

## **THAMES GATEWAY BRIDGE PUBLIC INQUIRY**

### **GREENWICH WILDLIFE ADVISORY GROUP**

#### **SUMMARY OF CASE**

- 1.0. **Introduction.** My name is Jeremy Cotton, of 43, Whernside Close, Thamesmead, London, SE28 8HB. I am a Chartered Biologist and a professional ecologist, now retired. I have been a member of the Greenwich Wildlife Advisory Group (hereinafter known as GWAG) since it was first set up in 1975 (as the Greenwich Wildlife Group). At various times I have served as chair or vice-chair, and am at present vice-chair, at least until our AGM on 4<sup>th</sup> August.
- 1.1. GWAG has varied in its composition, status and role over the past thirty years, but has usually included Greenwich Councillors, officers of Greenwich Council and other bodies (e.g. GLC before 1986. LEU from 1986 to 2000, and GLA since 2000). It has always been intended to be a meeting ground for such Councillors, officers, and members of the voluntary sector to discuss issues of interest in wildlife conservation and related matters.
- 1.2. Because of this intermediate status it will restrict its evidence to this Inquiry to issues of significance for wildlife, wildlife habitat, and access by the public to wildlife and wildlife habitat. Individual members, including myself, may give further evidence on issues that go beyond the limits set for GWAG.
- 1.3. The Group gave evidence at the 1985-6 Inquiry, mainly with reference to the Oxleas Woodlands SSSI, presented by myself but calling the then chair, MAURICE Dunk, a GLC and then ex-GLC officer, as a witness. At that Inquiry there was little distance between the GLC, LBG, and GWAG, so there was less need for restraint than there is now.
- 1.4. I intend to submit the full proof of evidence to the Group at our meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> August for final approval. That may involve some change of emphasis for the various topics dealt with below.

## **2.0. Access to Evidence.**

2.1. At the time of writing (28-30<sup>th</sup> May) I have received neither the rule 6 statement nor the proofs of evidence of Transport for London, and only the rule 6 statements from the other parties. It is therefore impossible to specify any questions of clarification - I shall have to include any that arise in my cross-examinations - or to be precise as to which witnesses, either for TfL or the supporters, I shall need to cross-examine. I therefore have to give provisional notice that I may wish to cross-examine all the witnesses, for both TfL and their supporters, and hope to reduce the list once I have been able to study the evidence.

2.2. I expect to adopt part or all of the proofs of other participants in the Inquiry, usually, but not exclusively other objectors. I shall also refer to other documents, and hope to supply these if they have not already been deposited in the Inquiry library or referred to by other participants

## **3.0. Effects on Wildlife, Wildlife Habitat, and Access by the Public.**

The traffic generated by the proposals before the Inquiry will have a significant impact on wildlife, wildlife habitat, and access to these by the public as follows:

### **3.1. The River Thames.**

GWAG does not have the resources to submit independent evidence on the impact of the Bridge within the Tidal Thames. We will, however, wish to scrutinise any evidence submitted by TfL or other parties to the Inquiry.

### **3.2. From the Thames to the A 2016 Thamesmead Spine Road.**

Access to most of this area is restricted. The papers submitted to Greenwich Planning Board in November and December 2004 indicated that there would be some impact. The Group will wish to scrutinise any data provided by TfL or other parties. In particular, West Thamesmead is the only part of Greenwich with a population of Water Voles (*Agricola*), which is the subject of a Species Action Plan (SAP) within the evolving Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Greenwich, as well as being a nationally threatened species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. I had to point this out to Scott Wilson myself in 1997, in connection with a planning application for the Twin Tumps. (So far as I am aware, Dr. Hughes joined Scott Wilson after 1997, so this is no criticism of her expertise). We will wish to scrutinise the proposal for any impact on existing Water Vole sites, and more importantly, for any impact on the aim of the SAP to increase the distribution of this species in the area.

### **3.3. Along the A2016 Thamesmead Spine Road.**

While the most of the habitats in this area are not of the highest importance (the Ridgeway is a Borough I SINC, as well as a Green Corridor) they do form part of important Public Open Spaces. Any adverse effects of the proposals on these open spaces, for example in terms of noise, will therefore constitute an infringement of the access of the public to wildlife and wildlife habitat.

### **3.4. South of the A2016 Thamesmead Spine Road.**

The adverse impact of the proposals is expected to be at its worst here. I shall have examined the traffic figures as part of my personal evidence. The Group may wish to adopt the conclusions, or the evidence of other parties. The expectation is that increased traffic between the Spine Road, the A2, and the South Circular Road will have the following results:

- 3.4.1. Increased severance, and loss of amenity, between Lesnes Abbey and Lesnes Woods AMINC and Bostall Heath and Woods AMINC.
- 3.4.2. Impact on Bostall Gardens.
- 3.4.3. Increased noise and loss of amenity at and near the bottom of Bostall Hill.
- 3.4.4. Increased noise and severance along Wickham Lane. This will affect both the Green Chain (chain of public open spaces) as a public amenity and as a chain of areas of wildlife habitat. Examples in Greenwich include Bleak Hill, Winns Common, Plumstead Cemetery, and the grounds of Goldie Leigh Hospital.
- 3.4.5. Increased Traffic on the South Circular Road will have a similar impact on Woolwich Common, Eltham Common and other public open spaces within its catchment area.

### **4.0. Errors and Omissions Excepted.**

When GWAG next meets on 4<sup>th</sup> August, representatives of local groups may wish to add further examples.

### **5.0. Conclusions.**

The proposals will have a deleterious effect on public open spaces and wildlife habitats over a wide area in the north-east of the London Borough of Greenwich, not just in Thamesmead. The Group may also wish to adopt the conclusions of my personal proof of evidence.