# Residents voice concerns over proposed housing estate in Five Oak Green



Residents of Five Oak Green, a village located in Kent, are expressing significant concerns over a proposal for a new estate that could bring up to 130 homes to the area. The plans, submitted to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, outline the development on 26 acres of Green Belt land, which includes two farming fields. A key feature of the proposal is the inclusion of a cycle link aimed at improving access to Capel Primary School.

The estate's developer, B.Yond Homes Ltd, which shares an address with Rydon Group Ltd, has indicated that the need for the new housing aligns with Tunbridge Wells borough's identified requirement for 6,000 new homes to be constructed between 2006 and 2026. The plans delineate that half of the residential units would be designated as affordable housing. According to B.Yond, it is necessary for Tunbridge Wells and Southborough to accommodate 75 per cent of the overall housing demand, which leaves 6 per cent for the surrounding villages, including Five Oak Green.

Interestingly, the developer referred to the site as being in what is described as "Grey Belt," a term that gained traction in national planning policy discussions following its introduction by the Government last year. Grey Belt is used to characterise Green Belt land that has been previously developed or is thought not to serve the intended purposes of Green Belt designation.

B.Yond has stated that the design incorporates a dedicated, off-road cycle and pedestrian route intended to replace the narrower pavement currently used by children to walk to school. Furthermore, plans include the establishment of a "village gateway" intended to slow down traffic in close vicinity to the school and improve general road safety. In addition, the proposal outlines the creation of a new 30-space car park for school staff, complete with two designated bays for disabled access, and a "daily mile" track designed for physical activity for the school community.

While B.Yond has pointed out that the majority of the site is classified in Flood Zone 1, indicating a low risk of flooding according to the Environment Agency's mapping, it does concede that a portion of the site in the north-eastern corner is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The developer reassured that its plans include drainage systems designed to handle surface water effectively and suggested flood compensation measures that they believe would offer substantial improvements for existing residents experiencing flooding issues.

Concerns from the community, however, remain poignant. One resident, Simon Payne, described the prospect of this development as "heartbreaking and deeply concerning." He recounted how previous flooding events saw water redirected to preserve existing properties, claiming that the introduction of new homes in this area would lead to heightened flooding risks for established roads and neighbourhoods. “Building 130 properties on here will almost certainly mean that all waters will flood Sychem Place and the main road regularly,” Payne asserted.

Victoria Everest, another resident, echoed worries about existing infrastructure inadequacy, predicting that the local school would not be able to accommodate the influx of new pupils and that local NHS services would come under increasing strain. "More unaffordable housing, more green land gone and not enough infrastructure as it is," she lamented, highlighting potential issues such as parking complications during school pick-up and drop-off times.

As the conversation surrounding this development unfolds, residents’ opposition raises critical questions regarding its potential impact on both the community's environment and its existing services. The proposal, while responding to housing demands, threatens to alter the character of a tightly-knit village in Kent.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.landatfinchesfarm.com> - This website provides information on the B.Yond Homes Ltd proposal for up to 130 new homes in Five Oak Green, including details on the site's location, public open space, flood attenuation measures, and traffic calming features.
* <https://www.landatfinchesfarm.com/faqs/> - The FAQs page offers insights into changes to the proposals, such as the reduction in the number of homes and an increase in affordable housing, along with modifications to highway measures.
* <https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/471952/TWLP_124-Matter-3-Issue-2-Five-Oak-Green-Bypass.pdf> - This document from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council discusses the strategy for Tudeley Village, including considerations for the Five Oak Green bypass and broader housing plans in the area.
* <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/malling/news/there-is-no-safe-greenspace-anymore-316657/> - This article highlights concerns about similar developments in nearby areas, such as Paddock Wood, focusing on issues like flooding, traffic, and greenspace loss, which resonate with the concerns in Five Oak Green.
* <https://docs.planning.org.uk/20231019/238/S2MOA9TYJDW00/lwhymolnmwlmll4f.pdf> - Although not directly related to Five Oak Green, this planning document demonstrates the context of local development projects involving housing and community infrastructure in the region.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-planning-policy-framework> - This government resource provides background information on national planning policies, including concepts like Green Belt designations and any recent terminology or policy changes that might influence local development decisions.
* <https://www.kentlive.news/news/kent-news/plan-130-homes-tight-knit-10104482> - Please view link - unable to able to access data