

LITTLE ABINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Genevieve Dalton
27 West Field
Little Abington
CB21 6BE

Tel: 01223 893332
Fax: 01223 892330
e-mail: clerk@littleabington.clara.co.uk

Dr C Wiesner
Chief Executive
The Welding Institute
Granta Park,
Great Abington
Cambridge
CB21

28 July 2017

Dear Dr Wiesner,

Access to Granta Park

I'm writing to you on behalf of the Little Abington Parish Council and the local community to express our disappointment at the recent decision made by TWI to stop local residents having access to the TWI site and hence the whole of the Granta Park site.

You will already be aware through direct contact from some residents about the poor reception this decision has had. The residents of the Abingtons have enjoyed and benefited from uninterrupted access to the site for many years albeit in the knowledge that it was permissive. Some have also been regular visitors to the Discovery Café and the Farmers' Market.

To date the community has had the impression that an important element of the ethos of the development of TWI and the larger Granta Park site was for some mutual benefit. One example is the pedestrian route from the land settlement in Great Abington through Granta Park to the centre of the village, which has provided a safe route for local pedestrians, in particular schoolchildren. Older residents have said they have enjoyed being able to walk on the site because it is a safe environment. The note your team sent to the parish councils in January 2016 about proposals to refurbish Abington Hall specifically looks to "*strengthen the links we have already with the community*" This seems to have been completely forgotten.

Many residents feel that promises made to them while the site was developing have been broken. This is having a significant impact on the goodwill and support that Granta Park has benefited from to date. Residents have tolerated drawbacks as a result of development, including obtrusive noise 24 hours a day, increased traffic volumes and speeding. It is inevitable that now that the site is almost fully developed there is some cynicism about the decision to withdraw access and any genuine commitment for residents to have access to existing and proposed facilities in the future. We had understood the restrictions would come into effect on Monday 31 July however access from Pampisford Road has already been closed.

In the past your senior team has been very keen to attend Parish Council meetings to discuss proposed developments with the apparent aim of gauging reaction and obtaining support. Indeed, Little Abington Parish Council was invited to meet on site in June 2014 when they were given a visit of your new facilities. However, there was no similar approach to discuss and clarify the reasons for withdrawing access to the site. Engaging with the community at an early stage might have been an opportunity jointly to develop a shared understanding of the problem and find mutually acceptable solutions.

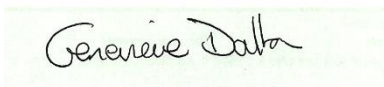
While the Parish Council understands that you have concerns about site security it is extremely unlikely that local residents have been the source of recent problems. As you know the parish councils have suggested ways to make the decision a little more palatable such as permitting access to residents who request it but they do not seem to have been given your full consideration.

The Old Coach Road is an important historical right of way. You have referred to it in planning documents that you have submitted to the District Council. We understand access will be restricted as a direct consequence of your decision. As well as the loss of access for regular local users this will cause some inconvenience to your staff who live in Little Abington. They might now decide to drive onto the site thus creating pressure on car parking space. A significant number of staff have enjoyed walking or running the circular route from the site through the village at lunchtimes and closing the route will have an impact on them.

To date the Parish Council has not been advised about the arrangements you are making to enforce the restrictions. The Parish Council chairmen were advised the closure would be temporary but there has been no discussion about timescales.

We look forward to meeting senior management team representatives very soon. I believe a joint Parish Council meeting is to be arranged in August. I am sure you are aware that Parish Councils meet in public. Despite this meeting taking place after access has been withdrawn we hope it will be possible to have a positive and fruitful discussion about the way forward, including your thoughts on potential solutions that will enable residents to continue to enjoy and benefit from some access to the site. The Parish Council has also requested an update on your proposals to refurbish Abington Hall and plans for community involvement in the project.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Genevieve Datta", is enclosed in a light green rectangular box.

Clerk

cc

Catherine Condie PR Manager, TWI

Mike Russell, Director of Operations TWI

Doug Cuff, Development Director, Biomed Reality