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8th January 2026

Dear Zoe,

Re: Northstone housing proposal for Lostock Gralam

Lostock Gralam Parish Council writes in response to the recent Northstone public consultation regarding the proposed development of over 200 dwellings on land off Manchester Road, Lostock Gralam.

The Parish Council has gathered comments from residents through written correspondence and at a well-attended public meeting held on Monday 5 January 2026. Having carefully reviewed all representations received, the Council wishes to formally raise the concerns expressed by residents, some of which are considered serious. In particular, the Council wishes to draw your utmost attention to concerns relating to the aviation fuel pipeline that runs through the site. Residents are acutely aware of the presence of this pipeline and, while recognising that the Health and Safety Executive will provide technical advice, have expressed strong concern that the age of the pipeline is a key factor in their nervousness regarding its long-term integrity. These concerns are heightened by the potential impact of construction works and the introduction of new housing placing additional stress on the pipeline, with potentially severe consequences should a failure occur, posing a risk to the existing community

The Parish Council has significant concerns regarding the increase in vehicle movements along Manchester Road. Planning permission has already been granted by the Secretary of State for the Wallerscote Limebed Solar Park, which is expected to generate an additional 86 two-way HGV movements along Manchester Road over a five-year period. The A556 is also expected to see increased HGV traffic once the Lostock Sustainable Energy from Waste plant becomes operational in 2026, in addition to construction and future residential traffic arising from this proposed development.

Manchester Road is already heavily congested, and the cumulative impact of these developments will significantly worsen the situation. The Hall Lane traffic lights do not have a right-turn filter, with the junction already operating at maximum capacity at peak times. As a result, HGVs waiting to turn right from Manchester Road into Hall Lane regularly block traffic heading towards the town centre, creating long queues. This has led to surrounding residential roads, including Townshend Road, being used as rat runs, causing ongoing disruption and safety concerns for residents.

If traffic volumes are to increase further, the Parish Council requests that a new set of traffic signals be considered at the Hall Lane traffic lights to include a right-turn filter, and that a controlled pedestrian crossing be provided at the existing Manchester Road refuge adjacent to the Stubbs Lane play area to allow residents to cross safely.

The Parish Council also wishes to highlight the existing parking and congestion issues associated with Lostock Gralam Primary School. There is already insufficient parking capacity, with staff overflow parking taking place on School Lane. Residents frequently raise concerns about congestion at school opening and closing times, with the surrounding side roads unable to cope with the current demand. Many parents rely on car travel to allow onward journeys to work. If there is any future extension to the school to accommodate additional pupils arising from new developments, parking provision within the village will need to be increased accordingly.

The Parish Council notes that the proposed development would increase demand on local schools, GP surgeries, and dental services, which are already under pressure. The Council would expect Cheshire West and Chester Council to carefully consider these impacts when calculating the necessary S106 contributions.

The Council acknowledges that Northstone was open to the suggestion of incorporating allotments within their proposal. The parish currently has no allotment provision, so this is welcomed. The Council also acknowledges that Northstone appears amenable to creating a safer footpath option on the inner side of the Manchester Road hedge, in response to resident concerns about the narrowing footpath towards the gyratory. Again, the Parish Council would welcome a safer walking route while retaining the existing hedgerow.

The potential loss of this agricultural field is significant, and there is strong feeling within the community about Green Belt land being used for housing. Retaining the back of the field as green space is important to the Council and community, as any loss of fields is concerning not only for the village's character but also for the rich wildlife that inhabits this site—something which enriches the lives of Lostock Gralam residents, who enjoy seeing wildlife right on their doorstep.

Below is a summary of resident concerns regarding the Northstone housing proposal;

1. Scale of Development and Impact on Village Character

Residents are concerned about the scale of the proposed development for a semi rural village, the 2021 Census recorded a population of 2,718 residents; an additional 200 dwellings would represent a population increase of approximately 17%.

There is a strong feeling within the community that Lostock Gralam has already accommodated a significant level of new housing in recent years, particularly through the development of the Lostock Triangle, and that the cumulative impact of further large-scale development is altering the character of what has traditionally been a semi-rural village.

Many residents said that they chose to live in Lostock Gralam because of its green setting and village identity, and that they are concerned that continued development of this scale will lead to the permanent loss of this character.

Residents also raised concerns that the area currently shown as open space on the development proposal could be subject to a Phase 2 development in the future, which would further erode the village's green setting and open character.

2. Green Belt, Agricultural Land and Precedent

The site is currently agricultural land and is Green Belt. Its loss is considered unacceptable by residents, particularly due to concerns that development of this field would set a precedent for further development of surrounding land, ultimately eroding the remaining open space between existing developments.

Residents also note that Cheshire West and Chester has already delivered housing above its original targets, and many feel it is unnecessary to build further in Lostock Gralam. There is strong concern about where the additional population for these proposed homes would come from, with residents questioning whether there is genuine local demand.

Residents strongly object to the permanent loss of productive agricultural land and are bitterly disappointed at the prospect of Green Belt land in the village being used for development.

3. Infrastructure Capacity – Schools, Health and Community Services

A dominant concern among residents relates to the capacity of local infrastructure to cope with further development:

- **Schools:** Lostock Gralam Primary School has very limited remaining capacity (approximately 19 places) with little or no room for expansion. Residents do not believe the local primary school could accommodate the number of children likely to arise from a 200-home development.
- **Healthcare:** Lostock Gralam has no GP surgery or dental practice. Residents already experience difficulty accessing GP and NHS dental appointments, and there is strong concern that additional population growth will exacerbate these pressures. References in the consultation literature to Northwich Victoria Infirmary as a “local hospital” have been widely criticised by residents as misleading, as it has no A&E or inpatient facilities. It is also noted that the village has four care homes, and residents consider that a doctors’ surgery within the village is needed.
- **Dentistry:** NHS dental provision locally is already under extreme strain, with residents struggling to secure appointments within a reasonable time.

4. Transport, Highways and Road Safety

Residents are extremely concerned about traffic generation and highway safety:

- **Manchester Road (A559) and the A556:** These roads already experience significant congestion, particularly at peak times and during incidents.
- **Site access:** Concerns have been raised regarding the proposed access to the site, which would be located at an already busy set of traffic lights.
- **Wilson Crescent:** Residents report existing difficulty exiting the road at peak times.
- **Construction traffic:** The level of HGV movements expected during construction was regarded by residents as unacceptable given the current traffic volumes on Manchester Road.
- **Emergency access:** Residents are concerned about maintaining emergency access during periods of congestion.
- **Public transport:** Residents view the provision as poor, with infrequent bus services and an unreliable rail service at Lostock Gralam station.

5. Environmental, Drainage and Flood Risk Concerns

Residents have raised substantial environmental concerns, including:

- **Protected species:** The site is believed to be home to badgers, bats, birds, and there is a strong belief that great crested newts are present. Residents request that proper ecological surveys be carried out over an appropriate timeframe.
- **Flood risk and drainage:** There are concerns that land levelling and the creation of plateaux will alter natural drainage patterns, increasing flood risk to Wilson Crescent, Manchester Road, and the brook, which already experiences flooding.
- **Pollution:** Residents are concerned that construction could result in pollution and chemical runoff, affecting existing waterways.
- **Water table and drainage:** The site has a high local water table, and existing storm drains run down the left side of the proposed site. Residents of Wilson Crescent are concerned that the proposed development could increase flooding risk.

6. Utilities, Pipelines and Safety

Residents raised serious concerns regarding:

- **Gas mains, high-pressure aviation fuel pipeline,** and brine pipes crossing the site.
- Safety exclusion zones and the potential risk to the wider village if these services are disturbed.
- Residents are sceptical that these constraints have been adequately addressed.

We wish to strongly emphasise that both the gas pipeline and the aviation fuel pipeline were significant concerns raised repeatedly by members of the public at the meeting, and that clear assurances to the community will be required to allay concerns regarding their safety should this site proceed to development.

7. Amenity Impact on Existing Residents

Residents living on Wilson Crescent and Wells Avenue expressed strong concerns about:

- Loss of privacy, outlook, and light.
- Years of construction noise, dust, and disturbance.
- Impact on mature trees, including oak, cherry, and fruit trees in Wilson Crescent gardens, with particular concern about root damage from development close to boundaries.
- Increased crime associated with higher population density.

8. Consultation Process and Accuracy of Information

There was widespread dissatisfaction with the consultation itself. Residents described it as a “tick-box exercise” and a PR event rather than meaningful engagement. Key concerns included:

- Consultation material containing inaccuracies or misleading information regarding schools, healthcare, supermarkets, and transport.
- Short consultation period, largely over the Christmas holiday.
- Perception that consultation staff lacked knowledge of the local area and spoke to residents in a dismissive manner.
- Concerns that not all households were properly notified.

This has led to a significant lack of trust in the consultation process and the information provided.

9. Affordability and Local Benefit

Residents do not believe the proposal will meet local housing needs. Concerns were raised that:

- “Affordable housing” may not benefit local people.
- Homes may be bought by private landlords.
- The development does not reflect local demand.

Conclusion

Taken together, the overwhelming view of the community is that this proposal is unsustainable, inappropriate for the location, and inadequately supported by infrastructure. The Parish Council shares residents’ serious concerns regarding the cumulative impact of the development.

Lostock Gralam Parish Council requests that Northstone gives full and genuine consideration to the issues raised above. The Council also expects that these concerns will be fully addressed should a planning application be submitted.

This response reflects the collective views of the community.

On Behalf of Lostock Gralam Parish Council

L. Sandison

L Sandison
Parish Clerk & RFO
Lostock Gralam Parish Council