

20th March 2026

Re: Planning Application for Land to rear of Mell Road, application ref 22/00066/OUTM

Dear Parish Councilors,

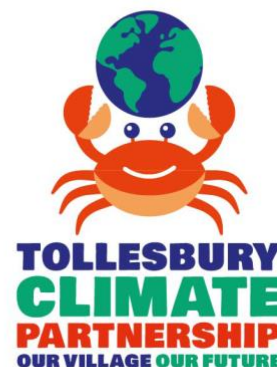
Tollesbury Climate Partnership (TCP) would like to express our concerns around the planning application, submitted by Gladman, for the land to the rear of 6 to 108 Mell Road. We would like to highlight a number of guidelines in the recently published DEFRA Land Use Framework that would support REFUSAL of this planning application.

TCP would also like to suggest an alternative use for the proposed development site that would bring a wide range of community benefit without the challenges associated with a large number of new houses.

Since the foundation of TCP in 2021 one of the organisations long-term goals has been the creation of a Community Market Garden. As part of TCP's focus to increase the sustainability of the village alongside reducing our community's climate impact, the ability to grow more of the food that we need within the village has always been a key objective. In order for a project such as this to succeed we have highlighted three key factors in choosing a site:

- Central location that puts the Market Garden physically as well as holistically at the centre of the community. Being in a central location would be key to encouraging a wide range of people to volunteer and contribute to the management of the project.
- Land which is suitable for growing a range of vegetables and other crops.
- A site that is of sufficient size to support not only the market garden, but other community focused projects that have the potential to generate additional income.

The proposed development site in this application has long been viewed as the ideal location for this community centered project, should it ever become available. It should be noted that if this planning permission were to be approved, this site will be lost as a potential location for such a worthwhile project. When viewing other potential land around the village we have yet to be able to identify anywhere else that fits the criteria so well.



From my own experience of working the land locally, the fields in question seem to be a slightly lighter soil than the majority of heavy clay which abounds in and around the village. This fact alone makes this site a key focus for any potential market garden project.

In order to provide an additional income to support the operation of the market garden, and to further enhance TCP's sustainability objectives, the site could also support a community energy project. The creation of Great British Energy and the Local Power Plan will make community energy schemes much more achievable, as supported by the Low Carbon team at Essex County Council.

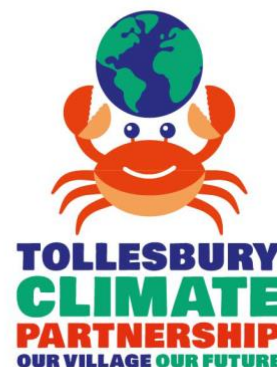
We are also aware of the intention to create a Community Land Trust for Tollesbury, to support the provision of truly affordable housing within the village. TCP would be keen to work with the CLT, as there would be an obvious overlap in objectives. The provision of a handful of low carbon, affordable houses on part of the site would compliment the overall community benefit of the project.

Obviously, the vision to deliver a truly community led, sustainability focused, project in the heart of the village is dependent on the land being available. TCP has already demonstrated its ability to successfully secure grant funding, community share capital and donations for other projects within the village, most notably the work to decarbonise the village school. We believe that TCP, alongside the new CLT, would be in a strong position to secure the mix of funding that would be required to deliver a project of this scale. Should this planning permission be refused, TCP would welcome the opportunity to discuss the options with the Landowner to see if an agreement on a community led project could be agreed.

In summary, REFUSAL of this planning application would allow an opportunity to deliver a truly unique combination of community food production, community energy scheme and community housing. To support this, the Land Use Framework provides clear justification for refusal which we hope will be given consideration.

The updated **Land Use Framework for England** was published by DEFRA earlier this month (March 2026). We would like to draw your attention to the following extracts from the Framework.

- **"By 2050 agricultural land will be managed to prioritise sustainable food production and environmental benefits"**. A community market garden, growing food to supply the local community in a nature friendly way using sustainable



farming practices is surely a more appropriate use of this site when viewed against this part of the framework.

- **“By 2030, communities will have a greater say in the stewardship of the landscapes they love”.** From the responses at the Public Meeting to discuss this planning application, TCP feel that the community preference would be for the Market Garden concept in place of a significant new housing development on this site.
- **“By 2050, Communities will have the agency to support authorities and landowners, whether by adopting local parcels of public land for nature or food growing, or offering to buy land that would be of greater value to them than the current owner.”** TCP would happily engage in a discussion with the current landowner to support a community led project on this site.
- **“Land use should be planned and managed to deliver greater benefits across a range of outcomes, tailored to local priorities and opportunities, societal needs, and environmental pressures.”**
- **“Government is clear that food security is national security”** and we should **“Safeguard our best and most versatile farmland from permanent land use change”**. Whilst the majority of the land in question is considered grade 3b, there is around 9% of the site classified as 3a ‘good quality’ which would make this some of the best farmland in this local area. Land classified as 3a falls in the ‘best and most versatile’ (BMV) category which the framework suggests should be prioritised for food production.

TCP hopes that the Parish Council will give due consideration to the points raised above and would consider supporting a community led scheme for the site, should the opportunity arise. We believe that the Land Use Framework provides sufficient grounds to REFUSE this planning application and we hope that the Council would support this view.

Kind regards

Mark Howland
Director and Sustainable Food Co-Ordinator
Tollesbury Climate Partnership