

## **A View from the District**

The December JDCC had two major issues on its agenda: the County Council's application for a new railway station at Chesterton and two more applications from NW Cambridge.

The station plan was contentious as it failed to meet our criteria on two aspects – the width of the shared-use access path on Cowley Road and the level of ecological damage to biodiversity. Members also raised concerns over the potential noise nuisance of loudspeaker announcements. Ultimately we had to decide whether these factors outweighed the benefits a station would bring, and after a long debate (3 hours) we rather reluctantly approved the application but requested that the conditions relating to the above issues should only be discharged by the full Committee, not by Officers. I have asked for the County to explore the possibility of widening Cowley Road and having an adequately wide cycle lane there, leaving the footway for pedestrians only. The NWC applications, in contrast to the above, were passed in a matter of minutes.

We then had a presentation from the developers of the NIAB sites. NIAB 1 (up to 1593 dwellings, almost entirely within the City) outline planning application was approved a while ago subject to the signing of the Section 106 agreement. This has now been done. There will now be a flurry of subsequent applications for the discharge of conditions placed on the outline approval, and for detailed plans. Meanwhile the developers are working on NIAB 2 and 3, where they wish to erect 1100 dwellings or more, though currently Officers believe the site can only accommodate about 1000. This application will only be presented after the conclusion of the District's Local Plan. We were shown lots of pretty pictures which could not disguise the fact that this development will butt right up to Wellbrook Way and the Thorntons even if the boundary treatment will include a 'Country Park' (housing allotments and recreational space) and the school playing fields. What freedom we shall have to protect these areas I do not yet know.

The NW Cambridge team is continuing to explore the issue of branding the site, and I am promised a briefing when the consultants have reported. I am anxious that the identity of that part of the site within Girton's Parish boundary should somehow be preserved as distinct from the City part. More anon!

If you would like my fuller monthly report emailed to you please contact me at [scdc@de-lacey.org](mailto:scdc@de-lacey.org) and I shall add you to the list of recipients. If you have any District Council issues you would like to discuss please don't hesitate to ask me.

*Douglas de Lacey*