

**NICKY PACKMAN**  
**STATEMENT FOR THE PLANNING INQUIRY 23/4/2024**

After living in the busy town of High Barnet for many years, I moved to Colney Heath in 2004 with my partner Simon when I was 6 months pregnant with our first child. We hadn't been able to find a suitable family home that we could afford in Barnet, so we looked further afield. That's when we found a house in Colney Heath Village which we **COULD** afford. We loved its quiet location, green fields and close community feel - for us it felt like an ideal place in which to bring up children.

We have two children, the youngest of which is about to take her GCSEs at Samuel Ryder Academy and - results willing - she plans to stay on to do her A-levels there. My 19-year-old son also attended Samuel Ryder and is now coming to the end of his first year at the University Campus of Football Business at Wembley Stadium. He lives at home and drives down there three days a week, as having analysed the logistics and cost of train travel, driving is the quickest and cheapest way for him to commute. He also has a couple of part-time jobs, both of which he needs to drive to. My daughter already has her provisional licence as she can't wait to be able to take driving lessons and get her own car when she turns 17, thus gaining her independence.

We have always driven the kids to secondary school as there isn't a bus. Attempts at cycling to school were short-lived due to the kids hating the long cycle along the deceptively uphill A414 and having to breathe in traffic fumes. Like other cycle routes this is NOT safe in our opinion. We also had concerns about them cycling home in the darker evenings when they had after-school activities, or in bad weather.

Both kids went to the primary school in the village, my son only just managing to squeeze a place in the school due to capacity issues at that time. We particularly enjoyed walking to school across the fields past the proposed development site in the summer months but used the car on very cold or wet days. On other days we walked along the High Street but were always mindful of safety where the pavements narrowed and with lots of traffic passing - often at speed. This could be more challenging on rubbish collection days where bins were on the pavement, or where foliage had not been cut back thus encroaching on the pavement.

We usually parked in the unofficial 'car park' next to the school – it really worries me that if ever that facility were to disappear, parents would be unable to safely drop and pick up their children. The increased number of yellow lines on roads around the school exacerbates that problem. **Where on earth would they park**

**SAFELY?**

Samuel Ryder Academy was our first-choice secondary school and we were fortunate to get a place for my son, with my daughter thankfully getting in on the sibling rule. Several of my daughter's classmates at that time initially had NO school allocated to them due to the lack of capacity locally and I remember it being a VERY stressful time for all those involved. Every year we have lived in the Village there has been an issue with secondary school place allocation.

I work from home but need to deliver products to my customers by car. Simon also works from home, but occasionally travels further afield which he does by car as the train fares are prohibitive.

Whenever any of us go into London we drive to Welham Green or St Albans station - or occasionally to Cockfosters or High Barnet to use the Tube.

We generally do our main shopping down at Colney Fields Retail Park and there is no alternative but to drive. We also need to drive to access medical and dental services by car.

Cycling has NEVER been on our agenda because of the state of the road surfaces and volume of fast-moving traffic. It is far too dangerous and we have seen too many near misses over the years.

Simon was a Governor at the village primary school for several years and we have both tried wherever possible to support fundraising events taking place there. We enjoy walking our dog around the village and across the fields. One of the routes we like to take is via Bullen Green Lane but that has becoming more difficult since the housing development works commenced due to the flooding caused. It now frequently requires wellies and carrying our small dog through the standing water which RARELY seems to completely drain away these days.

House prices in developments like this are way beyond the reach of the next generation of residents in the village, and we wonder how far away our children will have to move to own their own home.

I hope that gives you an insight into our experience of living in the Village and some of the issues further housing developments would exacerbate.

Nicky Packman

Hall Gardens, Colney Heath