

## Submission to the planning inspectorate

Firstly I understand the representatives from RossConn may have suggested that in my Submission of the 14<sup>th</sup> August, objecting to this planning application, that cyclists regularly use the Radwinter Road between Swards End and Saffron Walden Town.

Just to remind the Inspector of my submission I wrote:-

“Turning to the traffic relief proposals. The installation of a cycleway would be beneficial but the proposal is completely inadequate. It provides access to the western boundary but provides no relief to cyclists beyond the site. The increase in vehicles using this site on what is already a notorious road which has had a number of serious road traffic collisions, actually increases the risk to cyclists traveling into town using the Radwinter Road.

Let me add further to this and provide first hand testimony to the Inspectorate. I doubt anyone from RossConn has ever tried to cycle between Saffron Walden and Swards End along the Radwinter Road. I have.

When we moved to Swards End in August 1998, I was determined to cycle the 3 miles to Audley End station to commute into London. I knew the road was too dangerous to do this in the winter months due to the lack of proper lighting. Nothing prepared me however for just how dangerous it was even during lighter months. After the second occurrence of being force off the road by cars trying to overtake me on one of the three blind bends, I vowed never to cycle the road again, referring to use the longed cole end road route or a byeway known as the goat track from the Thaxted road to cole end road, the latter being rutted and requiring me to get off and walk sections but at least I would be safe. Cycle groups avoid the radwinter road and the addition of more vehicles will compound not alleviate the risks that cyclist face.

My main objection to the Inspectorate is that by granting this planning application, The parish of Swards End, which has existed for centuries will effectively be ended and will become co-terminus with the Town of Saffron Walden.

When we bought our home in March 2021 – Brian Walker of Snow Walker carried out our survey. Mr Walker is a charter surveyor with over 30 years experience working in the area of Saffron Walden.

Mr Walker wrote:-

“Two miles east of the market town of Saffron Walden, the linear village of Swards End lies astride a clay plateau about 150 feet above the Walden Valley. The approach, being the winding B1053 Haverhill Road, was once a river bed and on reaching the plateau, snakes in a long “S” bend through the settlement.

The village is relatively new, all things considered as there was nothing here, other than marshy forest and a few scattered farms during the Norman Conquest. Then Geoffrey de Mandeville granted 60 acres to his food taster, the 6<sup>th</sup> Ref. BPW/mas 21/015 Dane Sigisweard (Sayward), though the village is also understood to have been known over the Centuries as Sywart-les-hand, Swardsende and indeed Sewers End. By 1248 the Wills Ayley monks of St Aylotts controlled the area, though in turn they were sacked by Henry VIII's religious

purges in 1531. Several other land grants followed during the 13th C and the fledgling village developed in conjunction with the adjoining hamlet of Mattens (named for St John Maten)

In summary – the parish of sewards end has a unique identity dating back many centuries with an independent heritage, distinct from the town of saffron walden

Turing to more recent events, a Community Governance review was undertaken in 2021 and a paper was submitted to SWTC full council in 2021. The paper made the following recommendation:-

To redraw the parish boundary line to incorporate the proposed development land off Radwinter Road. For the avoidance of doubt, this is the land which currently rests in the parish of Swards End Parish Council and is proposed for development by Rosconn Group for circa 240 homes. It was further noted that the Town Council maintained its strong opposition and objections to development on this site but equally wished to adopt a pragmatic approach should future planning permission be granted on this site.

The minutes of the conversation state “Cllrs raised concern that requesting a boundary change is premature until a decision is made on the proposed housing development along Radwinter Road (which Saffron Walden and Swards End continue to object too). If the development is approved, this conversation will be had with Swards End Parish Council.”

I work for local government and I am familiar with the important strategic narrative around “place” and the relevance of recognising the unique characteristics of “place” that people can invest in. My plea to the inspectorate is to recognise the vital role you have in preserving the unique identity of a place, The Parish of Swards End, which has existed for centuries. The application will, if granted end that identity, condemning Swards End to being nothing more than conurbation in the town of Saffron Walden. The governance review recognised the real danger of this and I would implore the Inspectorate to refuse this appeal and preserve the identity of this unique parish and village.