https://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/Objection%20Checklist%20Feb%202022%20FINAL.pdf>

National policy

- *“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: (NPPF 174)
b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland” (NPPF 174b)*

The proposed development of 410 houses, with 1.6 hectares of employment and community land, will not contribute to or enhance the local landscape, character, or beauty of the landscape within the AONB when viewed within or from afar. This site of **“large field parcels”** and **“the listed church to the south west of the site is of prominence in views and setting”** can be seen from miles away, such as the from West Down Beacon atop the Jurassic Coast coastal path and gives the impression that Exmouth is a town of both coast and countryside. Not the urban impact it will have when Exmouth comes to intrude further into the AONB.

- *“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.” (NPPF 176)*

The development of this site will cause the loss of a large part of AONB. This is a fact.

It will push the settlement boundary for Exmouth further into the AONB towards Knowle and Budleigh Salterton. If this site is approved, when development has been completed the natural progression will be to build on the next set of **“large field parcels”** to the east and further into the AONB and more of this area will be lost. Developing here does not serve to conserve or enhance the East Devon AONB now or in the future.

- *“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:
d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be*

supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.” (NPPF 180d)

There is no information publicised to the public within the local plan communications that detail how this development will deliver a biodiversity net gain. When the land being proposed to be developed on consists of “**large field parcels**” which can be seen with large populations of gulls, corvids, fieldfare, and the occasional curlew and egret. The surrounding hedgerows are used as nature corridors for field mice, voles, hedgehogs, foxes, and badgers, along with the hedgerows feeding populations of starlings, sparrows, dunnocks, bullfinches to name but a few. This already existing biodiversity will be impacted by building so close to open fields and woodland. Not to mention, this site is so clearly inside an AONB. There is no need for development to enhance biodiversity when it is already present.

- *“Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:
c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.” (NPPF 185c)*

There is no mention in the site assessment survey of the light pollution impact the development will cause. As a resident who’s home and garden look out over the AONB, I can assure you that current light pollution levels are low. Constellations and some planets are clearly visible in the sky at with the naked eye, and as somebody who likes to photograph the sky at night, conditions from my home are nearly perfect for doing so. If a new housing estate is built on the proposed site, the light pollution from the development will completely destroy this pleasure for me, my neighbours and for anyone else who comes to the edge of Exmouth for the same reason.

- *Under section 41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006, the government is required to make a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for conserving biodiversity in England. These habitats and species are a material consideration in the making of planning decisions.*

The development will likely cause impact to a number of species listed in section 41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006, such as hedgehog, bullfinch, song thrush, sparrow, dunnock and starling that I regularly see in my garden. My garden abuts the AONB and proposed development site. As a dog-walker, runner and cyclist, when I use the footpath linking Littleham to Knowle, Pebblebed Heaths and Budleigh Salterton, I also encounter a number of these species which is why a number of people have commented against developing this area on the Commonplace site.

The Law

- *Species protected by law.*

Whether a protected species is present, how it will be affected, and any necessary measures to protect the species, should be established, through conditions and/or planning obligations, before the permission is granted.

Developers should not be required to undertake surveys for protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood of the species being present and affected by the development.

Local planning authorities should –

- *consult Natural England*
- *consider attaching planning conditions or entering into planning obligations under which the developer would take steps to secure the long term protection of the species*
- *advise developers that they must comply with any statutory species protection provisions affecting the site*

Given the large scale of the area of development proposed, there is no information provided to the Site Assessment Summary, which states checks have been made for the presences of protected species. Given the proximity to woodland and natural environment, it is likely that they are present.

- *Species protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act*

1981 (as amended) It is an offence under section 1(1) of the W&C Act to intentionally kill, injure, or take any wild bird or destroy, damage, or take its nest (while in use or being built) or destroy or take its eggs. in addition to the offences above, it is an offence under section 1(5), to -intentionally or recklessly disturb a bird while in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young, or while it is building its nest, or disturb their dependent young

For the following birds (listed in Schedule 1 of the W&C Act)

- *barn owl*

For the animals listed in Schedule 5 of the W&C Act

- *bats (all species)*

Species protected by the Wildlife & Countryside act 1981 - such as Barn Owl have nesting boxes in St Margaret's & St Andrew's Cemetery, and their hunting grounds would likely be impacted by development. The same for bats which have been seen along the hedgerows and in my garden.

- *Protection of Badgers Act 1992*

It is an offence, under the Protection of Badgers Act, to –

- *kill (or attempt to kill), injure or take a badger*
- *interfere with a badger sett (including intentionally or recklessly destroying, damaging or obstructing access to, a badger sett, or disturbing a badger while it is occupying a sett)*

Badgers are seen in the area, using the natural corridors and I have even recorded them in my garden, which is abutting the AONB, and so building in this area is likely to adversely impact them.

Pictures of the Exmo_09 & Exmo_17 site highlighting where the development of these sites will change the landscape for my property, the church, the sky at night and from West Down Beacon OS trig point, on the World Heritage Jurassic Coast footpath.

Pictures 1 and 2. View of the East Devon AONB from the boundary of our property. The highlights in red show how Exmo_09 fill in will be viewed from our property, and that in yellow shows Exmo_17



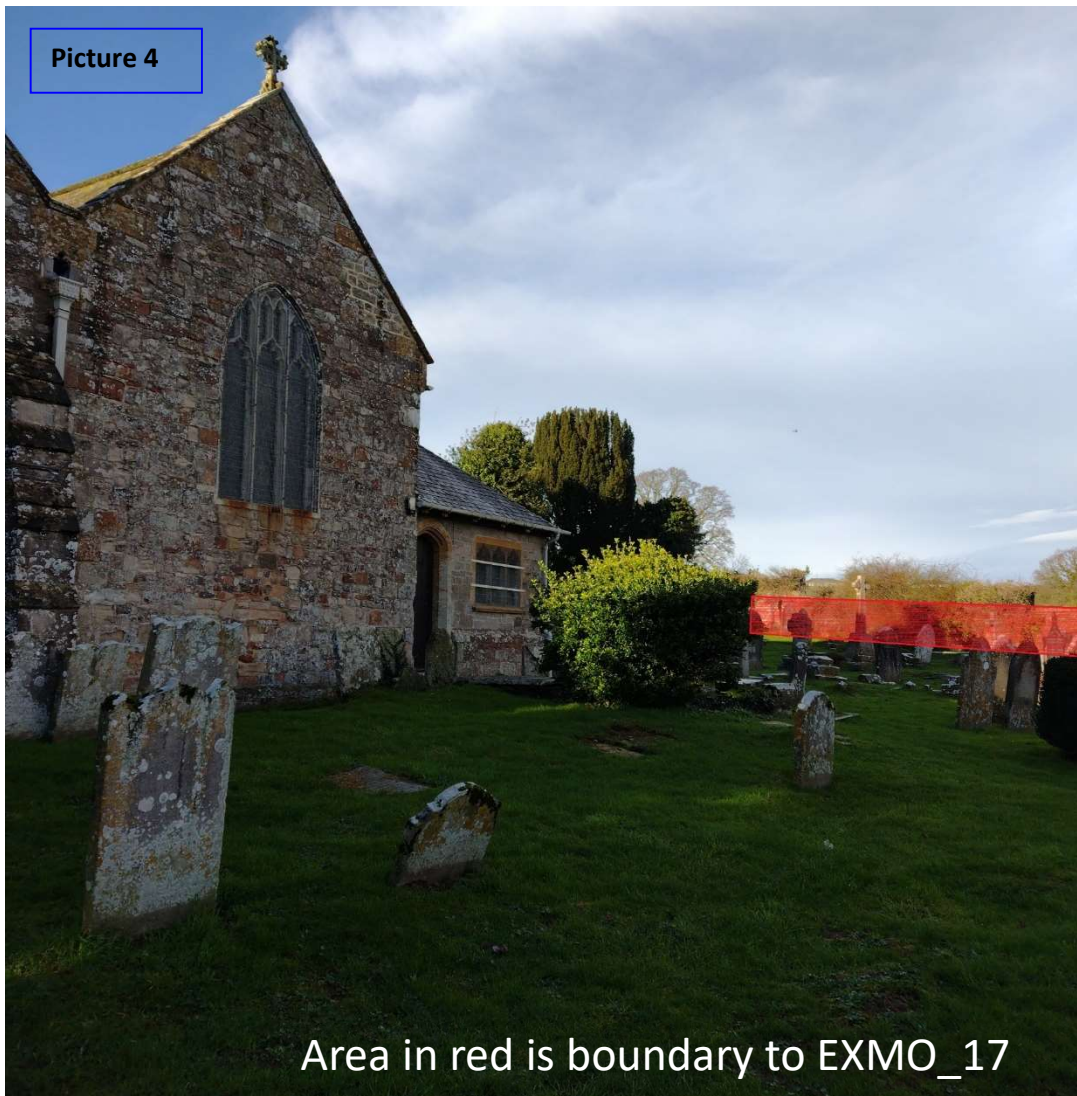
Picture 2



Picture 3 shows the quality of the dark skies over the East Devon AONB (taken from our garden). If the areas highlighted in pictures 1 & 2 become an urban housing estate with street lights, this dark sky site will be lost.



Pictures 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 show how the development on Exmo_17 and Exmo_09 will negatively impact the surroundings of the St Margaret's & St Andrew's Grade II listed church and cemetery.



Picture 5



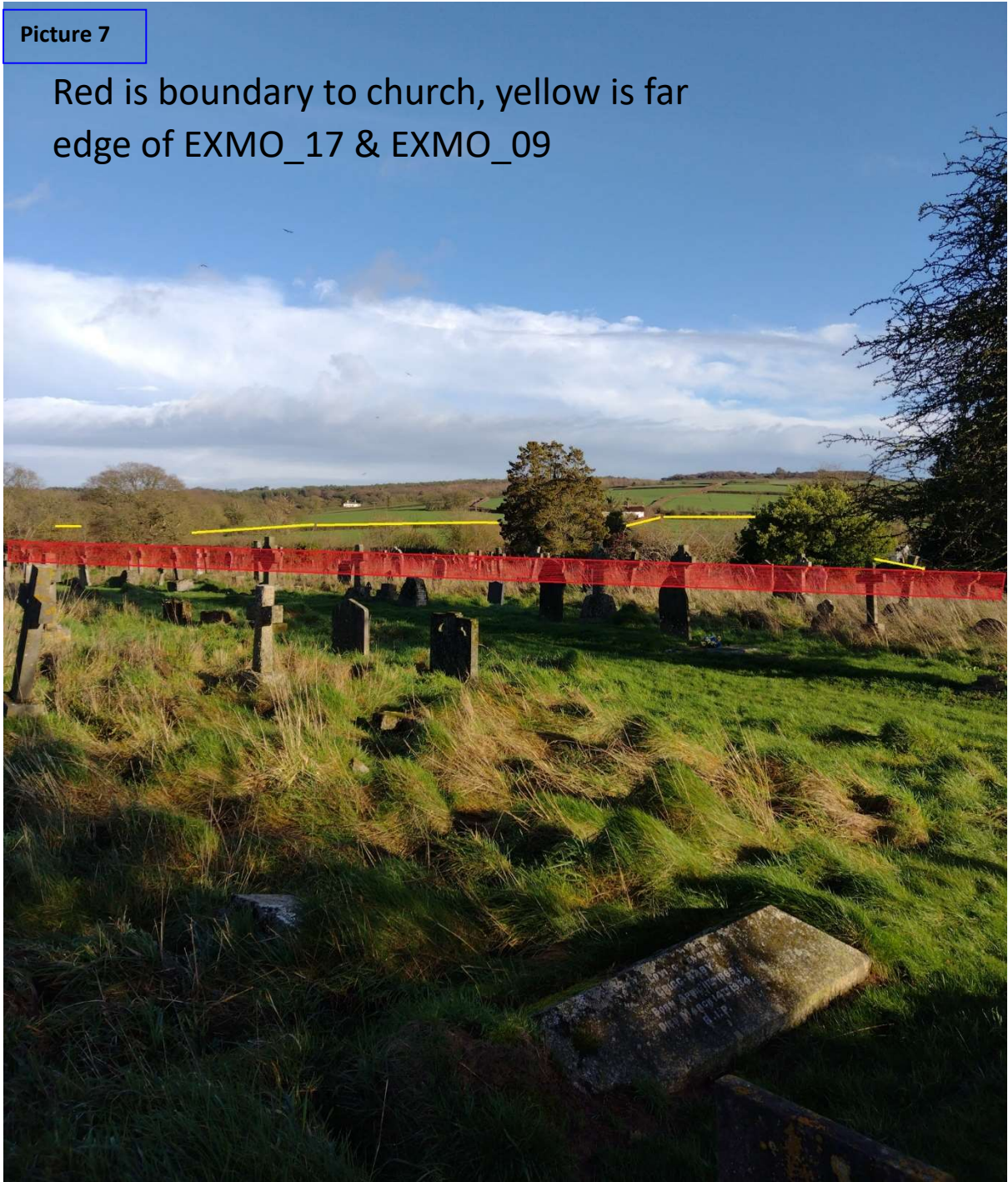
Picture 6



Red is boundary to church, yellow is far edge of EXMO_17

Picture 7

Red is boundary to church, yellow is far edge of EXMO_17 & EXMO_09



Red is boundary to church, yellow is edge
of EXMO_17 & EXMO_09



Picture 8

Red is boundary to church natural burial ground, yellow is edge of EXMO_17




Picture 9

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE NATURAL BURIAL GROUND

- We have removed the invasive shrubs and brambles along the boundary and rebuilt the bank.
- During the next stage we will plant a mix of Native Conservation trees, creating a hedge all around the boundary, to screen the area off and provide habitat for birds and wildlife.

If you would like to assist us in our efforts, or you have any questions, please contact:
Parish office: 01395 263681 or our Sexton, Shaun Davey, on 07779 860 618

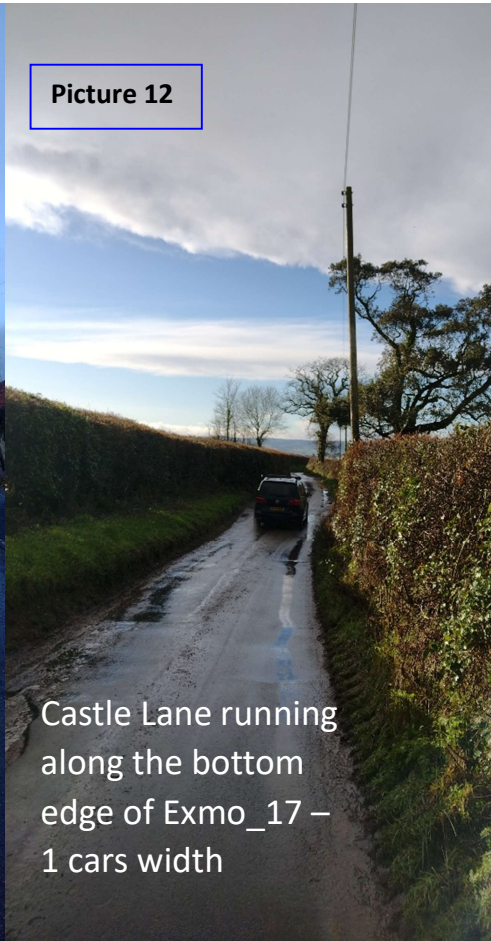


Picture 10 shows the what the loss of AONB will be, as seen from West Down Beacon on the Jurassic Coast, England's first natural World Heritage Site. The AONB is a nationally important landscape, designated in 1963 and covers 267sq km of Devon's finest countryside.

Picture 10



Finally, pictures 11, 12 and 13 show the narrowness of the current roads surrounding the Exmo_09 and Exmo_17 sites. During the tourist season, these roads become very congested and there is no more than a single cars width at times. Add a large-scale development into this mix, it will become worse. It also demonstrates that traffic from Exmo_17 would have to leave via Exmo_09 out on to the Salterton Road, where it will meet the traffic from Dinan Way, Budleigh Salterton, and the Liverton Industrial Estate. It will become a site of gridlock and very dangerous for everyone, including the families that would populate this new estate, and also negatively impact the existing residents of Littleham even more that it does now at peak season.



I appreciate that there is a vast amount of information provided in this document, and it will take some processing to understand if the issues I have highlighted for me and the residents of Littleham, especially those who back onto the proposed site and use the area, are valid issues.

Locally, we do not want to lose the AONB and easy access to countryside that sits on our doorstep. That's why we live here, at the edge of Exmouth in our East Devon, "An area of outstanding natural beauty", not in Exmouth's suburbs. Please remember East Devon's tag line when appraising this site.



Thank you for your time,

Kind regards

Mr and Mrs Tedd