

J.M. Frood & Son

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] 21st January 2018

Dear Sirs,

Response to: The North Dorset Local Plan Review Issues and Options Consultation - November 2017

Regarding: Slaughtergate Farm, Wavering Lane West, Gillingham, Dorset, SP8 5NH

In preparing our response to the above document we have reviewed:

- 1) The North Dorset Local Plan Review Issues and Options Consultation – November 2017
- 2) The North Dorset Local Plan Review Issues and Options Consultation Sustainability Assessment – November 2017
- 3) Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan – June 2017 version

We are the owners of the above property which falls within area I; being one of the four areas, out of eleven considered around Gillingham, that you have identified as suitable for sustainable development. We would support the allocation of this area within the forthcoming local plan. We believe that the land at Slaughtergate Farm can be used to resolve a number of the challenges identified in your Issues and Options Consultation including Highways and Recreation Facilities.

- 1) We have the following observations to make upon the consultation document:
 - a) We note that in paragraph 7.8 of the consultation you comment about the provision and enhancement of sports pitches close to Gillingham upon which we would observe that whilst not actually inside area I but within approx. 300m thereof. we are the owners of the land on which the extended sports pitches of the North Dorset Rugby Club are being established (under planning consent 2/2016/0495/FUL) and also the owners of the longer established pitches on the opposite side of Longbury Hill Lane.
 - b) We own the allotments just to the north-east of the junction of Longbury Hill Lane; Wavering Lane West and the B3081. The area of these is approx 0.27Ha; we note from the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan that current provision around Gillingham is recorded as 0.8Ha against a current target of 4.7Ha and a 2031 target of 6.8Ha. Therefore, we provide over a third of the current allotment provision in Gillingham.
 - c) We are also the owners of the Scheduled Ancient Monument Longbury Long Barrow to the west of Longbury Hill Lane (Historic England Reference: 1013680).

To that extent we would be willing to work with you as the new local plan emerges to explore how sites a, b and c might be secured as community facilities for the long term.

- d) We are also the owners of the land on which the solar farm to the north of the B3081 is located, established under planning consent (2/2012/1042) which contributes to the districts sustainability targets.
- e) We submitted in October 2016 two representations with plans for areas of our land; we enclose as Appendices A and B the plans for your further review.
- f) There is some land between that shown on plan B and the solar farm which could be part of the Gillingham Royal Forest Project as part of a town master plan.

2) In wider observations we comment that:

- a) Gillingham is a well-located town with the largest parish population in the district. (Your Map 2.3 – Population Distribution)
- b) It has a railway station upon the London Waterloo to Exeter line normally with 24 services per week day.
- c) The A303 road is 3.5 miles from Slaughtergate Farm yard to the Stourhead junction (using the B3087 as the connecting route). We recognise that the Wavering Lane West and B3087 junction is not the best but as we own the land to the north of Longbury Hill Lane here believe that a suitable solution can be provided. Possibly by the construction of a roundabout and the widening of Wavering Lane West.
- d) You have commented that the agricultural land around Gillingham is not the best in the district which is another reason that the farm is unlikely to be profitable post BREXIT. We are also aware of the Gillingham Royal Forest Area and therefore incorporating some of our wider land into this could be part of a delivery option for this as well as the extra housing need for Gillingham with the restrictions to the south.
- e) In the late 1980s and early 90's we were involved in discussions with developers looking at an extensive development to the north of Gillingham. The proposal was to construct a bypass around Gillingham by putting a roundabout at the junction of the B3087 and Wavering Lane West and then exiting on to the B3092 around the Purns Mill and Colesbrook junction. A bypass here would provide a distinct barrier between Gillingham and Milton which we note is an issue.
- f) Gillingham and the surrounding land is not in the two AONB's that cover a larger proportion of the district.
- g) The Slaughtergate Farm land is not part of the flood plain that you have identified as affecting some of Area I in your assessments.
- h) Focusing on the Slaughtergate and Wavering Lane West end of Area I will minimise the risk of coalescence with Milton-on-Stour which is also identified as a possible issue in the Gillingham Neighbourhood plan.
- i) The Gillingham Neighbourhood plan also identifies the need for further Community Facilities including a 16 x 23 m venue with a stage; we would suggest, without any knowledge of their plans, that perhaps something could be integrated with the North Dorset Rugby Club site?

3) We think that now is the appropriate time to set out the more recent history of this farm considering the changes to UK agriculture that BREXIT will bring:

- a) In 1980 we took over Slaughtergate Farm and invested in a new milking parlour and expanding the dairy cow herd. Then in 1984 milk quota was brought in which had a severe impact upon the farm.
- b) By the 1990's we had settled the farm into a secure position using an employed herdsman to run it day to day whilst we focused on our business (farm) in Essex.

- c) Then in the early 2000's the UK dairy industry went through a period of change which has seen the number of dairy farms reduce dramatically with substantial restructuring of the industry.
- d) We took the decision in 2008 to cease milking cows and instead let the farm to two brothers who were keen to try and establish their own sheep and beef business. Unfortunately, this did not work out for them.
- e) Now with BREXIT looming it looks that there may be no viable farming use for Slaughtergate Farm in the near future.

We have been considering making applications to convert barns in the farmyard into residential dwellings under the permitted development rights that have become available to agriculture to re-use redundant buildings as we do not see the farmyard as having a long term viable future in agricultural use.

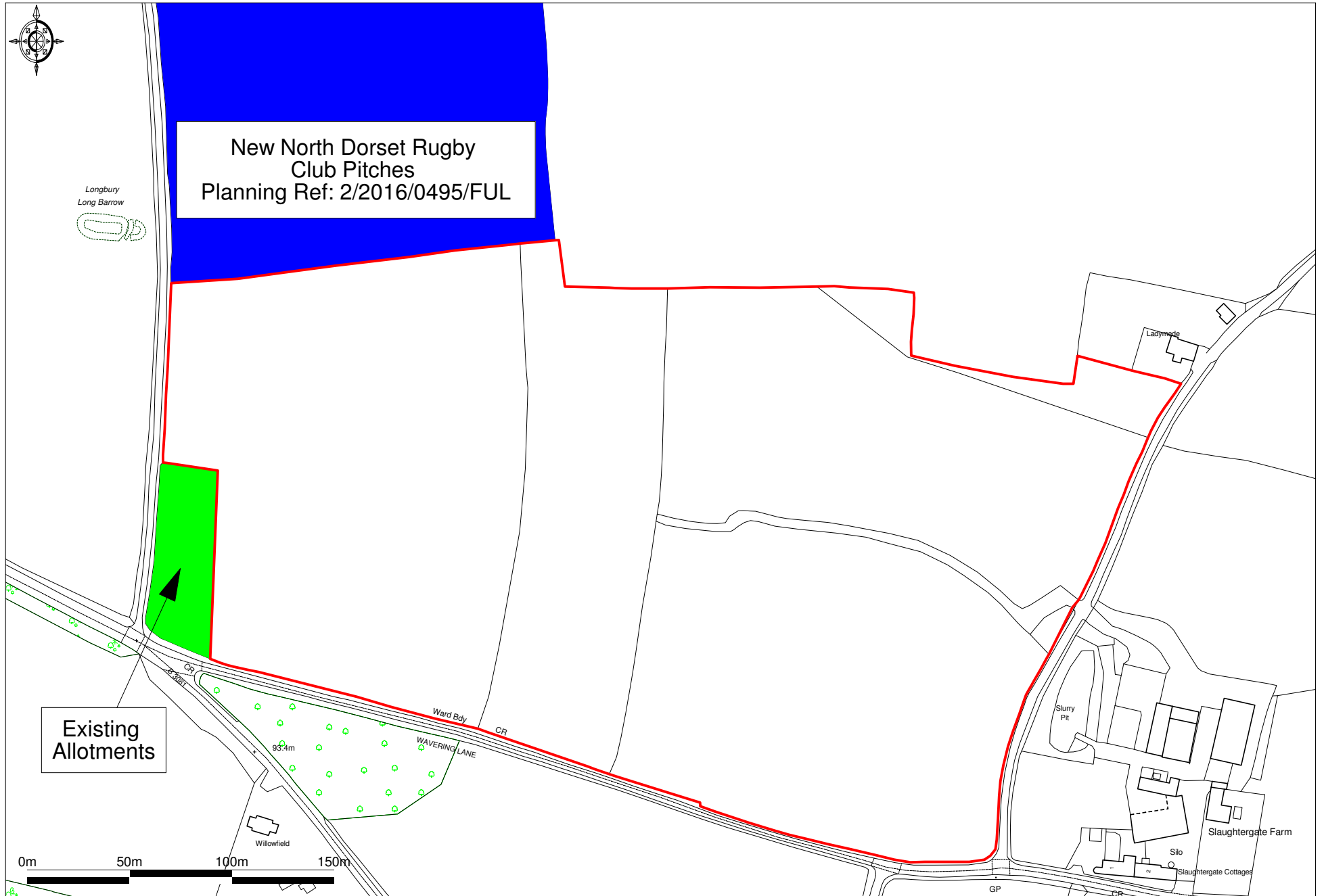
- 4) In conclusion we believe that Slaughtergate Farm, possibly incorporating some adjoining land, can help both the District and Town Council deliver their visions for the future of Gillingham. We hope that the above suggestions are useful and look forward to discussing them with you.

Yours faithfully,

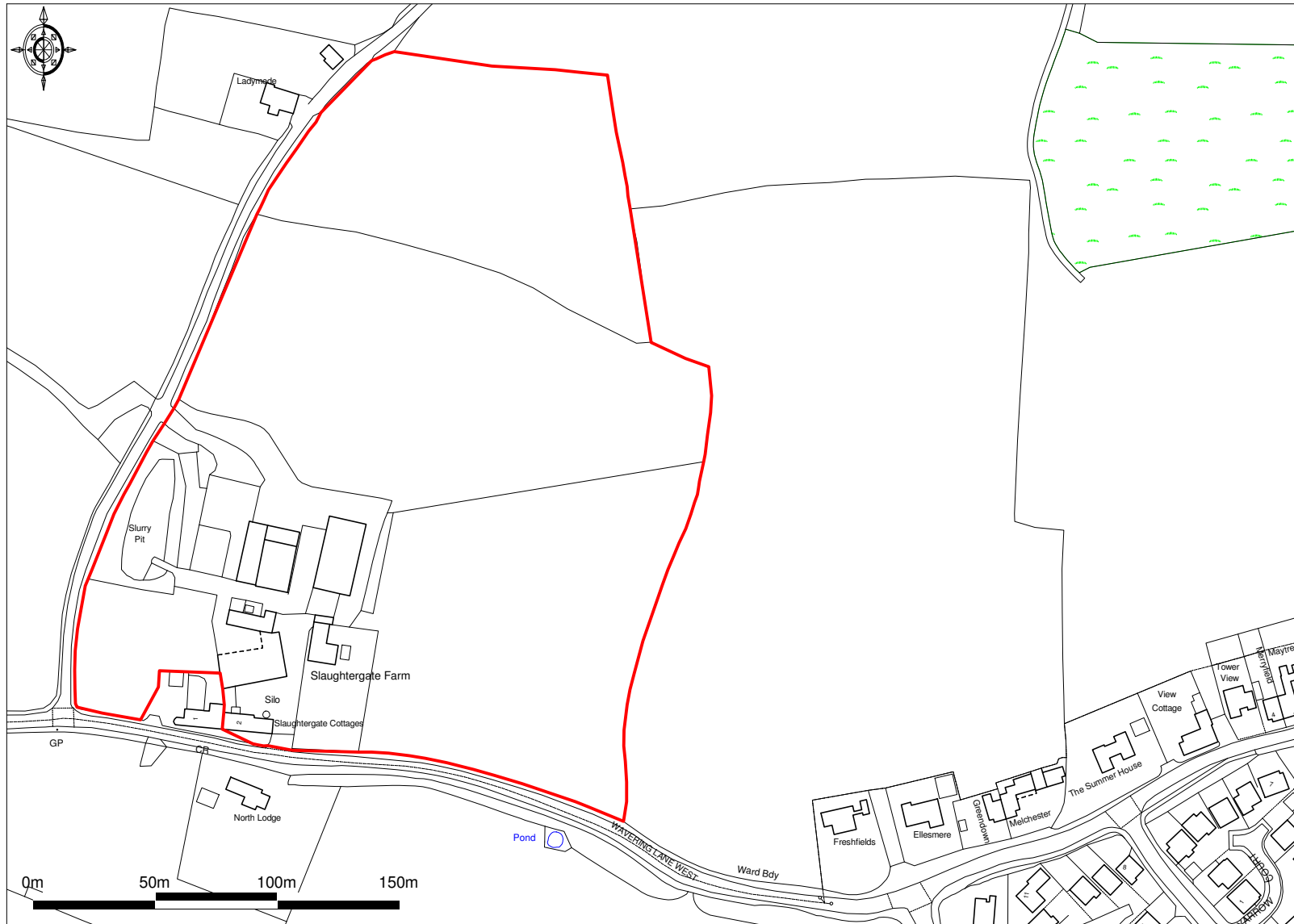
Mrs H Creed (nee Froot),

Partner, J M Froot & Son

████████████████████



Slaughtergate Farm, Gillingham, Dorset, SP8 5NH



Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright 2016. All rights reserved. Licence number 100022432. Plotted Scale - 1:2500