

CHRISTLETON AND LITTLETON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

REGULATION 16 EXAMINATION

RESPONSE OF THE QUALIFYING BODY TO THE REPRESENTATIONS OF BRIDGEMERE UK LIMITED (DATED 25 MAY 2026) v5

Submitted on behalf of the Qualifying Body (Christleton and Littleton Parish Councils)

CONTENTS

Part A Statement of the Qualifying Body, with Schedule of modifications offered

Annex 1 Parish Council mark-up of the Bridgemere representation

Annex 2 Evidence (notes of meetings and a key report)

PART A

Statement of the Qualifying Body in Response to the Representations of Bridgemere
UK Limited

1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY POSITION

This statement is submitted on behalf of the Qualifying Body in response to the representations made by Bridgemere UK Limited (“Bridgemere”) at Regulation 16. The Qualifying Body welcomes scrutiny of the Plan, but the representations materially overstate their case. They identify a limited number of matters that can be addressed by targeted modifications. On that footing the Plan meets the basic conditions and should be recommended to proceed to referendum.

The Qualifying Body does not accept that the Plan fails basic conditions (a) or (d), and firmly resists the contention that it should be withheld from referendum. As explained in Section 2, that is the most severe outcome available to the Examiner and is reserved for plans incapable of being modified into compliance. Bridgemere’s own representations are, by their nature, a schedule of curable drafting and evidential points. A plan that can be modified must be modified, not halted.

The Qualifying Body notes, neutrally, that Bridgemere owns the walled garden and the former playing fields and holds development interests directly engaged by Policies GG2 and LGS1 — the two policies to which the bulk of its representations are directed. The weight to be given to its characterisation of those policies should be considered in that light. The points are nonetheless addressed on their merits below.

Where a modification would improve precision or remove a legitimate concern, the Qualifying Body offers it in the Schedule at the end of this statement. Those modifications are offered constructively, in recognition of the Examiner’s modification power, and without prejudice to the Qualifying Body’s primary position that the Plan is sound.

A point-by-point mark-up of the Bridgemere representation, recording the Parish Council’s responses in context, is at Annex 1. The minutes of meetings and other documents evidencing those responses are at Annex 2.

2. THE EXAMINER’S ROLE AND THE PROPER REMEDY

Under paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (applied by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004), the Examiner must consider whether the Plan meets the basic conditions and the other statutory requirements, and must recommend one of three outcomes: that the Plan proceed to referendum; that it proceed with modifications; or that it should not proceed. National guidance and consistent examination practice establish a clear preference: where a plan does not as drafted meet the basic conditions, the Examiner should consider whether modifications would enable it to do so, and should recommend the minimum modifications necessary. A recommendation that a plan not proceed at all is reserved for the case in which no modification can secure compliance.

That framework is decisive here. Every substantive criticism Bridgemere advances — the drafting of LGS1, the use of “must”, the wording of INF1, the evidential support for parts of the supporting text, the placement of the design content — is, on Bridgemere’s own analysis, capable of remedy by modification. It follows that the request that the Plan “should not proceed to referendum” is misconceived and should be rejected at the outset. Bridgemere’s catalogue of fixable defects is the complete answer to the remedy it seeks.

It is also relevant throughout that a neighbourhood plan comprises policies and supporting text. Only the policies are determinative; supporting text assists interpretation but does not itself carry development-plan weight. A number of Bridgemere’s complaints are directed at supporting narrative (the Introduction, the “Christleton and Littleton Today” section, and the “Parish Council Actions”). Even where moderation of such text is accepted, it does not bear on whether the Plan meets the basic conditions.

3. POLICY GG2 – LAND SEPARATING CHRISTLETON, LITTLETON AND VICARS CROSS

Bridgemere contends that GG2 merely duplicates Green Belt policy and should be deleted, while simultaneously invoking the Planning Practice Guidance warning (ID 37-015) against creating, by designation, “a new area of Green Belt by another name”. These two contentions pull against each other and neither succeeds.

First, a local-gap policy and Green Belt designation do different work. Green Belt operates at the strategic scale through the five national purposes; a local-gap policy records local evidence on the separation, identity and rural setting of individual settlements. The two are complementary, not duplicative.

Secondly, the “back door Green Belt” point has no application to GG2. PPG ID 37-015 addresses the risk of designating open countryside so as to create a new area of Green Belt. The GG2 land is already washed-over Green Belt. One cannot create a backdoor Green Belt on land that is already Green Belt; there is no new designation and so no “Green Belt by another name”. The criticism is misdirected.

Thirdly, the Plan neither purports to, nor could, preclude an assessment of “grey belt” under national policy. GG2 records local evidence — that the land checks the unrestricted sprawl of the built-up area, preserves the setting of Chester, and carries important rights of way and views — which is a material consideration for any future decision-maker; it is not an unlawful fetter. Bridgemere’s assertion of a “demonstrable unmet need” for development of the playing fields is itself advanced without any evidence, which is the very deficiency it presses against the Plan.

If, nonetheless, the Examiner considers that GG2 reads as justification rather than as policy, the Qualifying Body would accept separating green-gap policy from its supporting evidence. The principle of the policy is sound; only its expression is in issue.

4. POLICY LGS1 – LAW COLLEGE PLAYING FIELD AND ORCHARD

Bridgemere's representations conflate two physically and legally distinct components of LGS1: (i) the former playing field, and (ii) the walled garden and orchard. They must be considered separately.

(i) The former playing field

The former playing field is not subject to any planning permission. Bridgemere expressly accepts that the playing fields “were not part of the Planning Permission”. The Planning Practice Guidance on land with planning permission (ID 37-008) therefore has no application to it, and Bridgemere's principal legal objection falls away in respect of the playing field entirely.

Assessed against NPPF paragraph 107, the playing field plainly qualifies. It is in close proximity to the community it serves (some 100 m from the Village Green). It is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land (in the order of 2 ha). And it is demonstrably special on more than one of the disjunctive bases the paragraph provides: recreational value as a playing field — the very example given in paragraph 107 — together with its contribution to local beauty and tranquillity and its function in nature connectivity, the perimeter tree planting linking to the canal corridor. The Qualifying Body defends this designation in full.

Bridgemere's reliance on the absence of public access, even though Bridgemere committed to the Qualifying Body to ensure it remains accessible green space, is misplaced. Paragraph 107 contains no public-access requirement; a site may be “demonstrably special” by reason of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of wildlife, in the alternative. The examination decisions Bridgemere cites (Middleton St George; Hadley Wood) treated access as evidence going to whether a particular site was special, not as a legal precondition, and each turned on its own facts — in Middleton St George a featureless grass field of no particular landscape value, in Hadley Wood pasture with very limited public viewpoints. LGS1 is materially different and those reports do not assist Bridgemere.

(ii) The walled garden and orchard

The Qualifying Body recognises the force of PPG ID 37-008 in respect of the parcel that benefits from the extant office permission and the Permission in Principle. The guidance states that designation will “rarely” be appropriate where land has planning

permission, the exception being where the development would be compatible with the reasons for designation. A dwelling is not compatible with designation as protected green space, so the exception does not assist the Qualifying Body here, and it does not contend otherwise.

That does not, however, leave the orchard unprotected or the Plan deficient. The orchard's heritage and setting value is in any event secured independently of LGS designation, through its inclusion in the Grade II listing and through conservation-area and listed-building controls. The Plan's objectives for the orchard are therefore achieved without reliance on LGS. Accordingly, if the Examiner considers the extant permission and PIP fatal to LGS designation of the walled-garden parcel, the Qualifying Body would accept a modification confining LGS1 to the former playing field. Nothing of substance is lost, and the strongest of Bridgemere's legal points is met without disturbing the designation that matters most.

(iii) The wording of LGS1

The Qualifying Body accepts that the present supporting text of LGS1 is expressed as narrative and policy – separation of narrative and justification keyed to the paragraph 107 criteria would assist clarity. The references to trees felled “by mistake”, to mandatory reinstatement of the orchard, and to mandatory provision of access for the residents of the new houses are not deliverable through a Local Green Space policy, and the Qualifying Body does not press them as policy. To the extent they are retained at all, they belong among community aspirations outside the development-plan policies. This concession removes Bridgemere's complaint as to “tone” and “subjective language” without affecting the designation. The minor inaccuracy in the reference to the A55 is likewise curable by rewording by way of explanation

(iv) The “second bite” and “frustration” characterisation

Bridgemere's framing — that the Plan is an attempt to take a “second bite of the cherry” and to frustrate permitted development — is unfounded on its own facts. The conversion of Christleton Hall and the 24 dwellings are built and complete. The office building and the PIP dwelling are, on Bridgemere's own account, lawfully implementable irrespective of any LGS designation, which constrains only future applications and cannot unwind an extant permission. LGS1 therefore frustrates no permitted development whatever. The rhetoric of frustration is contradicted by the very facts Bridgemere relies upon.

5. LOCAL GREEN SPACE DESIGNATIONS – SCALE AND CUMULATIVE EFFECT

Bridgemere argues that the LGS designations, viewed cumulatively, comprise an extensive tract of land. Each designation is, however, to be assessed individually

against paragraph 107, and the cumulative argument fails because the designations are physically discrete spaces serving distinct functions — a playing field, a recreation area, a graveyard, allotments, a pond, an orchard — not a single contiguous block. “Local in character” is judged per designation, and LGS1, at around 2 ha and 100 m from the Village Green, is local in character on any view. The examiner reports cited concerned genuinely large or contiguous tracts, or rural gaps mislabelled as Local Green Space; they are distinguishable and, being the recommendations of other examiners on other facts, are persuasive only.

6. USE OF THE WORD “MUST”

The raw count on which Bridgemere relies is misleading. It aggregates a large number of unobjectionable uses — considerations that “must include” specified matters, impacts that “must be carefully considered” — with the small number of genuinely absolute prohibitions. A lexical comparison with the NPPF is not the legal test in any event: the NPPF is a national policy statement written in a particular register, and the basic conditions require substantive consistency with national policy, not imitation of its vocabulary. Neighbourhood plans are entitled to use clear and directive language.

The Qualifying Body does, however, accept that a limited number of absolute formulations — most clearly in INF1 — could be read as inconsistent with the flexibility national policy expects, and would accept their rewording to qualified terms. That targeted modification meets the legitimate part of Bridgemere’s point without diluting the Plan.

7. POLICY INF1 – SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE

INF1 responds to a real and evidenced constraint. The Welsh Water statement — which Bridgemere itself quotes more fully — confirms that sufficient capacity is unlikely to exist at Chester Wastewater Treatment Works to accommodate development without mitigation, and that a development-enabling assessment and off-site reinforcement works may be required. That fuller quotation supports the policy rather than undermining it: it demonstrates that wastewater capacity is a genuine constraint requiring positive action, not a matter that can be left entirely to others.

The statutory duty to connect under section 106 of the Water Industry Act 1991 does not answer the point. A duty to connect is not a duty to provide unlimited treatment capacity, and the capacity and timing of treatment are legitimate planning matters, ordinarily managed through phasing or a suitably worded Grampian condition. The policy is therefore not rendered unnecessary by legislation.

The Qualifying Body accepts that the drafting requires correction. The word “insufficient” in the fourth line should read “sufficient”; and the absolute terms (“must

be refused”, “must not be occupied”) should be reworded to require that adequate capacity be demonstrated or secured, including by phasing or a Grampian mechanism, before occupation. So corrected — and retaining the Sustainable Drainage requirement, which reflects NPPF paragraph 182 — INF1 is sound and should be retained, not deleted. A corrected form is offered in the Schedule.

8. POLICY HN3 – BROWNFIELD AND GREENFIELD DEVELOPMENT

“Co-located” bears a plain meaning — development located together with, or adjoining, other new housing — and the policy is not an absolute bar in any event, being qualified by the words “unless there are demonstrable sustainable benefits from doing so”. There is no need to delete the first sentence. The Qualifying Body would accept the addition of a short definition of “co-located” to remove any ambiguity.

9. SUPPORTING TEXT – INTRODUCTION, AIR QUALITY, FLOODING, HIGHWAYS AND PARISH COUNCIL ACTIONS

As noted in Section 2, this material is supporting text, not policy, and does not determine the basic conditions. The Qualifying Body addresses the points briefly and offers proportionate moderation where appropriate.

- **Introduction:** the language reflects views gathered through community consultation. No policy is affected.
- **Air quality:** data gathered by the Air Quality Working Group is admissible evidence, and the proportionality of evidence is judged against a neighbourhood plan, not against the standard of a Local Plan examination. The substantive concern — elevated nitrogen dioxide and PM2.5 along the A41 and A51 corridor — is consistent with the wider monitoring context. The Qualifying Body will add references and further evidence the statements. On electric vehicles, the Plan’s point is that PM2.5 will not be resolved by their uptake, because non-exhaust particulates from brake and tyre wear from heavier electric cars will persist; the wording will be clarified so as not to assert that electric vehicles emit “more”.
- **Flooding:** the Qualifying Body accepts that the paragraph should be corrected for internal consistency (the “four locations / three problems” point). The point being made is that new housing developments will further overload the existing waste water system and increase the severity of existing flooding; the paragraph will be reworded to explain this, and so that development is required to avoid worsening flooding and to mitigate its own impact — not to remedy unrelated, pre-existing flooding. No unrelated betterment is intended or required.

- **Highways:** the Qualifying Body will reference the transport evidence for the junction and queueing statements.
- **Parish Council Actions:** these are expressly Parish Council actions and aspirations, not development-plan policy, and are not subject to the basic conditions. The Grampian-condition passage will be reworded to remove the pejorative characterisation. No policy is affected.

10. DESIGN CONTENT

National policy positively encourages design policies and codes at neighbourhood level, and there is nothing improper in the Plan containing them. The Qualifying Body is content to engage with Cheshire West and Chester and with design professionals, and — if the Examiner prefers — to present the design content as a clearly delineated code within, or appended to, the Plan. This is a matter of presentation and not of soundness.

11. CONCLUSION

Bridgemere’s representations identify a limited set of matters, each of which is curable by modification. The Qualifying Body has offered targeted modifications addressing the legitimate points — the boundary and wording of LGS1, the small number of absolute “must” formulations, the drafting of INF1, the definition of “co-located” in HN3, and proportionate moderation of the supporting text. With those modifications, the Plan meets the basic conditions, including conditions (a) and (d).

The threshold for recommending that a plan should not proceed to referendum — that no modification could secure compliance — is not met, and is contradicted by Bridgemere’s own analysis. The Qualifying Body respectfully requests that the Examiner recommend that the Plan proceed to referendum, subject only to such modifications as are necessary to meet the basic conditions. Should the Examiner consider a hearing necessary, the Qualifying Body wishes to participate.

SCHEDULE – MODIFICATIONS OFFERED BY THE QUALIFYING BODY (WITHOUT PREJUDICE)

The following modifications are offered constructively and without prejudice to the Qualifying Body’s primary position that the Plan is sound. They are framed to meet the legitimate matters raised by the lowest level of intervention consistent with the basic conditions.

Ref	Provision	Modification the Qualifying Body would accept	Purpose
GG2	Policy GG2	Separation of green – gap policy from supporting evidence of settlement separation, the setting of Chester and rights of way etc	Clarity / policy form
LGS1	Boundary of LGS1	If the Examiner considers the extant permission / PIP fatal to designation of the walled-garden parcel, confine LGS1 to the former playing field. The orchard's setting remains protected by the Grade II listing and conservation-area controls.	Consistency with PPG 37-008
LGS1	Supporting text of LGS1	Replace the narrative wording (trees felled “by mistake”; mandatory reinstatement as orchard; mandatory access for residents) with neutral justification keyed to the NPPF paragraph 107 criteria. Any retained aspirations to sit outside the development-plan policies.	Appropriate policy language
LGS1	Reference to the A55	Reword to explain that the playing field provided noise attenuation from the A55: a factual reference to the A55 as a noise source relevant to amenity and screening.	Accuracy
“must”	Absolute formulations (chiefly INF1)	Reword the small number of absolute prohibitions (e.g. “must be refused” / “must not be occupied”) to qualified terms; retain directive language elsewhere.	Flexibility expected by national policy
INF1	Policy INF1	Correct “insufficient” to “sufficient”; replace blanket refusal with a requirement that adequate wastewater capacity be demonstrated or secured (including by phasing or a suitably worded Grampian condition) prior to occupation; retain the SuDS requirement.	Drafting / deliverability
HN3	First sentence (“co-located”)	Add a short definition of “co-located”; retain the sentence as qualified (it is already subject to “unless there are demonstrable sustainable benefits”).	Certainty
Intro / 5.0	Introduction and “Today” narrative	Further evidence will be provided for the congestion, air quality and accident/injury references. Supporting text only — no policy effect.	Proportionate evidence

Ref	Provision	Modification the Qualifying Body would accept	Purpose
7.2	Flooding paragraph	Correct the “four locations / three problems” inconsistency and reword so it is clear that development must avoid worsening existing related flooding and mitigate its own impacts, and not remedy unrelated pre-existing flooding.	Internal consistency; no unrelated betterment
7.0	Parish Council Actions	Reword the Grampian-condition passage to remove pejorative characterisation. These are Parish Council actions, not development-plan policy.	Tone (non-policy text)

Signed: John Beckitt

For and on behalf of the Qualifying Body

Christleton and Littleton Parish Councils / Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Date: May 12 2026.

ANNEX 1

Parish Council Mark-up of the Representation by Bridgemere UK Limited

KEY TO THIS ANNEX

Italic text – the representation submitted by Bridgemere UK Limited, reproduced in full.

Red-Brown text marked  – the responses of Christleton Parish Council, inserted at the relevant points.

SUMMARY OF THE PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE

In summary, the Parish Council's response is that Bridgemere have forgotten that they made the following commitments:

Commitment made by Bridgemere	What actually happened
1. Relocation of the Bridgemere charitable foundation in the walled garden, so as to retain employment on the site.	The relocation was cancelled and the foundation office building became a 6,000 ft ² house.
2. Twelve of the apple trees in the walled garden would be retained.	The builder felled the twelve trees in the Christleton conservation area 'by mistake'.
3. The playing fields would be accessible green space.	Bridgemere fenced off the playing field.

INTRODUCTION

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

*Bridgemere UK Limited (**Bridgemere**) purchased the former Christleton Law College in 2021. Parts of the Land (being the walled garden to Christleton Hall and the former playing fields to the Law College) are directly impacted by draft policies GG2 and LGS1.*

In 2021 Christleton Hall itself was sold to Blueoak Estates (Christleton) Limited and the remainder of the land (excluding the walled garden and the former playing fields) was sold to Castle Green Homes Limited. Bridgemere still owns the walled garden and the former playing fields.

*Christleton Hall, the Castle Green Homes land and the walled garden benefit from planning permission for "redevelopment of the former University of Law Chester campus for residential use (Use Class C3) including demolition of late 20th century buildings; conversion of Christleton Hall to 18 apartments; erection of 24 new residential dwellings and an office building (Use Class E); and associated landscaping, parking and other works" (21/03458/FUL, granted on 12 September 2022) (the **Planning Permission**).*

The plan below shows the approved scheme.



Figure 1 – The approved scheme (21/03458/FUL)

The former playing fields have not been used as sports pitches for a long time and they were not part of the Planning Permission.

The residential development permitted by the Planning Permission has been carried out and completed:

1. The 24 residential dwellings were built by Castle Green Homes.
2. Christleton Hall has been converted into apartments by Blueoak Estates (Christleton).

The Planning Permission permitted development of the walled garden as an office building. The office building (see below) has not yet been built but can be lawfully constructed under the Planning Permission, which has been implemented by virtue of the development referred to at points 1 and 2 above.



Figure 2 – Approved office building: proposed elevations

The walled garden also benefits from Permission in Principle (**PIP**) for a large dwelling in similar form and size as the approved office building (see below). The PIP was issued on 11 October 2024 (24/02349/PIP). The technical approval details have been submitted to Cheshire West and Chester (**CW&C**) for approval.



Figure 3 – Permission in Principle: site plan

Christleton Parish Council objected to the planning application that resulted in the Planning Permission and also to prior planning applications for development of the land.

In summary, the former Law College site has been lawfully developed for a mixture of residential uses. The walled garden benefits from extant planning permission for an office and from a PIP for a residential dwelling. The former playing fields were previously sport pitches serving the Law College. There are no plans, intentions or policy requirements to seek any necessary planning permissions or approvals to reinstate the sport pitch use. The former playing fields did not form part of the Planning Permission.

POLICY GG2

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

Policy GG2 covers the former playing fields at the Law College.

The draft policy provides an unnecessary duplication of Green Belt policy in the NPPF and should be deleted. Adequate protection is provided through Green Belt policy. Furthermore, the PPG (ID: 37-015) is clear that “blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements will not be appropriate. In particular, designation should not be proposed as a ‘back door’ way to try to achieve what would amount to a new area of Green Belt by another name”.

There is no evidence robustly supporting the justification for these blanket designations to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan.

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE

The green gaps provide additional protection to that provided by Green Belt, so as to prevent settlements from merging into one another, and therefore preserve the rural character and landscape of the two villages and provide access to open countryside.

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

The policy fails to allow for consideration of the future potential of the former playing fields as grey belt in circumstances where there is a demonstrable unmet need for their development (paragraph 155 of the NPPF).

POLICY LGS1 – LAW COLLEGE PLAYING FIELD AND ORCHARD

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

First, the NPPF is clear at paragraph 107 that Local Green Space designations should only be used where the green space is:

- (a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- (b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
- (c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.*

A number of the proposed LGS designations, viewed in isolation and collectively, are considered to be extensive tracts of land (particularly due to a number of designations lying adjacent to one another) and therefore they are inconsistent with the NPPF. The issue of scale of LGS has been explored by a number of Examiners, including through the following Neighbourhood Plan examinations:

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE

All of the designated local green spaces, except LGS11 Capesthorne Community Orchard, are not extensive tracts of land and are within 100–150 m of the centre of the Village.

They include part of the High School playing field, the Primary School playing field, the recreation area, St James church and graveyard, Boughton Heath allotments, the Pit, the Law College playing field and orchard, Cullimore's field, Birch Heath Common and Legion Meadow. All add to the quality of place and character of Christleton, are justified on pages 51–55 of the Neighbourhood Plan, and satisfy criteria (a), (b) and (c).

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

- *The Examiner's Report to the Oakley and Deane Neighbourhood Plan recommended the deletion of an LGS measuring approximately 5 ha and also found it to be not local in character.*
- *The Examiner's Report to the Alrewas Neighbourhood Plan identified that both sites proposed for LGS designation, 'in relation to the overall size of Alrewas village', comprised extensive tracts of land measuring approximately 2.4 ha and 3.7 ha.*
- *The Examiner's Report to the Brixworth Neighbourhood Plan recommended the deletion of three proposed LGS due to the lack of evidence supporting their designation. In doing so, the Examiner recommended the deletion of one LGS measuring approximately 2.7 ha.*
- *The Freshford and Limpley Stoke Neighbourhood Examiner's Report identified four sites that collectively comprised an extensive tract of land that was not local in character, and therefore did not meet the criteria for Local Green Space designation. In addition, the Neighbourhood Plan stated, 'the Local Green Space is needed to prevent agglomeration between the settlement areas', to which the Examiner concluded that this is not a purpose of Local Green Space designation.*

Cumulatively, LGS2 and LGS3 measure approximately 3.8 ha, LGS1 measures approximately 2 ha across two parcels and the adjacent LGS measures 2.5 ha. In addition to the other LGS designations, these are considered cumulatively to comprise extensive tracts of land, particularly in relation to the size of the settlement.

Secondly, the LGS overlap with many Green Gap policies and (notwithstanding the above comments) the duplication of policy is unnecessary and confusing. Beyond supporting text within the Neighbourhood Plan document itself, there is no evidence specifically supporting or seeking to justify the local green space designations. Therefore, it is considered that the designations are contrary to the guidance in the PPG, which identifies that Neighbourhood Plans should be supported by proportionate, robust evidence that supports the choices made and the approach taken.

Specifically in respect of LGS1, the draft policy states:

Green field designated a playing field only 100 m from the Village Green.

Separates the new Law College housing development from the unacceptable noisy A55.

Large tree planting around the edges of the field which link to the canal and nature connectivity.

The walled orchard is part of the grade II listing and a crucial setting for Christleton Hall.

The housing developer agreed to retain the rare apple trees in the Orchard and provide the residents of the new houses with access to the playing field and the orchard.

The housing development builder felled all the trees 'by mistake' – this green space must be reinstated as an orchard. Access to the playing field and the orchard must be provided to the residents of the new houses.

The tenor and tone of the policy are argumentative and use subjective language without any evidential basis. The language is not appropriate for a development plan policy.

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE

The above wording is an objective statement of fact. The Parish Council agreed with Bridgemere that the apple trees would be DNA tested, and subsequently agreed to retain twelve of the rarest trees, which were included in an early Bridgemere landscape planning application submission. Bridgemere called two of the Parish Councillors to inform them that all the apple trees had been felled 'by mistake'.

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

The PPG deals specifically with circumstances where land has planning permission for development. It states:

What if land has planning permission for development?

Local Green Space designation will rarely be appropriate where the land has planning permission for development. Exceptions could be where the development would be compatible with the reasons for designation or where planning permission is no longer capable of being implemented.

Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 37-008-20140306. Revision date: 06 03 2014.

Accordingly, it is not appropriate to designate the walled garden as LGS.

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE

Free access to the Orchard by residents of the new houses was indicated verbally by Bridgemere, alongside the commitment to retain twelve of the apple trees in the Orchard. That offer was withdrawn without agreement when the foundation office building was converted into a single 6,000 ft² dwelling with a landscaped garden which did not include an Orchard.

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

The Land has been on the market for over a year and has not been sold.

The draft policy contains a number of inaccuracies:

- *‘the unacceptable noisy A55’: The approved housing has been built in accordance with necessary planning permissions. The noise regime from the A55 was considered when granting permission. The development was found acceptable from an acoustic perspective. However, it is unclear whether the comments relate to the existing homes or potential new development. If the latter, any future proposals would need to consider noise and other environmental impacts.*
- *‘The walled orchard is part of the grade II listing and a crucial setting for Christleton Hall’: The walled garden is not crucial to the setting of Christleton Hall. This can be seen from the CWaC Built Environment Officer (Conservation and Design) response dated 24 February 2025 in respect of the PIP technical approval application:*

We have assessed this TDC application for the proposed new build adjacent to the walled garden at Christleton Hall and have concluded that the proposal will result in no harm to the character or setting of the listed hall. The setting of the hall has been massively compromised over time by the addition of various educational buildings and a car park. These have been removed and replaced by a residential housing development, but the historic setting of the hall can in no way be said to be extant, except perhaps when viewed from within the grounds to the northwest. The interrelation between the hall and walled garden has been less impacted, but has been interrupted by buildings and a car park in recent years, such that we can say there is no long-surviving historic interrelation between the two that will be compromised by this proposal.

The proposed materials for the new building, which has already been accepted in principle twice, are appropriate for the setting of the hall. We would recommend the addition of a condition to any grant of permission for this proposal to require that details of all external finishes and materials be submitted for approval prior to installation.

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE

Because the walled garden directly adjoins the historic footprint of Christleton Hall (list entry 1187229) and has been an ancillary part of the original country house grounds since well before the statutory cut-off date of 1 July 1948, it is **fully protected under the legal principle of curtilage**.

The walled garden carries the exact same Grade II legal protections as the main hall framework.

While the official Historic England listing description for Christleton Hall (1187229) is notoriously brief, the walled garden has a rich historical and architectural profile that has been heavily detailed in local history records and recent planning assessments by Cheshire West and Chester Council.

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

- *‘The housing development builder felled all the trees “by mistake” – this green space must be reinstated as an orchard’: These are ill-informed, inaccurate and unfortunate assertions that are totally without merit and inappropriate for a development plan policy. The trees were removed in accordance with the Planning Permission and, at the time of the application for the Planning Permission, they were either dead or in poor condition, as confirmed by survey data.*

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE

Bridgemere and the Parish Council agreed that the orchard trees would be DNA tested by a tree professional, and twelve were then earmarked to stay as they were healthy and produce rare apple varieties. We have photographs of the trees proving they were healthy. The builder started work on the site and felled all the trees in the orchard and the conservation area ‘by mistake’. The site manager apologised to two Parish Councillors for the mistake and committed to replace the apple trees.

In earlier discussions Bridgemere indicated that the housing residents would have access to the Orchard around the Bridgemere charity building as well as the playing field.

The comments and report of **Katie Lowe of Heathfield Orchards**, recording the results of her examination and DNA testing of the Orchard trees, are inserted below.

Comments of Katie Lowe, Heathfield Orchards

Here's my brief report on the orchard in the Walled Garden at the Law College. I was really disappointed and saddened to hear that the trees had all been removed. It was a beautiful orchard with a lot of life left in it that could have been enjoyed for many years to come.

Traditional Orchards are classified as a Priority Habitat by Natural England and as such are a material consideration in the planning system. If the orchard was in the Christleton Conservation Area it would have been a protected habitat and would have needed written notice from CWaC before any work was carried out on it.

Pete tells me the Mere de Menage tree was one of the ones selected for retention by the developer. He also mentioned that Bridgemere had said they would pay for DNA testing of the trees that were still unknown varieties; however, this never happened.

I've got a plan of the orchard and several photos of the site taken on my visit if you need them.

Report of Heathfield Orchards

Heathfield Orchards visited the Law College's Walled Garden orchard on 15th October 2021 at the request of Christleton Parish Council. We carried out a basic appraisal of each tree on site and drew up a plan of the area showing the location of each tree within the Walled Garden. Some varieties were easily identifiable and were noted on the plan.

The trees were of an unknown age but were obviously several decades old and had been planted in a grid pattern, typical of traditional heritage orchards. There were 37 living fruit trees on site with the remains of 2 dead trees still in-situ. Most of the trees were apple, with a few pear trees and a plum tree also present.

One of the trees was identified as a heritage Cheshire variety called Mere de Menage. This was a large tree in excellent health – a superb specimen.

All of the other trees were in good health and many were producing copious amounts of fruit at the time of our visit. I could foresee no reason why the trees would not have continued living healthily for many years to come.

Some of the trees would have benefitted from a little maintenance pruning in order to: clear out any dead wood, open up the canopies where they were a little congested, and to cut back branches that had broken under the weight of fruit.

Katie Lowe, Heathfield Orchards

Bridgemere drawing showing the Orchard trees to be retained:



BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

- *‘Access to the playing field and the orchard must be provided to the residents of the new houses’: This has no planning purpose. There is no requirement under the existing permission to provide access to these areas of land. The former playing fields and walled garden are privately owned by Bridgemere and they have never been generally accessible for use or enjoyment by the community. Castle Green Homes has never had any ability to offer them for use by the residents and has not done so. The walled*

garden is enclosed, and the playing fields are fenced in accordance with public liability insurance requirements to prevent public access. There are no plans to reinstate the sports pitches and there is no intention or obligation to make the former playing fields or the walled garden available for use by the community.

Critically, there is no public access to the proposed LGS1 designation, and it cannot be considered to be demonstrably special to a local community. This conclusion is supported by the findings of the Examiners of both the Middleton St George and Hadley Wood Neighbourhood Plans.

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE

Bridgemere offered to gift the playing fields to the Parish Council, and at a meeting on 13 May 2020 Gary Hallman of Avison Young minuted the discussion as follows:

GH flagged that the issue of how to treat the former playing fields in the context of the emerging application proposals continued to be debated. Sport England are likely to want to protect the former use and object to any “loss”, and previously required the applicant to retain the land as formal recreational provision, with an obligation to enhance them, build a pavilion and open up to public use. PC Members confirmed this was not what they would wish to see, and they remained in favour of exploring financial support of existing facilities which they have management responsibility for, as opposed to the creation of further new facilities. Bridgemere will continue to explore the best option, as it is important to avoid a Sport England objection, and JM welcomed the Parish Council Members’ confirmation that their position on this issue had not changed. **JM requested a letter from the Parish Council, confirming that it had sufficient playing fields already and wished to secure this land as accessible green space. The caveat raised by JE and KS was that this land would not form part of any future development and this assurance was given by JM.**

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE (CONTINUED)

On 26 May 2020 the Parish Council wrote to Bridgemere and included the following statement:

I can confirm that the Parish Council does not wish to see a duplication of sports facilities at the UOL and that the former playing fields be left as accessible green space not forming part of any future development.

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE (CONTINUED)

The Parish Council from this point onwards assumed public access to the orchard and playing field. However, the former was gated off and the latter abruptly fenced off, preventing its use *as accessible green space*.

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

The Examiner of the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan stated:

“LGS11 – The area consists of a grass field crossed by footpaths. There is no recreational use of the field as a whole other than the use of the footpaths and it does not have any particular landscape value. It does not form part of the rural gap between the settlements. A representation has been made objecting to the designation. It is considered that the site does not merit designation as a LGS.”

Whilst the Hadley Wood Neighbourhood Plan Examiner concluded the following in respect of the proposed LGS8 designation:

“...although it is in close proximity to the community it serves, [it] is not publicly accessible and is operated as pasture/grazing land. From my site visit, I realised that current views of the Duchy site from public vantage points are limited by mature vegetation, topography and hedgerows. Occupiers of properties along Camlet Way, Crescent West and Bartram’s Lane may enjoy attractive private views across the land from their rear gardens and upper windows, especially in winter when vegetation may die back. However, the lack of public accessibility, combined with limited public viewpoints from within the Hadley Wood Neighbourhood Plan area, go against the requirement for being demonstrably special to the local community, in my opinion. The site is not used by the community for walking and recreational purposes as are the other proposed LGSs on the edge of the built-up area of Hadley Wood...

...Overall, I conclude that the case for LGS designation of LGS8 is not sufficiently strong. I recommend that Policy HW-6 and Figure 20 are modified to remove it as a LGS, for consistency with national planning policy.”

Overall, the policy is drafted in terms that the Parish Council and authors of the Neighbourhood Plan appear to want to have a ‘second bite of the cherry’ to seek to frustrate lawful development, on land the development of which it has frequently objected to over many years and other planning applications.

A Neighbourhood Plan policy is not the place to re-run those objections, which have been heard and dismissed. The development permitted by the Planning Permission has been lawfully implemented, and no enforcement action has ever been taken by CWaC. The proposed designation of LGS1 does not meet the criteria identified in NPPF paragraph 107. Furthermore, the NPPF is clear that ‘designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services.’ It is considered that the policy choices in the Neighbourhood Plan are therefore contrary to the NPPF.

Policy LGS1 is not capable of being amended and should be deleted in its entirety.

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE

The Walled Garden directly adjoins the historic footprint of Christleton Hall (1187229) and has been an ancillary part of the original country house grounds since well before the statutory cut-off date of 1 July 1948; it is **fully protected under the legal principle of curtilage**. Bridgemere committed to retain the twelve ancient apple trees and felled them ‘by mistake’

The Playing Fields must be retained as the agreed **accessible green space**. **These two spaces are very different and must be considered separately.**

OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

*A number of policies use the word ‘**must**’ (emboldened to add unnecessary emphasis) as a way to prohibit development or place extra tests and requirements on development proposals.*

The word ‘must’ is used 156 times in the draft Neighbourhood Plan, many times to place absolute requirements on development – whereas ‘must’ only appears nine times in the NPPF and never in the context of an absolute requirement that a development proposal must, or must not, do something.

By contrast, the word ‘should’ is used 442 times in the NPPF and 62 times in the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

The Examiner is requested to review the use of the word ‘must’ in the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE

The Neighbourhood Plan provides requirements that protect the semi-rural nature, heritage, wildlife, future environmental performance and character of the Villages. Use of the word ‘must’ is required so as to ensure that these requirements are not simply set aside.

Furthermore, on page 14 of the Neighbourhood Plan, in line with the Model National Design Code and the emerging CWaC design code, there are three levels of design instruction. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has chosen ‘**must**’ when a requirement is mandatory.

THE INTRODUCTION TO THE DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

The **Introduction** to the draft Neighbourhood Plan sets an unfortunate tone. It refers to a series of ‘unchecked’ developments which the authors believe threaten the rural character of the village by:

- *being too high;*
- *being too densely packed;*
- *eliminating open views;*
- *invading privacy of adjacent housing;*
- *being of a low quality and unsympathetic to the character and heritage of the village.*

These are subjective terms (and in some cases emotive) that are without evidence, and they fail to recognise that all developments would have been approved by CWaC, so cannot be characterised as unchecked, as they would have undergone full scrutiny.

In terms of quality of development approved in Christleton, the Examiner is respectfully requested to view the Castle Green Homes development off Pepper Street to appreciate the quality of development which has been built in Christleton.

In a similar vein, the draft Neighbourhood Plan talks about the persistent adverse impact of development on the village. The wording is disappointing and, without evidence, should be removed.

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE

An objective view of the recent developments along the A41 would support the above assertions: Saughton Camp (unadopted roads and inadequate drainage and waste water treatment), Wyldewood (too high, and 140 of 155 dwellings unoccupied), A41 developments (poorly specified affordable houses), Christleton Village (large houses in backland that overlook other houses), and finally developments that block off distant views.

CHRISTLETON AND LITTLETON TODAY

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

There are several unevidenced references to problems with congestion, adverse air quality conditions and accident/injury records. While understanding the authors' concerns, such references must be fully evidenced (by experts or suitably qualified professionals) to justify their inclusion in a development plan document. For example, the Air Quality Report in the 'link' appears to have been undertaken by volunteer members of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and the results do not appear to support the concerns expressed.

It is unclear what the evidential basis is for the reference to a 60-foot plume of PM2.5s, not least as PM2.5s are invisible.

This section of the draft Neighbourhood Plan should be deleted or substantially rewritten using appropriate evidence.

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE

Professionally qualified engineers and scientists, with experience of environmental issues, have measured air quality with portable PLUME instruments which they calibrated at the Wrexham and Frodsham AURN (Automatic Urban and Rural Network) and sites. The Plume measurements are consistent with average CWaC, DEFRA and Imperial College measurements but the Plume instruments provide instantaneous measurements not only of NO₂ but also PM2.5 and PM10 and have which revealed peak concentrations on the A41 and A51 that are many times the WHO and DEFRA target levels.

This critically important **Air Quality Report** evidence is provided in the Neighbourhood Plan. The 60 ft diameter clouds referenced have been measured by our engineers, using portable PLUME analysers. Whereas NO₂ is lighter than air and disperses, PM2.5 particles are heavier than air and form these large clouds that do not disperse. PM2.5 exposure is the next major challenge following smoking and asbestos, as it causes a wide range of chronic respiratory, cardiovascular, neurological and cancer conditions as well as birth defects. The Air quality measured on the A41/A51 by the CWaC diffusion tubes is worse than 77/90% of the measurements in the Chester Air Quality Management Area. The level of pollution is comparable to other large urban areas and heavily used highways.

Our engineers and scientists also have full access to the environmental and scientific library at Manchester University as well as the regular British Medical Journal publications which have informed the evidence presented here and in the Air Quality Report

Early in the Air Quality Report it states:

About 4 million people die globally each year as a result of outdoor exposure to particulate air pollution. In Europe, 520,000 excess deaths a year were attributed to air pollution in 2017. In the UK 40,000 deaths a year are attributed to air pollution, with London alone contributing 10,000 deaths. These deaths are mainly due to exposure to nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM).

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE (CONTINUED)

The daily long traffic queues on the A41 and A51 are self-evident and observed by hundreds of residents and the overall accident injury rate can be observed on CRASHMAP - See www.crashmap.co.uk/Search:

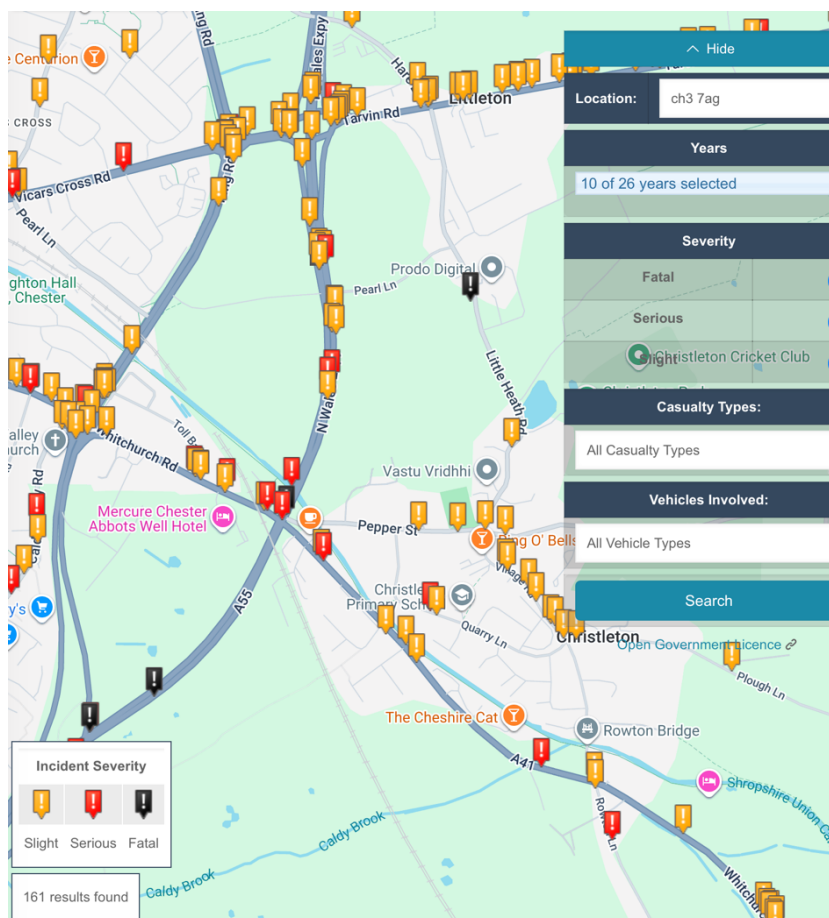


Figure 4 – CrashMap extract: recorded incidents, Christleton and Littleton area

POLICY NH3 – BROWNFIELD AND GREENFIELD DEVELOPMENT

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

The policy uses the term ‘co-located’, which is not defined. Nevertheless, there is nothing to suggest that development being located close to existing development or connecting with shared access provision is unsustainable. The first sentence of the policy should be deleted.

DESIGN CODE

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

The majority of the Neighbourhood Plan is taken up with policies intended to serve as a design code. It is recommended that these policies are removed from the draft Neighbourhood Plan and are included in a separate document which could be appended to the Neighbourhood Plan. The policies are detailed and would substantially benefit from consultation and discussion with design professionals at CWaC (to ensure that the design code is consistent with CWaC’s own design code), local architects and other professionals.

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE

The Neighbourhood Plan design code was provided by Create Streets, who are preparing the CWaC Borough design code. The two codes will be complementary.

POLICY INF1

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

This policy is concerned with sewage and drainage, particularly wastewater. The policy is unnecessary as there is a legal requirement for wastewater companies to provide connection for developments¹. The policy should be deleted as the matter is dealt with by legislation.

Notwithstanding the above, it is assumed that there is a typographical error in the fourth line of the draft policy. The word ‘insufficient’ should be ‘sufficient’.

¹Section 106 of the Water Industry Act 1991.

The justification for the draft policy prays in aid a consultation response from a planning application for 200 homes on the A41. Unfortunately, the quote is selective, and the full quote goes on to say:

Accordingly, it will be necessary for the developer to undertake a development enabling assessment to identify a solution for mitigating the impact of the proposed development. This may include the removal of surface water flows from the immediate public sewerage system to offset the new foul flows from the development. Where this is not possible, the identification of an alternative reinforcement solution to the network via further hydraulic modelling analysis will be required to identify suitable off-site reinforcement works to the public sewerage system.

This illustrates that solutions to wastewater can be found.

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE

We have heard no evidence that Welsh Water are able to provide waste water treatment for large housing developments, but just the opposite. To the contrary, they recently said in response to a large development planning application:

We have considered the impact of foul flows generated by the proposed development and concluded it is unlikely that sufficient capacity exists to accommodate the development within the immediate public sewerage system without causing detriment to the existing services we provide to our customers, or in regard to the protection of the environment.

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

Policy INF1 and the supporting text should be deleted in their entirety.

SECTION 7.0 – PARISH COUNCIL ACTIONS

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

This section is misinformed and the general tenor has an anti-development tone.

For example, when addressing the use of Grampian conditions as a means of restricting development until work is undertaken, the Neighbourhood Plan takes a gratuitous swipe at the development industry by saying a "...developer will try to get around the condition."

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE

That is an accurate statement of the inevitable result of building large developments without a credible waste water plan. If a development is built without the required waste water treatment and a Grampian condition awarded, then it is inevitable that a developer will fight to occupy any houses built. Developers must not be put in the position of building houses that cannot be occupied because of a Grampian condition.

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

There is no recognition that development can and does contribute to upgrading infrastructure to accommodate development.

AIR QUALITY

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

The document implies the increase in PM2.5 is due to tyres and disc brakes and that electric vehicles generate even more PM2.5s. The evidence for this assertion is unclear, and it does not recognise that one of the largest generators of PM2.5s is agriculture, or that some studies show that the highest level of PM2.5s can be found in residential properties.

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE

We have months of evidence and data, collected by professionals, summarised in the Neighbourhood Plan air quality report. We have firm evidence that links traffic volumes to PM2.5 and NO₂ levels on the A41, A51 and in the Villages. Whereas the background levels of PM2.5 are from a range of sources – such as the combination of nitrogen oxides from vehicles combining with ammonia from agriculture, residential heating, wood burners and cooking – the dominant peak component in our area is brakes and tyres from the 30,000 vehicles/day on the A51, 20,000 vehicles/day on the A41 and 2,500 vehicles/day through the centre of Christleton Village. The following graphs reveal the relationship between traffic flow and NO₂, PM2.5 and PM10. Electric vehicles are heavier and will continue to

produce these particles until the materials of brake discs, tyres and road surfaces are improved.

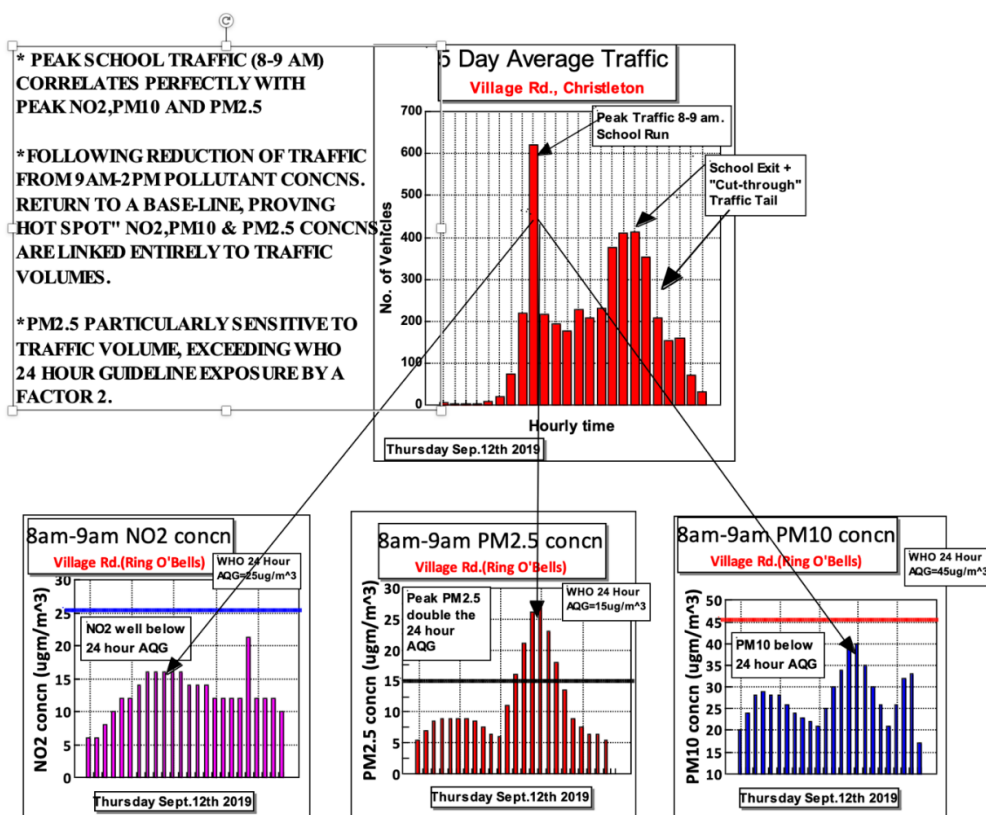


Figure 5 – Measured relationship between traffic flow and NO₂, PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ concentrations

FLOODING

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

The paragraph refers to four locations where there is flooding and requires development to resolve three problem areas. The paragraph is confusing and, moreover, there is no policy requirement for a development to resolve issues which it does not impact. Unrelated betterment is not a requirement of development.

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE



This is photograph of the current regular High School flooding caused by waste water treatment capacity limitations:

If a development were approved and further overloaded the already overloaded drainage and sewage facilities in the centre of the Village, then the development must either be refused permission or the development must make contributions to increase drainage and sewage capacity to prevent flooding that causes flooding in the Villages and closes access to the schools.

Figure 6 – Flooding at the High School access

HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

There is no evidence that the roundabout on the A41 is overloaded or that queues can be half a mile long.

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE

There are A41 queues from the A41 hamburger junction to Waverton, and there are A51 queues from the A55 junction to Bridge Trafford and on to Tarvin, every morning and afternoon. This results in Christleton and Littleton cut-through traffic that multiplies the flows and creates gridlocks and frequent pavement mountings in the middle of Christleton Village, amongst 1,200 children walking, cycling and being driven to and from school.

SUMMARY

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

Bridgemere consider that the Christleton & Littleton Neighbourhood Plan does not meet basic conditions as amended by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, specifically basic conditions (a) and (d), and also seeks to frustrate the delivery of permitted development, including the delivery of housing.

It is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan should not proceed to referendum on this basis.

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE

This Bridgemere representation is full of inaccuracies and unevidenced assertions. The examination process provides a vehicle for an objective assessment of the evidence provided to support the Neighbourhood Plan.

BRIDGEMERE ASSERTION

Should the Examiner consider that a hearing is necessary, Bridgemere request the opportunity to contribute to the examination process and provide oral representations.

Bridgemere UK Limited 25 May 2026

ANNEX 2

Evidence – notes of meetings and a key report

1-Playing field as accessible green space - May 13 2020

2-First reference to DNA of Orchard apple trees - Feb 9 2021

3-Second reference to DNA of Orchard Apple trees – June 7 2021

4-Heathfield Orchards review of Orchard apple trees

Note of a video conference call with Members of Christleton Parish Council

University of Law, Christleton

13 May 2020

Participating

John Beckitt; John Eccles; Kate Sinclair; Susan Robson Christleton Parish Council

Jonathan Masters Bridgemere Land

Gary Halman Avison Young

The meeting had been arranged at the request of Parish Council members for a mutual update including progress from Bridgemere on the temporary construction access and feedback from the Parish Councils recent discussions on the emerging proposals for the site.

The following is a summary note of the key points

1. JM reported progress with the landowner Stuart Arden over the Little Heath Road option for a temporary construction access route, albeit at quite a cost. It is hoped this can be formalised in which case permission will be sought for this as a construction route when the application is submitted. PC Members felt this was a big step forward.
2. The last full PC meeting (held virtually) discussed the public consultation and emerging plans. JE commented on the survey result in respect of the much smaller number of respondents (37%) in support of the redevelopment. JM explained why in statistical terms this could be considered positively. JE then asked whether other options *(such as office development) had been considered before Bridgemere embarked on the residential led proposals. JM confirmed they had been and residential was the only viable use that would cross fund and secure the future of the Listed Hall, conversion of which was uneconomic on its own account.
3. Other key issues, previously flagged to Bridgemere, which will need to be responded to include traffic impacts on the village centre; air quality and education provision. JB said that previously those promoting the applications had not been sufficiently transparent on these issues, with a lack of feedback to the local community. JM confirmed that all of these issues seemed to have been resolved as part of the previous application but clearly, the previous applicant hadn't communicated this properly to the local community. JM also confirmed Bridgemere will be open and all these matters are part of the ongoing dialogue with CWaC officers the outcome of which will be shared with the PC Members in due course.
4. JB said that the PC continued to develop its thinking in relation to environmental enhancement measures in the village centre. There are 3 options for additional car parking being considered and work is ongoing to research their relative

deliverability and feasibility. The PC should be in a position to share their proposals with us within 8 weeks.

5. JB confirmed that Planit has now been separately commissioned to develop schemes related to traffic calming measures and various options for the PC to consider, outputs of which are expected in about 8 weeks' time. Again the PC will share with Bridgemere when available.
6. JM confirmed that in principle and subject to cost and compliance with planning regulations, Bridgemere remain willing to offer a financial contribution to be captured under a s106 Agreement, which the PC can deploy to help support implementation of the environmental enhancement measures, with Bridgemere looking for PC support on the planning application when submitted.
7. GH flagged that the issue of how to treat the former playing fields in the context of the emerging application proposals continued to be debated. Sport England are likely to want to protect the former use and object to any "loss", and previously required the applicant to retain the land as formal recreational provision, with an obligation to enhance them, build a pavilion and open up to public use. PC Members confirmed this was not what they would wish to see, and they remained in favour of exploring financial support of existing facilities which they have management responsibility for, as opposed to the creation of further new facilities. Bridgemere will continue to explore the best option, as it is important to avoid a Sport England objection, and JM welcomed the Parish Council Members confirmation that their position on this issue had not changed. JM requested a letter from the Parish Council, confirming that it had sufficient playing fields already and wished to secure this land as accessible green space. The caveat raised by JE and KS was that this land would not form part of any future development and this assurance was given by JM.
8. JB asked whether it was feasible for Bridgemere to consider accommodating the bridge club within the application site, so as to provide a new venue for it. This would assist in decreasing the village centre parking issues which currently exist. JM confirmed that regrettably this would not be possible, as the Green Belt constraints mean Bridgemere need to carefully marshal the existing built footprint and this capacity is needed in full to support the residential proposals.
9. KS raised a couple of points on 1) further public consultation and 2) no access from Windmill Lane. Re 1), given the enforced move away from a face to face consultation, she felt more village consultation needed to be done and this could be addressed by a "webinar" which allows for live questions. Regarding (2), KS reminded Bridgemere that Windmill Lane is unadopted and consequently there is no access to the site via the boarded gate in the walled garden. JM acknowledged this.

10. The Parish Council meet next on Tuesday 19 May and it was agreed there would continue to be regular dialogue between Bridgemere and PC representatives, as the application scheme is developed. JM said there was still a long way to go, but his hope was that an application will still be possible sometime during the summer. It was estimated that the planning process could take at least a year with the University of Law due to move out in July 2021
11. JM thanked the Parish Council for calling the meeting and for conducting it so courteously. JE similarly thanked Bridgemere for their time and input.

Agreed meeting note issued by GH 18/05/20

CHRISTLETON PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK: MRS SUE THWAITE
6 CHILTERN CLOSE, WESTMINSTER PARK, CHESTER, CH4 7QZ
TEL: 01244 900956 MOB: 07904 242966

Email: clerk@christleton-pc.gov.uk

26th May 2020

Mr. G. Halman
Avison Young
Norfolk House, Manchester M2 1DW

Dear Gary

Former UOL Playing Fields

Thank you for your email of the 18th of May 2020, following on from the agreed note of our strategy group virtual meeting of the 13th of May.

You detailed an issue in respect of the former playing fields at the UOL and the anticipated close interest of Sport England alongside possible consequences. All of these points are noted, not least Section 106 implications.

As your application proposals emerge, you are now seeking the Parish Council's formal position on this area going forward and as discussed at our earlier Strategy Group meetings. Such discussions touched on the Parish Council already providing and being responsible for similar facilities on the King George's Field site and thus seeing no need for duplication. The preference being for financial support to be channelled to these existing facilities rather than taking on new accountabilities at the UOL.

Consequently, I said I would raise this issue at the full Parish Council Meeting on May 19th for consideration and an agreed position.

I can confirm that the Parish Council does not wish to see a duplication of sports facilities at the UOL and that the former playing fields be left as accessible green space not forming part of any future development.

This statement is without prejudice to any later Parish Council response on the wider Planning Application when submitted.

Best regards
Cllr John Eccles
Christleton Parish Council

Cc Mr Jonathan Masters, Bridgmere Land

UOL PRE-MEETING

Present

Jonathan Masters
Gary Halman

Peter Tong
Bob Wilcox
John Beckett

Brief notes

The development is now presented in 4 parts

1 – Conversion of the Hall period building to provide 14 appts by Blue Oak – access up service road not main entrance

2 – Building of 30 homes by Castle Green(was McBride)

3 – New office block built to rear of walled garden – small proportion of area available

4 – Building of 10 homes, adjacent to existing Cheshire Cat, by Castle Green
Existing tasteless development stalled whilst waiting for UU waste water plant

Rear construction access confirmed – meeting Little Heath Road at first gate after last house

They feel they have responded to the first community consultation and to the PC with

1 – The shift from affordable housing in the orchard to an attractive office block occupying a small proportion of the orchard

2 – Reasonably spaced and not densely packing housing on main development

3 – The provision of rear construction access

4 – The provision of affordable housing on the Cheshire Cat site – will be presented as a linked development

Issues raised by working group as follows

Construction access

The chosen route will be in the planning application BUT will not be mentioned in the forthcoming consultation – they are concerned that a road across greenbelt for whatever purpose will be misunderstood

PC will provide times of school drop off and pickup when construction access should be avoided

Access on to Little Heath road needs to be supervised to eliminate traffic and pedestrian risks

Only large HGVs will use the rear access – all other small vans will be advised to use the Pepper St bridge access to the A41(helps Littleton)

Utilities

The request to ensure storm water put into the canal registered – too early in design

Electricity and gas not specified but importance of not disturbing the road through the Village registered

Green space

Outside red line of development to avoid Sports England requirements – changing rooms, car park, pitches

PC suggestions for winter walk, trees and species protection registered – respond later

Orchard

We recommend that we take DNA samples in the spring and cuttings in nov/dec so that any of the ancient trees that have to be removed to accommodate the office development can be recreated elsewhere by grafting on to new root stock

Cost for 10 trees = £620

Cost for 20 trees = £940

Approval required

Contribution to Village

They are minded to contribute to transformation of Village Green but the quantum is a function of the development scope – they are hoping that there is no reduction in scale as a result of Village and CWAC consultations – they will make a decision at the end of their consultations

Milestones – earliest dates

Preaap – asap

Planning permission – Easter

Receive planning permission and S106 signed – September

Update ecological surveys over summer

UOL Update – June 7 2021

Present

Jonathan Masters

Kate Sinclair

Pete Tong

John Beckitt

The University will vacate the site a few days after July 31 when Bridgemere will be responsible for security – a car had been spotted parking at the entrance?

CWAC planning had indicated that they were likely to refuse permission for the 10 affordable houses located on the A41 site adjacent to the Cheshire Cat – Bridgemere was therefore planning on leaving one of UOL buildings standing and converting it into 3/4 affordable units of around 800ft² each

The overall development size looked like being 24 houses, 14 apartments and 3/4 affordable units(in the development) compared with the original proposal of 30 houses, 14 apartments and 10 affordable units(on the A41)

The rear access haul road route not chosen yet but would start on the east side of the site, well away from adjacent houses, avoid trees and join Little Heath Road at the first gate - meeting with the farmer at the end of this week – a route map would be provided when available

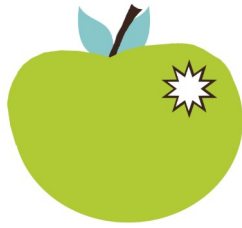
Our proposals for development of the green space could not be implemented at this time so as not to trigger the interest of Sports England – consideration at a later date possible

Bridgemere would provide Pete Tong with access to the orchard after July 31 to carry out DNA sampling of the fruit trees

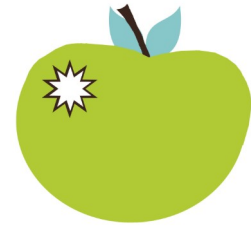
Utilities not addressed in detail but storm water to canal and other utilities should avoid need to dig up pavements and the resurfaced roads – confirmation required later

The PC had previously listed a few Village proposals that would benefit from a developer contribution – the emerging need to replace the play area behind the PIT was added for consideration by Bridgemere

John Beckitt



**Heathfield Orchards
Heathfield
Tarvin Road
Littleton
Chester CH3 7DF**



07870 140520

Christleton Law College

Heathfield Orchards visited the Law College's Walled Garden orchard on 15th October 2021 at the request of Christleton Parish Council. We carried out a basic appraisal of each tree on site and drew up a plan of the area showing the location of each tree within the Walled Garden. Some varieties were easily identifiable and were noted on the plan.

The trees were of an unknown age but were obviously several decades old and had been planted in a grid pattern, typical of traditional heritage orchards. There were 37 living fruit trees on site with the remains of 2 dead trees still in-situ. Most of the trees were apple with a few pear trees and a plum tree also present.

One of the trees was identified as a heritage Cheshire variety called Mere de Menage. This was a large tree in excellent health – a superb specimen.

All of the other trees were in good health and many were producing copious amounts of fruit at the time of our visit. I could foresee no reason why the trees would not have continued living healthily for many years to come.

Some of the trees would have benefitted from a little maintenance pruning in order to: clear out any dead wood, open up the canopies where they were a little congested and to cut back branches that had broken under the weight of fruit.

Katie Lowe
Heathfield Orchards

Appendix 1

Code Number	Fruit Type	Variety	Notes
A1	Apple	Unknown	
A2	Apple	King of the Pippins	
A3	Apple	Allington Pippin	
A4	Apple	Charles Ross	
A5	Apple	Unknown	
A6	Apple	Egremont Russet	
A7	Pear	Unknown	
A8	Pear	Unknown	
A9	Pear	Unknown	
A10	Pear	Unknown	
A11	Pear	Unknown	
A12	Pear	Unknown	
A13	Pear	Unknown	
A14	Apple	Unknown	
A15	Apple	Unknown	
B1	Apple	Bramley	
B2	Pear	Unknown	
C1	Apple	Charles Ross	
C2	Apple	Unknown	
C3	Apple	Unknown	An eating apple
C4	Apple	Tydemans Early Worcester	
C5	Apple	Unknown	
C6	Apple	Unknown	
C7	Apple	Cox's Orange Pippin	
D1	Apple	Unknown	
D2	Apple	Unknown	
D3	Apple	Unknown	
D4	Apple	Unknown	
D5	Apple	Newton Wonder	
D6	Apple	Unknown	
D7	Apple	Unknown	
D8	Apple	Unknown	

E1	Apple	Unknown	
F1	Apple	Mere de Menage	Heritage Cheshire variety.
F2	Plum	Unknown	
F3	Pear	Unknown	
F4	Pear	Unknown	