

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Appeal by Northern Trust

ref. APP/N2345/A/11/2145837

Site at Tanterton Hall Road, Ingol, Preston PR2 7BY

PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF

ALAN BROOKES BSc CEng MICE

On Behalf Of

INGOL GOLF VILLAGE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION (IGVRA)

1.0 Witness Experience

- 1.1 I am Alan Gwyn Brookes. I am a retired Chartered Civil Engineer with some forty years experience in the design and construction of major projects, typically the M6Toll road and the improvement of the A1 and M62 motorways around Ferrybridge. During my professional career I have worked for local government, a major civil engineering contractor and latterly as a freelance consultant.
- 1.2 I am appearing as a witness on behalf of the Ingol Golf Village Residents Association (IGVRA). I have lived in the Greyfriars and Ingol wards since 1970. I have a detailed knowledge of the development site having lived local to the golf course, in The Avenue, for some twenty three years. My home shares a boundary with the site. I have enjoyed walking around the course and the bounty that the hedgerows provide since it was first opened in May 1981. The Association was formed by local residents initially in response to a submission to the Local Development Framework (LDF) 'Call for Sites' in the name of the owner of the course. I have been a member of the IGVRA Committee since a public meeting in February 2010. I am not a golfer, I enjoy the open space that the course provides for recreation. However, the Committee does include some members who at one time were members of the Golf Club and also used the associated squash facilities at the club house. I know residents who used the Golf Club facilities; indeed my immediate neighbours have been past captains of the Golf Club.

2.0 Ingol Golf Village Residents Association (IGVRA)

- 2.1 The Ingol Golf Villages is the generic name given primarily to the new housing developments which were an integral part of the development of the Ingol East area by the Central Lancashire Development Corporation (CLDC) through the late 1970's and 1980's. The Ingol Golf Village Residents Association, however, deliberately encompasses the greater community that surrounds and takes pleasure from the Ingol Golf Course; Greyfriars, Cottam, Cadley, Ingol and Tanterton. Membership as such is open to all who live in these areas. The objective of the Association is to preserve and enhance the quality of the local environment for the benefit of the community. Some three hundred plus residents attended the public meeting in February 2010.
- 2.2 The Association actively encouraged the local community to attend the 'IngolVision' presentation by Northern Trust in February 2010, some 450 persons attended. The Association have since hosted further public meetings, including an open 'drop in' meeting and also local presentations by Preston City Council to the local community, through the

'Citizen Zone' bus, to better communicate the Northern Trust proposals to develop the golf course. These meetings have each attracted attendances in excess of 250. Full details of IGVRA Public Meetings can be found at: www.ingolgvillage.org.uk/. A photograph of our most recent meeting, held to publicise the forthcoming Public Inquiry, is appended.

3.0 Introduction to and Structure of my Evidence

3.1 The Local Planning Authority, Preston City Council, has set out in some detail and at length how the proposal to develop the Golf Course is in conflict with the requirements of local and national planning policies and guidelines. The Association (IGVRA) fully endorses those grounds of objection.

3.2 I am not a planner and, in giving evidence on behalf of the Association, it is not my intention to duplicate the evidence put forward by the Local Planning Authority. but to try to communicate to the Inspector why this issue is one that has united the local community in opposition to the proposed development. In particular I want to emphasise:-

- The extent to which the golf course land in its entirety has been, since its inception, and remains, valued by the local community as a special recreational resource, master planned and executed by CLDC as 'open space' as part of the deliberate growth of Preston through the 1970's to date, a resource that enhances the quality of life enjoyed by the local community and helps to make the north of Preston, and indeed the wider city, a great place to live.
- The local community has shown virtually unanimous opposition to the development proposals and their and the Association's rejection of suggestions by the Appellant that the golf course is surplus to the leisure and recreational needs of the locality and community; and that its development in the manner proposed would deliver any local or wider housing or other community benefit.

4.0 Ingol Golf Course – The heart of a thought through, master planned and executed, major open space provision serving the north west of Preston – it was right then, it is right now and it is right for the future

4.1 My evidence is in part based upon the considerable body of archived original information in hard copy format relating to the CLDC/CLNT held at the Lancashire Records Office (LRO). The archived records were selected and collated by Richard Phelps, General Manager, throughout its independent existence, of the CLDC. The records include commentary by Richard Phelps as to why certain information was selected for archive. The records for the

development of Ingol East, which includes the Ingol Golf Course, is one such. A summary of the archive information available can be found on the website of the National Archive:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/.

4.2 **History of CLDC** (précis extract from National Archive web page)

'Summary

The Central Lancashire New Town (Designation) Order was approved on 14 April 1970 and the Development Corporation (DC) formerly constituted on 17 February 1971. The Statutory Order for the dissolution of the Central Lancashire New Town (CLNT) was approved on 31 December 1985 and the Corporation was formally dissolved on 31 March 1986. The housing stock was transferred to housing associations. Other assets were transferred to the Commission for New Towns.

Central Lancashire Development Corporation (1971-1986) - General History

In 1966 Messrs. Robert Matthew, Johnson-Marshall & Partners were commissioned to conduct a two-part study. The first part being a study to advise of the feasibility of a major expansion in Central Lancashire. This study was concluded by the report 'Central Lancashire Study for a City' in 1967. The second part was the production of a Master Plan and much work was done up to the creation of the Corporation.

During 1972-3 the DC submitted to the Minister proposals to develop a residential area of 84 hectares called Astley Park and a proposed employment area of 98 hectares called Walton Summit. Approvals were granted in June 1973 and March 1974 respectively. A land use plan and summary of the Outline Plan were published in February 1974. A Public Inquiry into the Outline Plan was held in Preston between November 1974 and January 1975.

Approval was granted for two schemes during 1977-8 - a housing development of 175 hectares at Ingol East; and 148 hectares of land at Moss Side, Leyland for industrial, commercial, residential and associated development.

Towards the end of the financial year ended 31st March 1984, Ministers agreed that DC housing in Preston Borough should be transferred to a Housing Association. The DC's assets were to be transferred to the Commission for the New Towns (CNT) at the end of 1985. The Corporation's housing stock transferred to four Housing Associations during July 1985 - in the region of 4,900 properties.

The remaining assets and liabilities of the DC were transferred to CNT on 1st January 1986.'

4.3 **CLDC History of Ingol East** (précis extract from National Archive web page)-Commentary

by Richard Phelps as to why the record of the development of Ingol East was deliberately included in the archive.

'Ingol East was the largest housing development in the designated area and the first to be developed north of the Ribble. Approval was granted on 5 April 1977. The feature of this project which caused the files relating to it to be selected for preservation was the inclusion of a golf course as an integral part of the development. A marina project was also considered but never implemented.

Full development in this area required road improvements and in 1978 the proposal for the Ingol Distributor Road, which had already been discussed at the Outline Plan Inquiry as route appraisal no 2, was formally submitted. The road was planned as a single carriageway from Tulketh Brow to Lightfoot Lane to serve the new residential areas and relieve pressure on Woodplumpton Road and Tag Lane. There was considerable opposition to the original route because of the effect on properties south of Blackpool Road (Paradise) and Haslam Park. The Inquiry turned down one of the CPOs essential to this route (CPO 31) and the road was redesigned in 1981 to underpass the Blackpool Road (A 5085) and run very close to the railway line thus obviating the need to route it along park property.'

- 4.4 It is worthy of note that the marina referred to above now forms an integral part of the proposal to develop the Cottam Brickworks site, much as envisaged at one time by the CLDC. The Planning Application for the overall development of the Cottam Brickworks site is currently with Preston City Council. It also includes for the provision of some 200 homes.
- 4.5 Draft proposals included at one time in the Outline Plan relating to the development of Ingol East and specifically the golf course included for a range of facilities for use by the community; namely, squash and tennis courts, a bowling green, a small swimming pool etc. The CLDC Planning Statement for the 'Ingol East Residential and Associated Development' refers.
- 4.6 The Outline Plan would also have included details of the proposed developments at Cottam and Cottam Hall. Hence as a master planned whole, the provision of a significant open space and a golf course as part of the development of Ingol East would have relevance for the developments at Cottam and Cottam Hall. Again, it is worthy of note that completion of the development at Cottam Hall is currently being master planned on behalf of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), successor agency to the CNT/CLNT/CLDC. Application for Outline Planning Permission for some 1300 plus homes is anticipated in the near future following a recent public consultation.
- 4.7 The provision of infrastructure by CLDC and its successor agencies over the past thirty five

years has clearly been based upon the Outline Plan. This defines the Ingol Golf Course as the major recreational open space provision for the developments at Ingol East and Cottam. As the development at Cottam is yet to be completed then the inference must be that the original concept as proposed by CLDC is still valid.

- 4.8 **Ingol East: Open Space provision and Public Access** - The Ingol Golf Course was conceived, designed and constructed by CLDC in the mid to late 1970's, integrated as a whole with the concurrent development of the several adjacent housing estates, to form the Ingol Golf Villages. The CLDC drawing reference no.6/34/17 revE, revision dated December 1978 and titled 'Ingol East, Local Plan' refers. Copy appended to submission. The title also has wording to the effect that this drawing represents the state of 'approval to develop Ingol East under Section 6(1) of the New Towns Act'. It is the then current revision of the definitive planning approval drawing. The Key to this drawing clearly denotes the 'Public Open Space/Golf Course' and the 'Public Access' routes and 'Bridle Paths'. Indeed access is a significant feature of the proposal.
- 4.9 The development plan details as approved by the Secretary of State at that time refer specifically to the Ingol Golf Course lands as 'Public Open Space/Golf Course'. Note the specific juxtaposition of the words 'Public Open Space' and 'Golf Course'. The intent is clear. the Ingol Golf Course land as a whole is to form the recreational Open Space provision for the immediately adjacent Golf Village housing estates, for the then recent developments in Sharoe Green and Greyfriars areas and for the wider Cadley and Ingol areas. Indeed there was limited open space provision planned into the Ingol Golf Villages estates themselves. This is supported by the numerous public access points to the open space built into the development as a whole. This included the proposal to designate significant lengths of Walker Lane as a pedestrian access only.
- 4.10 At the time of the Ingol Golf Course land passing into private ownership in August 1985, the planning designation as 'Public Open Space/Golf Course' remained. The land was transferred with that planning designation in place. As 'Open Space/Golf Course' the Ingol Golf Course land has been used in its totality since its inception, and continues to be used, as recreational open space by residents and the community at large. This is in addition to its well documented use as a golf course for 'use by the public'.
- 4.11 Drawing reference no. 6/34/520 revA dated February 1980 and titled 'Ingol East, Composite Drawing'. This drawing clearly shows marked up the 'Footpaths Now Closed' and the 'New Footpaths and Footways or Existing Footpaths Remaining Open'. This drawing reinforces the concept of Access to the Open Space. Copy appended to submission.

- 4.12 Background to the Procurement and subsequent Sale of the Ingol Golf Course** - From the available documentation in the Lancashire Records Office Archive and the Land Registry my understanding is as follows.
- 4.13 The Central Lancashire Development Corporation (CLDC) compulsorily purchased farm land in the north west of Preston during the 1970's in order to carry out the development of Ingol East. CLDC therefore held the freehold to Ingol East. Ingol East included a golf course deliberately integrated into the housing development as part of the master plan. The Applicant's assertion that the concept of Ingol Golf Course/Ingol Golf Village was experimental needs to be dismissed. It followed a well tried and tested model from North America, then being introduced into Europe. New to the United Kingdom, possibly, however the Wentworth Estate comes to mind; new as a model for procurement of New Town housing, possibly; experimental, no.
- 4.14 CLDC leased the whole of the golf course estate, open space/golf course proper and associated land for housing to Miller Buckley Golf/Miller Buckley Investments (MBG/MBI). CLDC with Miller Buckley Golf master planned the concept of the Ingol Golf Village. The golf course was initially designed, executed and operated by Miller Buckley Golf under a ninety nine year lease from CLDC. CLDC maintained the freehold. In turn, MBG/MBI sold the leases for the various Ingol Golf Village housing developments to a variety of house builders. The intent is that Miller Buckley get on with developing some eight of the golf village estates (out of an original projected eighteen or twenty estates). The rest to follow later as the area developed.
- 4.15 Presumably the sale of these leases funded the design and execution of the golf course by MBG/MBI. In turn, the house builders constructed and sold homes to the potential residents. On the sale of a house some eight per cent of the sale price was handed over to CLDC in return for the house owner obtaining the freehold from CLDC. Presumably these monies funded the CLDC initial investment/compulsory purchase/provision of social housing and CLDC operational costs whilst providing a return on the initial investment. The above mechanism is no doubt responsible for the community contention that 'residents paid a premium to live in the Ingol Golf Villages'.
- 4.16 It is clear that the golf course was intended as the open space provision for the golf village estates. The master plan drawings refer to the designation 'Public Open Space/Golf Course' for the whole of the area. Hence CLDC obtained a substantial open space at effectively zero cost and had potentially set up a mechanism through the golf course in which that open space could be maintained. The golf course was designed, executed and marketed as a 'championship standard' course. England's then most respected golfer, Henry Cotton, put his

name to the course. The layout of the course has been described in various websites as being 'challenging for the better golfer'. This description as 'challenging' in its layout has been confirmed by the writer in casual conversation with golfing acquaintances.

- 4.17 There was one covenant on the lease to Miller Buckley Golf. This clearly stated that 'the golf course is only to be used for playing golf, by the public at large, on a fee basis'; ie as a public golf course. This was construed by MBG as potentially limiting development for other leisure activities. The golf course opened in 1981. The club house also contained two squash courts. The arrangement with CLDC was that Miller Buckley Golf and CLDC would share profits and losses on a 50/50 basis. In 1985, after four years of operation the golf course had lost some £20k per annum, £85k in total. Losses were attributed to the poor economic climate between 1981 and 1985. CLDC was due to be wound up at the end of 1985.
- 4.18 Miller Buckley Golf wished to be gifted the freehold with the intention of developing further leisure activities before selling the course on. However, CLDC viewed this as losing control of any potential future sale, and of any chance to recoup their share of the operating losses. They decided to take back the lease and sell both the leasehold and the freehold to a leisure operator of their own choosing. CLDC took professional advice to establish a potential sale price. This was advised at in excess of £50k to £100k, or sufficient to cover CLDC losses to date. Following this CLDC sought expressions of interest locally. In August 1985 CLDC sold the freehold to Hemm-Inns, 'a well known locally based leisure operator' for £50k, cancelled the lease with Miller Buckley Golf and handed the lease to Hemm-Inns. Freehold of Ingol Golf Course as leisure development - £250 per acre.
- 4.19 A clause in the Deed of Transfer extinguished the covenant restricting use to playing golf. This was on the basis that the then Commercial Director reported that it is NOT possible to include a restrictive covenant in the proposed lease! CLDC concurrently sold a licence (to Hemm-Inns?), to develop a four acre adjacent parcel of land, for housing for some £160k. License to develop land for housing, a minimum of £40K per acre, rising on later parcels to £60k per acre.
- 4.20 All the above is documented in the appended records of the CLDC Ingol East Planning Statements and the CLDC Board Meetings extracted from the LRO Archive, namely:
- Section 6(1) New Towns Act 1965; Ingol East Planning Statement
 - NTC 2/2/145; Meeting 145 with Board papers, 17 February 1984: Ingol Golf and Squash Club (Board paper 28/84)
 - NTC 2/2/154; Meeting 154 with Board papers, 14 December 1984: Ingol Golf and Squash Club (Board paper 164/84)
 - NTC 2/2/155; Meeting 155 with Board papers, 15 February 1985: Minutes of

meeting 154 (Board paper 174/84), Ingol Golf and Squash Club (Board paper 6/85)

- NTC 2/2/156; Meeting 156 with Board papers, 19 April 1985: Minutes of meeting 155 (Board paper 17/85), Ingol Golf Course (Board paper 24/85)

- NTC 2/2/159; Meeting 159 with Board papers, 19 July 1985: Ingol Golf and Squash Club (Board paper 65/85)

- NTC 2/2/163; Meeting 162 with Board papers, 20 December 1985: Private Housing Development Boy's Lane, Ingol (Board paper 118/85), Section 7(2) Applications (Board paper 127/85)

4.21 The above records were accessed under a 'Freedom of Information' request.

4.22 The intent was clear. CLDC were intending for further investment in the golf course as a leisure facility for the community, possibly in line with the Outline Plan, in order to boost the potential revenue earnings, costs were under control. Hence, Hemm-Inns acquired the 211 acres of open space for £50k, debt free, with no covenants to restrict usage. Residents and golfers would contend that the intended investment never materialised resulting in the current Planning Application and Appeal.

4.23 A variety of leisure uses were suggested as adding to the potential revenue stream. There was until some ten to fifteen years ago a 'practice area', now overgrown, at the back of the Sheraton Park development. This had been proposed as a driving range but nothing came of it. Miller Buckley Golf suggested extending the squash facility, adding badminton courts and also providing two bowling greens. The former 'practice area' is large enough to develop as a cricket ground. The north west of Preston has effectively lost two local league cricket grounds in the past ten years. Hence there were and are demonstrably a number of potential leisure options available.

4.24 Defence and Statutory Protection of Open Space Provision and Public Access - Since its establishment the planning designation of the golf course and adjacent areas as Open Space have been fiercely defended through the years by the local community who have enjoyed and continue to enjoy the area for casual recreation. The planning designation of Open Space/Golf Course and the concept of Access have been carried forward in the Fulwood and Western Suburbs Plan and the Preston Local Plan 2004; endorsed through public consultation.

4.25 The Central Lancashire Local Development Framework Core Strategy - The value placed on these lands is fully recognised in the ongoing future planning of the City and wider urban area. The concept of the open space as an 'Area of Major Separation' has been included in the Submission Version of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy document.

4.26 The Submission Version of the LDF Core Strategy is due to be examined in Preston in June/July 2011. This document was approved at a full Preston City Council meeting. The Submission Version reinforces Cottam as the Strategic Site in the north west of Preston. It also identifies, in Policy 19, two 'Areas of Major Open Space'. These are areas between:

- Ingol/Tanterton and Greyfriars/Cadley; the intent is that this area is the whole of the Ingol Golf Course land as a minimum
- Sharoe Green and Fulwood; the intent is that this is the existing Preston/Fulwood Golf Course land

4.27 **Prematurity** - In respect of determining the LDF Core Strategy and also the Development Plan Document for the area, the planning application to develop the Ingol Golf Course land is considered premature. The planning application clearly goes against the planning intent in the LDF Core Strategy and the vision for the future growth of Preston. . It attempts to pre-empt decisions which should be thought through, well considered, and subject to the fullest possible public engagement, looking at the future needs of Preston and how they are met in the round.

4.28 Not only would the development conflict with the Submission Core Strategy on open space provision and pre-empt decisions on how the areas housing needs should be met, it could undermine key strands of that Strategy. The Core Strategy includes Cottam as a Strategic Site. The development of Cottam Hall is yet to be completed. It is currently at the 'Master-planning' stage. It is a key element in the housing provision in the Core Strategy allied to the Cottam Strategic Site. The development of the Cottam Brickworks is currently subject to a Planning Application. Again, this development forms a key element in the proposals for Cottam as a Strategic Site. The primary infrastructure to serve both sites is in place, put there by CLDC as part of its overall plan for the north west of Preston. The LDF seeks to build on that infrastructure and on the Cottam Hall and Cottam Brickworks developments.

4.30 All the above is intended to demonstrate that:

- the Ingol Golf Course in its entirety was planned by CLDC as the Open Space provision for the community, was sold to Hemm-Inns with the intention that it remain so and that the recreational and leisure facilities should be further developed by them
- that subsequent Local Plans continued the categorisation of the Ingol Golf Course as recreational open space in the north west of Preston,

- the emerging vision and strategic development policies for Preston as set out in the submission Central Lancashire Core Strategy support its future protection and are in other key respects potentially undermined by the proposed development.

5.0 A very special resource that was and is still needed by the Local Community

- 5.1 The government in PPG 17 recognises the very special role that open space and recreational provision play in the lives and health of local communities. Ingol Golf Course represents a very special resource in many ways not least because it is within the very heart of the community and was developed as part of and to serve that new residential community (as set out in Section 4).
- 5.2 As previously noted, **the golf course** was designed and constructed to a Championship standard under the patronage of Henry Cotton, at that time still regarded as England's foremost golfing champion. The course was considered to be challenging in its layout and design. Whilst well maintained it was enjoyed by the better golfer, as various comments on golfing websites will testify. By its very location the golf course was readily accessible to the local catchment/community without involving a lengthy car journey. However, the course was also played by visiting celebrities appearing in shows at Blackpool during the summer season.
- 5.2 The youth of the area made a significant use of the golf course in its formative years. From when it first opened and through the 1990s the course enjoyed a strong youth following, something that it would be desirable to replicate today. This was evidenced by the writer, particularly during summer weekends, when scores of young golfers would occupy the course on Saturday afternoons. During this time the course also had a strong Senior Members section, competing in local competitions. This is evidenced through my former neighbour, the late Bill Crawford, a stalwart of the Seniors and former Captain.
- 5.3 It is understood that the **clubhouse** was also well used as a venue for social functions. For instance, at time of closure it is understood that bookings for wedding receptions extended some eighteen months into the future
- 5.4 In the early days of the Ingol golf course the **squash courts** were well used, Ingol being a member of a local squash league. After several years absence, the Ingol squash club had recently returned to use the two courts, invested in the expansion of the facilities only to be rebuffed by the owners when the golf club closed.
- 5.5 The **Ingol golf course complex** is a facility which should have been viable, could still be viable and be at the heart of any leisure and recreational activity in the community.

- 5.6 **Walking** is recognised as a significant recreational pursuit. The golf course land was originally designated as 'Public Open Space/Golf Course' and is crossed by numerous dedicated walking routes and public rights of way with the associated infrastructure, signage/styles/gates etc. incorporated into the development of the golf course and surrounding estates at time of construction. As such the open space that the golf course provides has been used in its entirety for casual recreational walking and related pursuits since inception. It provides a pleasant and rewarding semi rural area within the existing urban boundary.
- 5.7 This is achieved through the general open landscape, typical of the area, the nascent streams, ponds, trees and the associated wild life. The Applicants own Ecology Study and submissions from related Statutory Consultees would confirm the variety and extent of the wildlife in and around the Ingol Golf Course. Indeed the variety of wildlife and the pleasure that this brings to the local community is picked up in many third party representations to this Inquiry.
- 5.8 Landscape value can be a subjective issue but the writer considers that the original concept of the golf villages estates fully integrated with the open space/golf course provides for an excellent setting with the open views across a field structure, from both public and private areas, which so define this area of Lancashire. It fully justifies the original concept.
- 5.9 The requirements of PPG17 'Planning for open space, sport and recreation' are relevant in that the community have had and still enjoy the un-opposed use of the golf course land as recreational open space. The open space that the whole of the Ingol Golf Course provides very much defines the whole character of the area.
- 5.10 It is what makes the area an attractive place to live. I suspect for many it was a prime factor in their decision to move to the area, and for long established residents such as myself, it is a major reason not to move to *pastures new*. It cannot be said in any way to be surplus to the recreational requirements of the community,.

6.0 Ingol Golf Course proposed housing development – a development that the Local Community does not want

- 6.1 The prospect of the loss of the golf course to a potential large housing development has been prevalent in the local community since its acquisition by Hemm-Inns in 1985.
- 6.2 It has been apparent to the golfing community, the local community and even the casual visitor that the condition of the golf course proper and the open space provision, particularly the infrastructure as deliberately provided by CLDC, has been allowed to deteriorate over the years. Some would argue that the level of maintenance required of a 'challenging championship standard golf course' has not been forthcoming and that the local community

has been actively dissuaded from accessing the open space. Typically this has manifested itself in the removal and non replacement of the 'Public Footpath' signs, the deliberate blocking of some CLDC access points, the construction of palisade fencing across some of the CLDC access points, the construction of a golf tee on a supposed public footpath, the poorly maintained state of the wooden stiles at the access points, the poorly maintained state of some wooden bridge structures, particularly across the Sharoe Brook, the poorly maintained state of the 'trim trail' exercising provision, the poor state of some of the woodland in the open space provision (regular coppicing or pollarding would have proved beneficial) and, as some would allege, the poorly maintained state of the drainage to the golf course.

- 6.3 It is understood that firm proposals to develop the golf course were first mooted in October 2008 through submission by Northern Trust to the LDF 'Call for Sites' process and through meetings with Preston City Council. This was brought to the fore in the publication of the draft list of sites and a further, better publicised, 'last' call in November 2009. The writer was one of a number of people who were attempting at the time to bring the issue to the attention of the local community. This resulted in submissions by the local community to the LDF process.
- 6.4 The Association came into being at a public meeting prompted by the closure of the Ingol Golf Course in January 2010 and the subsequent announcement by Northern Trust of the 'IngolVision' public consultation. The public meeting was held in the Preston Grasshoppers RFC function room and was attended by some three hundred plus residents. There was almost unanimous opposition to the prospect of development of the golf course and the loss of the open space.
- 6.5 Some 450 residents attended the 'IngolVision' public consultation which again resulted in a well documented almost universal rejection of the development proposals. To complement the 'IngolVision' consultation IGVRA also carried out its own survey which again resulted in total rejection of the proposals by some 750 residents. This almost universal rejection of development has been confirmed by residents attending the various public meetings, open sessions and consultation events organised locally by the Association to better communicate with residents.
- 6.6 This is also supported by the community responses to the LDF 'Call for Sites' calling for the golf course to remain as open space and which effectively initiated the Association; by the numerous and lengthy written objections to the Planning Application; by the public's response to the Site Allocation and Policies consultation recently undertaken by Preston City Council and by the responses to the Appeal. Rejection of the development proposals is the message being sent by the community to the members of the Association committee.

Appended to this submission are photographs of the attendance at the recent meeting to explain the Public Inquiry process and the IGVRA part in it (see Appendix 12). This meeting endorsed the Association's approach to the Public Inquiry. Through these meetings we have also raised significant funds which have enabled the Association to engage the services of a professional planning consultant, Tim Brown, and more recently led to IGVRA opting for Rule 6 status and potentially the engagement of Mark Smith as Expert Witness in respect of the viability of the Ingol Golf Course (now called by Preston City Council).

- 6.7 I would venture that the above demonstrates that there is little, if any, support in the local community for the proposed housing development; and that the requirements of PPG17 that the developer should demonstrate categorically that there is community support to the proposals to develop this recreational open space have in no way been met.
- 6.8 Northern Trust did consult the local community but this exercise failed utterly to demonstrate that their proposals are widely supported by them ' as required by PPG 17. The Planning Application contains a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) together with Appendices. The Appendices relate particularly to an analysis of the responses received from residents at a consultation event held by the applicant in February 2010.
- 6.9 At this consultation event proposals for 'IngolVision' were first put to residents. The 'IngolVision' draft proposals were broadly similar to those in the current planning application. Residents were asked to comment on these draft proposals. The Applicant's own analysis shows that residents were almost universally, 98 per cent, in favour of retaining the whole of the Ingol Golf Course land as an operational golf course or as recreational green open space. Northern Trusts pre-application consultation clearly demonstrated that residents are almost unanimously against the proposals. To suggest otherwise would be disingenuous.
- 6.10 This was also demonstrated by the results of a simple survey carried out by IGVRA in the local community in late April 2010 (in response to the 'IngolVision consultation'); from some seven hundred plus returns:

● Open a quality golf course	40%
● Convert to park land	47%
● Change to woodland for bio-energy projects	11%
● Sports fields	2%
● Other, explain:	0%

These results still hold good today and are confirmed by the support in the local community for the IGVRA stance and attendances at IGVRA Public Meetings.

- 6.11 All of the above seeks to demonstrate that the open space/golf course land is far from

surplus to community requirements and that the proposed development does not have the support of the local community.

7.0 Ingol Golf Course Proposed Housing – An unnecessary development that will not increase housing supply.

- 7.1 Northern Trust claim that Preston has less than 4 years supply of housing land and that housing development on the golf course is needed to provide enough housing land for the next 5 years. This claim seems to ignore the economic conditions that exist today and the uncertain and almost certainly slow recovery that is anticipated over the next 5 years.
- 7.2 Evidence commissioned by the Central Lancashire Planning Authorities for their submission Core Strategy the *ECORYS Housing Requirements Study* (March 2011) clearly indicates that the actual demand for housing in Central Lancashire will be much less than the RSS housing requirement of 507 dwellings per year upon which Northern Trust are basing their claims (my underlining). ECORYS conclude

On a North West scale, and using the assumptions that underpin RSS and the logic of the EIP Panel, it is reasonable to assume that the requirement might be lowered by at least 31% to take account of recent economic growth trends. On that basis, the Central Lancashire approach of reducing the requirement temporarily by 20% is also reasonable. [Page 23]

Even if economic growth in the wider region and county eventually returns to its long term trend path, there has been and will continue to be a sharp deviation from this trend for some years to come, and this will have considerable implications with respect to the effective demand for housing. [page 47]

Whilst demographic trends and the future pattern and type of employment growth have important implications for future household formation demand, ultimately it is mortgage conditions, together with household income and house prices that determine the extent to which this underlying household formation demand will be effective.[page 48]

- 7.3 I believe that the ECORYS study fully supports the conclusion reached by the Central Lancashire LDF Joint Advisory Committee in September 2010 that:-

“ there is therefore no need to actively boost housing land supply by permitting significant housing proposals in advance of new site allocations being adopted, as this

would risk undermining the efficient and effective use of land”

7.4 The Central Lancashire Authorities are only proposing to trim their housing requirement by 20% not the minimum 31% that ECORYS think is more likely to reflect the actual future demand for housing. If ECORYS are correct then Preston undoubtedly has a 5 year supply and South Ribble (immediately to the south of Preston City Centre) considerably more.

7.5 Recent statistics from the Council for Mortgage Lenders (see Appendix 10) and the Land Registry (see Appendix 11) appear to support the ECORYS view that the actual demand for housing is set to remain depressed for a number of years.

- Mortgages remain much more difficult to secure than pre-recession (with most mortgages at no more than 80% of property value).
- Mortgage lending is running at considerably less than half of pre-recession levels.
- Sales Volumes in Preston and across the whole of Central Lancashire are half what they were in 2007.
- The impact of public sector cuts are yet to be fully felt with people concerned over job security.

7.6 I am not a planner but it seems to me that in these circumstances the consequences of planning permission being granted for the development proposed will not be that more houses or affordable units are delivered over the next 5 years but instead that

- Few if any units are completed on the application site (in which case the arguments of the applicants lack any substance)
- Any units that are completed are likely to be almost wholly offset by lower sales and fewer completions on other sites particularly Cottam Hall that is nearby and where the Homes and Communities Agency are well advanced in bringing forward the release of land for development..

7.7 Again this view seems to be supported by ECORYS who conclude at page 53:-

Our analysis is that increasing the range of sites will not necessarily increase housing delivery because of the constraints that will still apply on mortgage availability but will switch development to the easier to develop sites and so risk undermining the spatial strategy.

7.8 I agree wholeheartedly with the Central Lancashire Authorities that the case for releasing additional housing land (beyond existing allocations and permissions) to meet longer term needs should be debated through the site allocation plan-making process upon which Preston City Council have already made a start. This would provide an opportunity to consider properly the merits of potential sites to meet Preston's longer term housing needs *in the round* supported by full public engagement.

8.0 Ingol Golf Course proposed housing - a development that does not deliver any other significant Local Public Benefit

8.1 The development proposals lead to the loss of significant recreational open space. There are no proposals included in the Applicant's proposals that would in any way mitigate this loss to the local and wider community. In his Planning Statement the Applicant offers unrestricted access to some 75 per cent of the area of the Ingol Golf Course. As such the land would remain in the Applicant's ownership and could be subject to yet further Planning Applications for development. In this context it should be noted that the community have enjoyed un-opposed access to the whole of the recreational open space/golf course since its effective completion in May 1981. The offer by the Applicant is not considered to offer any benefit over the existing arrangement..

8.2 The link to the Guild Wheel is merely window dressing and could be provided through the wooded area within the existing land take without the necessity of the proposed development.

8.3 As noted previously the youth of the area made a significant use of the golf course in its formative years. With a thriving youth section it provided a strong focus. Although there are now several community centres in the area with a good youth element, other than the MUGA facility with its restricted access, non provides the recreational outlet that the golf course previously gave. Investment in the youth of Preston is currently targeted at the provision of a dedicated community centre in the city centre. The offer of some 500 sq.m. for an as yet unspecified 'community facility' without significant ongoing funding in no way compensates for the loss of the golf course as a facility for the youth of the area, for the loss of the club house as a focus for the community, for the loss of the squash courts or for the loss of the golf course, with its un-opposed access, as a community facility for casual recreation.

8.4 In summary, the development does not deliver any other significant public benefit.

9.0 Summary and Conclusions

9.1 The development of Ingol East lead to the concept of the Ingol Golf Villages which provided

for recreational open space within the context of a golf course fully integrated into the housing provision. This concept has been carried through all subsequent Local Plans and is embodied in the LDF Submission Core Strategy.

- 9.2 The Ingol Golf Course was sold to Hemm-Inns, as a developer of leisure interests, with the intent that the recreational and leisure aspects might be further developed. That further development and investment has not transpired.
- 9.3 The local community has had un-opposed access since the inception of the Ingol Golf Course and continues to utilise the whole of the area as recreational green space. The Golf Course, Squash Courts and Clubhouse were a well used and highly valued resource that contributed much to the life of the local community. Their decline and closure has come about through a lack of investment and proper management and maintenance. The Appellant has not demonstrated that the course and associated facilities are not viable and in no way are they surplus to the wider recreational requirements of the local community.
- 9.4 The proposal is directly contrary to past, and present local planning policies and conflicts with the emerging vision, objectives and strategic policies for the area set out in the submission Central Lancashire Core Strategy..
- 9.5 The current proposal to develop housing on Ingol Golf Course has little or no demonstrable support within the local community, indeed the local community have been proven to be almost unanimously against the proposal.
- 9.6 Little or no no additional housing is likely to arise from the development of Ingol Golf Course. The Cottam Hall development, planned in overall concept at the time of Ingol East, has yet to be completed by HCA. The proposed development of the Ingol Golf Course will be in direct conflict to and have the potential to undermine the completion of this development which is a Core Strategy priority.
- 9.7 The proposal to develop housing on the Ingol Golf Course does not offer to deliver any significant local public benefits in terms of open space provision and access; community facilities or transport infrastructure

Appendices

1. CLDC drawing reference no.6/34/17 revE, revision dated December 1978 and titled 'Ingol East, Local Plan'
2. CLDC drawing reference no. 6/34/520 revA, revision dated February 1980 and titled 'Ingol East, Composite Drawing'
3. Section 6(1) New Towns Act 1965; Ingol East Planning Statement
4. NTC 2/2/145; Meeting 145 with Board papers, 17 February 1984: Ingol Golf and Squash Club (Board paper 28/84)
5. NTC 2/2/154; Meeting 154 with Board papers, 14 December 1984: Ingol Golf and Squash Club (Board paper 164/84)
6. NTC 2/2/155; Meeting 155 with Board papers, 15 February 1985: Minutes of meeting 154 (Board paper 174/84), Ingol Golf and Squash Club (Board paper 6/85)
7. NTC 2/2/156; Meeting 156 with Board papers, 19 April 1985: Minutes of meeting 155 (Board paper 17/85), Ingol Golf Course (Board paper 24/85)
8. NTC 2/2/159; Meeting 159 with Board papers, 19 July 1985: Ingol Golf and Squash Club (Board paper 65/85)
9. NTC 2/2/163; Meeting 162 with Board papers, 20 December 1985: Private Housing Development Boy's Lane, Ingol (Board paper 118/85), Section 7(2) Applications (Board paper 127/85)
10. Extract from Council For Mortgage Lending Annual Report 2010
11. Land Registry Housing Sales Volumes data for Preston, Central Lancashire and Lancashire 2007-2010
12. Photos of IGVRA Public Meeting 11th May 2011