

ISLES QUARRY EAST & CREST NICHOLSON'S 10 HOUSES

Isles Quarry East is the wild area bounded by the Surgery, Thong Lane, Basted Mill, and the footpath from Basted Mill to Harrison Rd. It is currently owned by Crest Nicholson as part of their land purchase from Hanson/ARC. It is a partly backfilled ex quarry, and because it has never been fully restored, has very poor soil that encourages rare orchids and unique varieties of wildlife and plants.

Crest Nicholson want to build 10 houses at the Hanson Office site, where the recycling bins have been sited. 5 of the houses will be on the office site and there is nothing we can do about them, it is previously developed land. The other 5 are on the edge of Isles Quarry East, on land that is Greenbelt, part of the North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and is an area of Special Scientific & Conservation Interest (SSCI), and it was also designated as Public Amenity Conservation Land in the restoration Planning permission in 1994 (TM/94/155).

Crest have made an offer to the Parish Council that in exchange for our support for the extra 5 houses, they will give us Isles Quarry East (IQE) in perpetuity, and donate the land between the Surgery and Harrison Rd (apart from the line of trees) to the surgery for future expansion. The surgery offer is a matter for the Practice, not the Parish Council.

We also need to be aware of the relevant history of Isles Quarry East & West. In 2003, Hanson, TMBC and Borough Green PC had confidential discussions about allocating IQE for "low density housing" ie 35 £1m+ houses in spacious plots, and the Hanson Office site for Elderly Sheltered accommodation. Only Isles Quarry West was taken forward at that time, initially for 300+ houses, eventually reduced by our campaigning to the current 171.

It will be said that the constraints on IQE will prohibit development, but we thought that about IQ West, that was also Greenbelt AONB, and wild habitat, and look what happened.

It will be said that IQE should be given to TMBC, but they are under intense pressure for housing, and we know how weak these constraints are once the Planning Department gets to work, it is but a stroke of the pen to make them vanish. If IQE is owned by the Parish, it is under your direct control, the electors of Borough Green, and we will ensure that control is enshrined in our Standing Orders.

Borough Green is under constant attack by housing developers, and I am loathe to give an inch, but I personally believe that 5 new houses is a very small price to pay to ensure that the jewel that is Isles Quarry East is preserved in perpetuity as Public Amenity land, and wild habitat, for our children and for future generations.

Mike Taylor

Chairman, Borough Green Parish Council.

TMBC Ward Member Borough Green & Longmill.

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