

My name is Steven Wakefield and my mother and I own the property and land at [REDACTED] which is one of the properties required as part of the M5 J10 scheme.

For over 3 years we have been willing and trying to reach a fair settlement with the mistaken belief that this would be achieved by engaged negotiation with fairness and equality, as per government guidelines and laws. However, this has failed to occur.

Carter Jonas have stated it is their duty to acquire property at best value. As their contract is for a fixed fee of £600,000, the only value that could be possibly altered to achieve this would be at cost to affected parties. There is no other interpretation of that statement.

My concerns about that statement to acquire property at best value is supported by an extract of a meeting between Carter Jonas and Homes England where they stated that the duty to pay compensation can be under pressure to not pay the right amount when referring to home loss compensation negotiations. I put this forward in my written submissions which was met with the following response:

*'The Applicant cannot comment specifically on the statement made without knowing the specific quote or context within which it has been made.'*

My understanding of the rules of submission is that you are not permitted to provide internet links and the comment is made in an official Homes England Video, I currently have no way of providing this information other than a link, and I suspect it will be removed very quickly. Because I have lost all faith in GCC and Carter Jonas to behave honestly, I have downloaded a copy of the video. I am happy to make this copy available should I be given the means to do so and welcome hearing their resulting comments.

Those are two documented examples displaying the intent to obtain property at unfair prices, I am confident that there are many more unwritten and unrecorded communications that are not available to the public which are much more focused and determined. But of course this could never be proven and always be denied.

However, Carter Jonas's actions speak louder than words, and these have been documented:

From the outset Carter Jonas has endeavoured to obtain properties at 'best value' for their client by avoiding negotiation and making a take it or leave it offer. Should you reject the offer and provide evidence of their under valuation Carter Jonas will dismiss this and break communication for up to 10 months despite repeated efforts to engage with them, they will continually refuse to do so. I do not consider this constructive engagement or fair negotiations.

A neighbour questioned why Carter Jonas was returning to value his property, their reply was 'I have come here to devalue your house'. I have no reason to believe my neighbour was lying.

Carter Jonas have also downgraded an offer made to me 8 months previously by £20,000 only to simultaneously offer an increase of £25,000 all in the same letter to imply the increase was greater than the £5000 it actually was. When in reality during that period the rise in the house price index meant it was in effect a reduced offer and undervalued our property further still.

Carter Jonas have questioned Tewkesbury Council on the legality of the mobile home situated on my property for my mothers residential use as a granny annexe. Permission for it's location and use was applied for and granted. The decision to grant a certificate of lawfulness for this purpose is published on Tewkesbury BC website.

Tewkesbury Council are now attempting to rescind on the decision to grant a certificate of lawfulness for my mothers mobile home despite it's continual use for over 4 years. Attempts to gain a copy of the certificate from TBC by request have been blocked along with an official complaint raised to obtain a copy. However, the complaint has also been ignored as the response should have arrived by today but it has not. During the submission of the complaint TBC took the unusual step of telephoning me with a promise that they would grant a certificate if I retract the decided and positive application and resubmit another application. My legal and professional advice is not to take this action as TBC would then have the opportunity to refuse and I would have nothing more than a verbal promise, which of course could be denied.

This action by TBC is also frustrating the progress to settlement and supports Carter Jonas in their efforts to reduce fair compensation.

Meanwhile, over the past 3 years the crime in our little cul de sac of just a few houses has gone from zero to continual break ins and vandalism of all the vacant and boarded up properties. The council have neglected the properties and reduced the grounds maintenance to an annual event which consists of a brief yet ineffective visit with a brush cutter on a few of the properties, yet allowing vegetation from properties to overgrow and make pathways inaccessible.

I often see my neighbours wife having to push a baby in a pram with a 7yo and a 4yo in the road because of this.

Despite the security patrols which can only really report the issues we experience such as squatters, vandalism, break ins, stolen vehicle abandonments, fly tipping and drug use along with other sordid activities, and people who use the area as a toilet for all bodily functions. These things happen on a daily basis, just this week another stolen vehicle was recovered from outside a neighbouring property. My neighbour and I clean up the remains of these activities and maintain overgrown areas as best we can in an attempt to keep the area respectable as we still live here. Even Royal Mail have removed our post box for fear of vandalism.

GCC have allowed the storage of hundreds of tons of cow manure on aquired land in our road and have also allowed logging activities which causes wheelbarrow loads of wood bark and branches to be scattered all over the road and pavement each time they load the lorries. This causes a danger to cyclists and vehicles. Living in Withybridge Gardens has now become extremely unpleasant while GCC and Carter Jonas happily leave us to consider their offer, nothing like this ever happened before and only serves to apply pressure to take what offer is available. Other residents have already succumbed to the pressure to escape these encouraged illegal activities and accepted an offer that they now regret.

My [REDACTED] mother who now [REDACTED] [REDACTED] yet has urged me to speak here today. She is now scared of the once peaceful neighbourhood we once held so dearly and is terrified when my partner and I are not present. She has become tearful and wants to get out as soon as possible. I hold GCC and CJ entirely responsible for her distress with needless delays and neglect to us, our neighbours and our properties. It is clear that GCC and CJ care only about the bottom line and show contempt to fairness and peoples wellbeing and have little to no regard for the laws and process which have been for the most part ignored.

My previous land agent who is a senior director at CBRE has continually been frustrated by the process and on many occasions relayed his concerns to me on the unprofessional approach by Carter Jonas. On the advice of my solicitor I have now changed to a new land agent who has had success with Carter Jonas and their latest change of appointment. But Carter Jonas are delaying final payment to my previous land agent who has requested final settlement, but Carter Jonas did not even reply, resulting in him withholding the files and information, frustrating progress to resolution. It appears that even RICS members don't trust Carter Jonas.

Obviously the public have no insight into the dealings, meetings and calls that happen behind closed doors, but the actions of GCC, TBC and CJ strongly suggest a lack of integrity, honesty and a willingness to avoid complying with the law and processes to reduce their own costs at the expense of affected parties.

It is noteworthy that the first serious attempt at settlement in over 3 years occurred only a few weeks ago, during the planning inspectorate examination stage, with an offer about 50% above their initial offer. I'm sure you can all see how shockingly low their initial offer was.

Unfortunately, the offer is lacking essential details on how the figure was derived. My solicitor has requested engagement to clarify these details yet is still awaiting a response since a request made on 26 July.

To sum up:

We have had our trust in the process broken and feel the guidelines and law have been abused. There have been no attempts to achieve equality and no meaningful engagement in negotiations and certainly no consideration for my disabled 80yo mother. There is avoidable pressure to accept a low offer, resulting in a clear effort focused to minimise compensation.

Additional note: My land agent has reported that Carter Jonas are now also challenging an agreement made to reimburse payment for a CAAD application made over 2 years ago.

[Land Assembly using Compulsory Purchase Powers - Winter Learning Programme 2023](#)