

**Statement to Open Floor Hearing 19/10/2020 from Susan Freestone and Stephen Bullock**

We have already made a submission in writing so we restrict our comments today to the response by Womble Bond Dickinson (WBD) to our submission of 20<sup>th</sup> September.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>IP's response</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<p>For clarity – Susan Freestone represents her only sibling, Stephen, Ian Bullock having died on October 2018 as stated in the written submission.</p> <p>WBD states that the Applicant continues to work closely with environmental consultants. We have asked for evidence that our land is appropriate for a newt receptor. This request has been ignored and has been presented – only in part - second hand.</p> <p>WBD states that the Applicant will contact our surveyor to ascertain what information is required. We have asked throughout what use is to be made of our land. This is still unclear.</p>
<b>2. Biodiversity, ecology and the natural environment</b>	<p>If I read the notes correctly, the land to the west of the motorway, is deemed suitable for the creation of Great Crested Newt habitat. It further states that any new Great Crested Newt habitat should be located to the west of the M5. The land selected for the newt receptor lies to the east of the M5 as clearly stated under point 4 – construction impacts.</p> <p>It now appears that the land to the east is being considered for a more general reptile receptor, particularly slow worms to which the Applicant devotes considerable attention. Point 4.2 of the Reptile Presence/Absence Survey Results revealed a high concentration of slowworms (30) at Watchhouse Hill against 2 at “Lodway Farm”.</p>

	<p>There were 5 at the Portishead Ecology Park. Reasons are given why Watchhouse is deemed inappropriate but why is the Ecology Park considered less appropriate than our land as the most suitable site for a receptor?</p>
<p><b>4. Construction impacts</b></p>	<p>I am confused by the Applicant's response under point 4 since it refers to land to the East of the motorway and land to the north-east. We have always understood that the area required for the construction compound is that which lies to the west of the motorway. It would be very helpful if the applicant would refer to the land by plot number to remove any confusion as to which area is being referred to.</p>
<p><b>5. Compulsory Acquisition</b></p>	<p>WBD states that the Applicant is unaware of any of our land being sought for temporary purposes, yet, in the response to point 4 states that low numbers of slow worms were recorded during the survey of the land subject to <b>temporary</b> compulsory acquisition. Furthermore, under point 4 the heads of term proposed by Ardent, the second option clearly states – As well as a <b>Lease</b> over – plots 50/51 and 05a/05. What is this if not temporary acquisition? Does this mean that the Applicant no longer wishes to acquire those plots or that it wishes to permanently acquire all of our land? If this is so, we have not been informed.</p>
<p><b>Material points</b></p>	<p>1. I think that what I have said today demonstrates clearly one aspect of the inaccurate designation of our land. Furthermore, if there has been no confusion with Lodway Farm, then our land – Manor Farm, receives one mention that I have been able to find in all of the documentation released thus far. Even in this response, under point 4, the Applicant refers to a construction compound on our land. Does this mean that there are to be two such compounds</p>

	<p>on adjacent sites or is this, indeed, a confusion between Manor Farm and Lodway Farm?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="555 293 1372 524">2. I am pleased that the Applicant has taken advice from Jacobs on environmental matters. However, the little of that advice that has been reported – that is to site the receptor to the west of the motorway - has been ignored.</li><li data-bbox="555 539 1372 763">3. In our submission of 20<sup>th</sup> September we laid out the sporadic nature of communications with the Applicant, either directly with us or with our agent. I don't intend to reiterate that here.</li></ol>
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From the beginning of our relationship with Ardent we have allowed surveys to be conducted in good faith, always asking why the surveys were required. In response, I feel we have been misled by the clear inaccuracy of the designation of land and the lack of clarity over its intended use which continues even now. This has compromised our ability to challenge the proposals or to submit responses in a timely and appropriate manner.