

Additional comments with FORMAL SUPPORT to Planning Application DC/26/0945 - Amendment to buffer strip to reflect an additional swale with landscaping (part retrospective).

I have noticed a rather critical response on the HDC planning portal to the above application from D&M Planning, whose client is a local developer who owns the freehold to the village shop and owns the swale pond to the east of Abingworth. The client is not a resident of this development.

All of the Strawberry Close residents + adjacent residents in Penn Stone Way have supported the scheme with comments. The Bellway residents have seemingly all objected to the scheme because of public access / privacy issues, although most acknowledge keeping the swale is a necessity. I am assuming you will dismiss access / privacy comments as they are essentially not relevant to the application. Thus, it would be a shame if this response from D&M planning causes a rejection, particularly as they have nothing to do with phase 3. You really have to ask why D&M are making such a response and why their client is presumably paying for this to be done.

I draw your attention to 3 aspects of the D&M representation as follows:

1. They are asking for a new flood risk assessment. In the original phase 3 planning application by Bellway, there was zero consideration given to water run-off from the field to the south of Springett Close, which was an oversight, yet planning was granted. On completion of phase 3, it became clear there was an issue with water run-off from just one field to the south. Bellway have recognised and accepted there is an issue and have provided their own consultants flood assessment calculations and devised a suitable scheme to manage the water from the field. Therefore, surely no further flood risk assessment is now necessary, as a perfectly good and working scheme is now in place. D&M appear to be suggesting the drainage scheme may not work, but I can assure you that with all the rain from last winter, there were no further surface water issues. I suggest Bellway revise their application to make suitable statements to explain what their consultants have done and to provide more details of the water management scheme, together with comments received from the WSCC LLFA.
2. The Bellway plans show the drainage ditch outside of the red planning boundary at a location just south of my house [see annotated diagram and photo]. In my opinion, this is wrong and the ditch is actually within the red line. Bellway should revise the plans accordingly.



3. The plans mention self-draining Breedon gravel for the PROW, which is outside the planning red line. D&M have the audacity to suggest it is part of a critical flood risk strategy whereas, in reality, TPC are simply finishing off what they have done to many other footpaths in the area to eradicate water pooling. This work has already been done by TPC, and so Bellway should revise the application accordingly.

If these issues are rectified by Bellway, then the major thrust of D&M's response is surely nullified. In my opinion, this response has been submitted to simply force a refusal of the application. It is full of twisted arguments and, in my opinion, is being used to try and initiate a new flood risk assessment covering the whole of Abingworth, presumably culminating in a revised scheme that routes water through the swale pond to the east.

This client [a local developer] purchased the swale pond a few years ago, presumably with the hope that a water management scheme would eventually be routed through it and with the hope of financial gain in the future. Without a change of scheme, their client will be left with a swale pond that requires a maintenance obligation as a riparian owner, but with no compensation for ongoing costs. Originally, I supported the swale owner in trying to get Bellway to route the run-off water via the farmers field and swale pond. He even allowed me to provide his contact details to be given to Bellway [email available if required]. However, Bellway did not want to engage with neither the farmer or the swale owner for various logistical, legal, financial and schedule reasons, particularly as the swale owner apparently wanted some form of remuneration for allowing the use of his swale. Instead, since only one field was an issue and it only affected phase 3 and Strawberry Close, it was rightly concluded by Bellway that the best solution was to keep the water management scheme within the boundary of the development and use the land drain trench down the side of Strawberry Close to route the water through to the culvert. Based on the representation from D&M, Bellway clearly have made the correct decision in not dealing with this client, and I fully support Bellway in this decision, particularly as the scheme has proved to be so effective.



The water flow coming from the buffer zone is substantially less than the water flow coming from the client's swale pond to the east. The adjacent photo, taken on 27th Jan 2026 using my phone, clearly shows water flow into the northern culvert. The torrent on the left is from the client's swale, whilst the only partially full 300mm pipe on the right is bringing water down from the buffer zone, using Bellway's newly installed scheme, which helps attenuates water flow for the benefit of downstream properties. This clearly shows the impact of the buffer zone scheme to be relatively small in terms of the overall water management, although the scheme is vital to protect Springett Close and Strawberry Close. The huge water flow from the client's swale area also shows why the client is so concerned, yet this is not Bellway's problem and has nothing to do with them. It is the

water flow from the client's swale pond area to the east that needs proper management, not the Bellway scheme. Perhaps this is why D&M's client wants to revisit the overall water management. The WSCC LLFA manager visited the site last year and I was involved in the site meeting. He clearly said to me that nobody with any sense would want to own a water course / feature that is designated for drainage purposes and I can see why. He was also against Bellway using the client's swale pond. Again, this photo reinforces the correct decision in making the buffer zone scheme a standalone scheme.

If the scheme is refused, then there will be nobody else who would fund a new unbiased flood risk assessment, let alone a new scheme. D&M's client could possibly step up to fund a new flood risk assessment, but I would argue it would ultimately recommend a route via the client's swale pond. If rejected, Bellway would rightly argue they provided a fully workable solution to remedy the issues brought about by building phase 3. They would not fund any alternative, particularly as the original planning application for phase 3 was approved without regard for surface water run-off from the adjacent field. Currently, residents of

Strawberry Close are now better protected from run-off than they would have been if phase 3 had not been built at all.

If this application is rejected residents of Strawberry Close and Springett Close will then be blighted by run-off issues and unable to sell their houses, whilst D&M's client will not be affected in the slightest, apart from having to fund riparian maintenance of the water courses that he owns!

Bellway really are their own worst enemies with no apparent attention to detail, and a lot of issues could have been avoided if they had taken more care with the application.

Owners of 5 Strawberry Close