



By Email

18<sup>th</sup> February 2016

John Cotton  
Leader of SODC

Dear John,

**Re: Planning Application P15/S3228/O**

I write in support of your comments quoted on the front page of this week's Didcot Herald.

**“It does seem curious that we are trying to achieve this greener, leafier Didcot and the town council should start considering selling off the allotments.”**

I am sure you'll agree in the context of a “greener, leafier Didcot”, whilst to lose the allotments would be curious, to lose the Green Gap would be catastrophic. Yet this is what the District Council is considering.

You will need little reminding that the Green Gap has been identified as a key site for a greener, leafier Didcot and East Hagbourne for decades dating back at least to the Inspector's report from 1981.

The Machin Bates study commissioned by SODC in 2006 confirmed its “green” importance. Chris Blandford's green space network study for SODC took the site into the Core Strategy process as the (famous) ‘green necklace’. The parish council boundary redraw of 2014 specifically called out the importance of recognizing and protecting this site. Currently it is amongst the last remaining “best and most versatile” agricultural sites surrounding Didcot. As to the future we have SODC's latest (and greatest) commitment - Didcot Garden Town –, which champions this site as the “green lungs” for Didcot.

Whilst it is understandable that the community of allotment users should be up in arms about this, it should not be forgotten there have been over 600 objections to the speculative, unplanned application for development on the Green Gap. (I know

that you are busy, but please take a moment to peruse them, the quality of the planning based objections is both compelling and extraordinary.) And surely it should not be forgotten that they are residents, voters and supporters of SODC's own local plan.

Calamitous, own goal, soul-destroying decision making must be avoided. And avoided it can be. We look to SODC to demonstrate **Visionary Planning, Brave Planning, Skilled Planning**. If SODC is not able to provide it, there can be no hope for Didcot, leafy or otherwise.

Finally, and totally gratuitously, here is a picture of "greener, leafier Didcot" (actually East Hagbourne but you know what I mean) for you to enjoy. Hopefully for posterity.



Here's hoping we can count on SODC's support for its own local plan.

Kind regards,

Nick

CC: Jane Murphy, SODC  
Adrian Duffield, SODC  
Anna Robinson, SODC  
Andy Barmer, MTGG