

**Statement by Richard English on behalf of six East Oxford Residents' Associations and  
75 individual Oxford residents on the inclusion of two sites in the Bartlemas  
Conservation Area in the Sites and Housing Development Plan**

**December 2011**

My name is Richard English and I am a resident of East Oxford. In making this appeal I am speaking on behalf of six residents' associations in East Oxford and an additional 75 Oxford residents who have signed this statement..

Tonight the City Council is asked to approve the Proposed Sites and Housing Development Plan for public consultation.

We appeal to the council to support a proposed amendment by Councillor Nuala Young to this document in respect to two sites within the Bartlemas Conservation Area - the Bartlemas Nursery School and the East Oxford Bowls Club.

We are grateful to the City Council for listening carefully and responding to the local community's views and interest in these two sites.

However residents are still very concerned on the need for adequate protection for the Conservation Area and its historic building as well as the need for positive proposals to bring the sites back into active community use.

The two sites play a vital role in helping to preserve the unique rural, open and secluded setting of the Conservation Area and the ancient buildings – the Grade 1 14<sup>th</sup> century chapel and two Grade 2\* buildings that make up this ancient hamlet founded in 1126 by Henry I as a leper hospital. There is no place like it in any urban area in Oxford or anywhere else across the UK and it must be protected at all costs. We urge the Council to give full weight to the findings of the Bartlemas Conservation Area Appraisal, which was the result of extensive consultation with all interested parties and key stakeholders.

The Bartlemas Conservation Area Appraisal states: "Bartlemas is one of the hidden treasures of Oxford, described by the Planning Inspector in 1986 as a 'rare and beautiful enclave which must be preserved'" and "The conservation area benefits from a number of different uses: residential, religious, gardening/recreational and sporting. It is vital that any future management of this area maintains the established balance of uses."

As East Oxford residents we know this beautiful place very well and are convinced that the best option for the redevelopment of the Nursery site is for a low rise day-time community facility. Development options on this site are highly constrained by the historic buildings and their setting and by existing trees, an ancient boundary ditch and access issues. Any development, therefore, should be no larger than the existing nursery footprint and single storey in height and continue to act as a buffer of 'open visible space' as highlighted by two past Planning Appeal Inspectors' when refusing residential proposals for this site in 2009 and 2011.

We believe that the Bowling Green's Local Plan designation (SR2) as a recreational or sporting facility should be confirmed across the whole site – both bowling green and pavilion. This will be in line with the clear wording in the Conservation Area Appraisal on the site's importance to the setting. Any use must contribute to maintaining the rural, open and secluded nature of the Conservation Area and act as an essential buffer between the Cowley Road and the areas historic core and the allotments within it. To do this any proposed recreational buildings on the site must be low impact and single story and views into the conservation area ensured by open green spaces which have been given special attention by past Planning Inspectors and the Conservation Area Appraisal.

We urge the City Council to allocate these sites as suitable for low impact community use for the Nursery site and community recreational use for the Bowling Green. Only in this way will their value as an integral part of the Bartlemas Conservation Area and the setting of the historic buildings be preserved and enhanced and provide benefits to the community and the City.

Thank you