

HAMMOND GROUND – 4th June 2025

My name is Martin Crabtree. I have lived on George Lane in Read for 40 years. I acted as Chair of the Hammond Ground Residents Group which successfully challenged two Planning Applications and an Appeal at a Public Enquiry between 2016 and 2018 to build initially 50 houses with a view to 700 houses ultimately being built on Hammond Ground.

I have asked to speak on the issue of Point 13H in the minutes of your meeting on 7th May. It is recorded that Hammond Ground would be the "least objected option" for potential locations for additional housing set against Mary's field

It may be the decision was made in the absence of knowledge of the full facts. For the second planning application on Hammond Ground which led to the Appeal in 2018 there were 175 formal objections from residents across Read and Simonstone and a petition against the development was signed by over 400 residents.

The Planning Inspector at the Appeal in 2018 was highly complimentary of Hammond Ground referring to its historical significance, high quality trees and saying "Hammond Ground provides an attractive open parkland setting" for the village. In a later application to build a property at the top of George Lane the Planning Officer referred to protecting "the special characteristics of Hammond Ground for future generations".

In 2013 the landowners of Hammond Ground - Trustees based in Jersey and Monaco responded to a consultation by Ribble Valley proposing that their 50 acre site was suitable to build 702 houses on.

When the first application to build 50 houses on Hammond Ground was lodged we instructed a planning expert Tim Brown who had been Chief Planning Officer at Blackpool Council to assist us. He advised based on his extensive knowledge that the limited number of 50 houses applied for was

just a ploy to get the principle of building on the land past the planners. That would then open the flood gates. There would be later applications aiming to achieve the target of 702.

Our information was the landowners had a 10 year plan from the start of the initial permission to fill the entire 50 acres.

The Parish Council website says there are 600 houses in Read with a population of 1500. The real risk of supporting any initial application for development of Hammond Ground is this will ultimately lead to the number of houses in Read more than doubling and the population increasing by around 2000 more people. Read would be unrecognisable.

I appreciate that there is a real dilemma and the preference would be neither Hammond Ground nor Mary's Field face development. It would be great if there were other options.

Mary's Field is a third of the size at 17 acres of Hammond Ground and it seems various parts of it have already been hived off. Development of Mary's field and numbers involved would have a significant impact on the village but nothing like the drowning of it that would occur as a result of the development of Hammond Ground.

I ask therefore that you reconsider your suggestion that Hammond Ground is the 'least objected to' site.