

Joe (0) 19/03/2020/OUT

**Valerie Singleton**  
*Journalist and Broadcaster*

Templecombe  
Somerset

S.SOM DC  
23 JAN 2020  
POSTROOM

David Kenyon  
Planning Department  
South Somerset District Council  
Brymton Way  
Yeovil  
Somerset BA20 2HT

21st January 2020

Dear David Kenyon

**RE: Planning Application No 19/03416/OUT**

Last August I spoke to you about the two houses that were to be built behind the hedge at the top of Combe Hill, on land owned by Mr Hunt. You corrected me and said, 'not houses - bungalows' ...because you didn't want to spoil the view for those walking along the public footpath below. Spoil may not have been your exact word .. but your concern was that two houses would look out of place and be intrusive seen from the footpath..

Yet now we see outline planning has been submitted to build 80 houses on Manor Farm for those walking along the footpath to gaze up at. Won't that spoil their view ?

We all understand new housing is needed, but with restraint ... not recklessly and without thought. The amount of housing you are planning (if all plans are accepted) for an already much expanded Templecombe, is excessive. A few of the smaller developments that now exist have been done well, though quite a number of houses remain unsold.

Whatever happened to your plan of 75 houses in Templecombe between 2016 and 2036 ? How has that suddenly become over 222 ?

I expect most of my concerns below have already been made and I am sure you are well aware of them.

The impact on me personally is listed at the end.

Objections - to South Somerset District Council's development plans for  
Templecombe and Manor Farm

1. Traffic and Environment

It is naïve, if not self deluding, to imagine that you can introduce so many new houses into a community without there being damaging environmental consequences. Every indicator points to new residents having to leave Templecombe to work, shop and for entertainment. To do this they will invariably travel by car.

Templecombe is already short of parking space. We have a station with South West employees frequently going on strike and an intermittent bus service. There is no provision for 'sustainable transport' in the plans. There will be a considerable increase in noise, air and light pollution, which you say you are trying to combat. So reducing the carbon budget by 2030 is unlikely.

Any extra traffic on our already dangerous high street will mean increased danger for pedestrians. Add that to the huge lorries constantly pounding through, ignoring the speed limit, and access to the proposed Manor Farm development will become even more problematic in its hazardous position at the top of a hill. There will also be disruption on an already busy road as building is carried out.

2. Employment

Where are all these new residents going to work ? Your expectations are ridiculously optimistic. The employment opportunities you enthuse about just don't exist. And there seems little scope for increased work in Templecombe. Apart possibly from a few jobs in the new Co-Op when it opens. Again this means most of the newcomers will likely travel out of the village to work, making a nonsense of your ambitions for 'self containment'. Again the majority will more than likely travel by car.

One person operates the railway station ticket office and it closes mid morning. A few volunteers look after the station's plants. The small surgery, with restricted hours, has no access for wheel chairs or prams. Milborne Port surgery has to take patients not only from Templecombe but from the recently closed Stalbridge surgery, Henstridge and all those extra new homes being built in Milborne Port. So where will all these new patients find treatment. ?

The Thales extension has only just started. And the company have stated there will be between 35 and 50 new jobs when it is completed, likely to be specialised work. The village shop/post office has a limited staff of 6 ...almost all family. The Jasmine Bay café is run by the owner and her business partner, with occasional help from a few local residents. The take away Fish and Chip shop is run by a husband and wife with one part time helper. It is not open every night. It will be a brave soul who risks the high street at night on foot to collect those.

The above are all mentioned as offering employment opportunities !!



### 3. Wild Life and Flooding

Origin3 say just a small number of bird species have been identified on the Manor Farm site. It appears the gang of delightfully noisy starlings in the tree behind my house were completely missed. They perch en masse on the telegraph wires and feed in the field. Starlings are red listed as a bird of high conservation concern.

I have experienced flooding several times in my garage ... up through the concrete floor. I appear to be in a direct line from several old wells up the hill towards the farm.

### 4. Your Aims

In your South Somerset Local Plan Review - Questions and Answers ... you write about - *'promoting healthy and safe communities'* - *'through non car based transport and design'* - *'supporting the use of non-carbon fuel cars and commercial vehicles'* - *'reducing as much as possible the negative impact of human activity on the environment'* and *'conserving and enhancing the natural environment'*. How will you be tackling these worthy aims with your various housing developments ?

If just one of the present plans goes ahead, the 80 houses on Manor Farm (presuming 2 cars a household) that's 160 cars. The extra carbon emissions and polluting car fumes will be extremely detrimental - just when this has become a major issue, nationally and globally. There will be damage to both the environment and our health. How are you intending to reduce this when you plan to increase human activity on the Templecombe environment by a huge percentage? What are your plans for the new technologies you mention ? Will these new developments include chargers for electric cars and carbon neutral houses ?

Instead of another housing estate I have an idea. Turn the Manor Farm barns into a museum about the history of the Knights Templars and Templecombe's railway connections, with a first class restaurant and shop attached. Plenty of room for parking. It means more traffic but we will have that anyway if your plans go ahead. It would certainly create jobs and bring people in to spend money. In your Review you talk about the need to ... *'enhance a district's distinctive heritage assets with the economic benefits they bring to places'*. A museum would certainly do that.

And definitely give Templecombe a bit of much needed status.

### Privacy

From a personal point of view, my privacy and my neighbour's would be greatly compromised. We have small gardens that run up against the protected mediaeval village boundary wall, which borders the field. The houses in Templars Barton are higher than the field. On the garden side the wall is low enough to sit on. It drops 5 feet to the field.

From the moment I close my front door all my rooms look straight out over the garden, wall and field. The French windows in the dining room open onto the garden, 24 feet from the wall. My conservatory (even closer to the wall) looks over the field. Conservatories don't have curtains! Wide double glass doors open into the conservatory from my sitting room. My kitchen, upstairs study and bedroom, look over the field. I really don't see why I should have to have pull my blind down every time I want to dress or undress or work at my computer.

I would be constantly visible, unless I lived behind closed curtains all the time. Even more so at night. The extra light at night from houses and street lighting would be horrendous. Let alone the noise from vehicles of all kinds. Much worse than where I lived in London.

In my garden everyone could see me. People in bungalows (as presently planned) in front of us and even a little further away could look up into our homes. And we could look straight into theirs below us. The open fields mean it can be incredibly windy here .. so building works would cause dust and dirt blowing towards us. We would be unable to open windows, and furnishings inside our homes would become grubby.

Having said all this, I would like to acknowledge that two members of Origin3 and someone from Gleeson's did take the trouble to spend a morning here to meet me and some of my neighbours. They were able to see for themselves how this would impact on our lives and hear our views. We appreciated them taking the time to do that. And I hope they will take into account our concerns.

I am greatly regretting moving here. We are not allowed to complain about a loss of view. I didn't move here for the view. I actually moved here because the field is a perfect outlet for my cats! They love it and it keeps them safe from the dangerous main road. Very sadly they may have to go.

Yours sincerely

A redacted signature consisting of three horizontal black lines.

Valerie Singleton OBE

cc: Cllr William Wallace: Somerset County Council.  
Cllr Hayward Burt: South Somerset District Council.  
Simon Fox: South Somerset District Council.  
Tessa Saunders: South Somerset District Council.  
Jan Gamon: South Somerset District Council.  
David Warburton MP, FRSA  
Jonathan Orton: Origin3.