

# Saxongate Newsletter and very important update (Science Park and WOW! plan)

Please find attached our latest newsletter with updates on our activities in recent months and the current situation.

There is more to report as well. It is an evolving situation. Please do take a moment to read everything, including details of the potential science park and the council WOW! plan below.

It is more important than ever for the future of our town that local people are well informed. We are at a tipping point and we all need to pull together to ensure things go in the right direction.

## **Other updates and information: -**

The newsletter has a note about leaving engines running at Park Lane school. This can impact air quality monitoring and, of course, children's young lungs are vulnerable. We would ask any parents to consider switching their engines off when waiting to collect children. The double yellow lines around the school have also been repainted.

Councils do have confidential pre-planning meetings which can be commercially sensitive. There have been rumours of a local incinerator project for some time. Saxongate are aware that Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) were holding meetings with an American company called JUNO Technology for a 'waste to energy plant' to the west of Whittlesey. There was push back from our town council and we understand the proposal has been dropped.

One of the planning documents written for the successful Johnsons Aggregates IBA plant planning application referred to a possible waste to energy plant to the west of Whittlesey. That report was written by Peter Bond, then a consultant working for Johnsons Aggregates. He is now a planning officer at CCC and he dealt with the recent Saxon pit eastern buttress extension for the council.

Saxongate became aware that a material was being sold by Johnsons and processed next to the lagoon in Saxon Pit. There was no valid permit for this and, as mentioned in our attached newsletter, the lagoon is then pumped out into the Kings Dyke, again without a permit. We reported this to the Environment Agency (EA) and we understand that this activity has now been stopped. Water pumping continues and we are pressing the EA to process a permit with a proper public consultation.

Saxongate highlighted a recent BBC article on 'forever chemicals' to the councils and agencies. The Saxon Pit lagoon is tested retrospectively for 20/40 chemicals, mainly due to the non-conforming waste. The BBC article refers to 9000 chemicals and in Europe they talk about 40,000 in regards to Industrial Bottom Ash '(IBA ) and IBAA. There are many open questions about that material. We have been told it is acceptable for road building, but we don't think it should be used in every project around Whittlesey and never where it can contaminate our water or land.

Experts call for tighter limits on 'forever chemicals' in water - BBC News

Saxongate provided evidence of dust being created by the Saxon Pit eastern buttress works to the EA who have been following up on that situation. The winter and wet weather will suppress dust anyway for the next few months. The land agent, who is also the director for the new Science Park, had promised there would be no dust nuisance from these works.

A permit request had been raised to drain Victory Pit into Kings Dyke. Saxongate raised a number of concerns. We understand this plan has now been shelved.

There used to be a yearly liaison meeting with Forterra (Kings Dyke brickworks). This has not happened for three years. After pressure from Saxongate a meeting was scheduled for August but it was then cancelled by Forterra. It has now been rearranged for November. We will raise the increase in odour complaints if the meeting goes ahead this time.

We continue to press for a southern relief road. The latest update from Fenland District Council is attached.

### **The Science Park**

Plans for a Science Park to the west of Saxon Pit (Victory Pit) are making progress. Also, there is a possibility of a solar farm on the eastern buttress of Saxon Pit. Saxongate has met with the Science Park director in the past and is monitoring the situation. We are concerned that the councils have waived an environmental impact report considering the potential scale of the site. We also struggle to see how these developments can dovetail with the existing IBA and IBAA + recycling works being undertaken in Saxon Pit. We understand there will be a public presentation in the town on the 1st and 2nd of December at Whittlesey Christian Church in Broad Street. We would encourage as many people as possible to attend and will keep you informed.

### **The WOW! plan**

Saxongate attended the Whittlesey Town Council meeting on the 19th of October. Councillor Simon Black, who is also chair of the planning committee, presented his vision for the west of Whittlesey which is now called the WOW! plan. It was unanimously adopted by the council as a positive vision for that area. The proposal included: -

- Moving the railway station and coach station to Kings Dyke.
- Shuttle bus service into the town.
- Cycle and walking tracks to the town.
- Rail freight terminal.
- Hotel.
- Water sports complex.
- River walks / running tracks around Star Pit.
- Must Farm heritage centre.
- Golf course.
- The Science Park and solar farm.

Since the meeting we have also been told possibly a youth club facility.

It is a very grand vision with numerous projects and landowners / developers involved. Some items, such as the Science Park, are already at an early planning stage.

Basically, it proposes a better mix of recreational, educational, retail and industrial developments which would also give a positive first impression when entering fenland, rather than being seen as just a large trailer park. We have attached a pdf which covers some for the WOW plan.

Saxongate are positive about the vision but we still struggle to see how these developments can dovetail with the existing IBA and IBAA + recycling works being undertaken in Saxon Pit. This is not shown on the attached plan. We also wonder about funding, The current early stage bypass report alone is costing around £250k (money which had been allocated for a Must Farm heritage centre). Without taking anything away from the ambition, we will keep pushing hard to minimise needless pollution and avoid improper use of materials which might create long-term environmental and health issues. Companies need to follow the rules.

Please do keep reporting any issues and we will endeavour to keep pushing forward. If you suffer and noise, smells or dust please do still report it to the Environment Agency 24/7 on 0800 80 70 60

We also need to grow our membership so do pass on our details. People can contact us on this email or via Facebook if they wish to join :- <https://www.facebook.com/SaxonGatePE7>

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