

From: Ben Moorhead
Sent: 03 January 2006 11:11
To: 'kentishexpress@thekmgroun.co.uk'
Subject: Wye Science Park

The Editor, Opinion Section

Dear Sir,

Steve Dawe's letter (opinion 29th December) and his green approach hits the mark perfectly, following on from your paper's excellent coverage of this project on 22nd December.

One would have preferred to comment after the public meeting next Monday but the promoters of the scheme (some County Councillors, the Ashford Borough leader and the Imperial team) have presumptuously released a triumphant photograph with their half story in an attempt to give the impression that there is universal consensus. Do the supposed representatives have the authority of their councils as a whole or support of the local community which they do not appear to have consulted?

The secret nature of their approach, with no consultation with Wye, Brook or neighbouring villages make this a flagrant neglect if not betrayal of community interests. The introduction of this magnitude of urbanisation may well result in the death of the rural villages of Wye and Brook. Ironically, this threat emanates from the very bodies duty-bound to have regard to the future of their fabric and environment.

The fact that ordinary people who live in the area have been denied details of the proposed development is hardly transparent or responsible governance. Even the "public" meeting on 9th January is by prior registration which will give a useful database of objectors' names to Imperial.

The environ of Wye is largely designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty and is very special. The proposed site is nestled in the lea of the North Downs below the famous Crown. Even though Imperial should be allowed some development in moderation over time, the scale that is proposed is simply untenable in this unique location. A scheme that envisions 12,500 employees at fruition, with the inevitable expansion of Wye's infrastructure would destroy forever for our children and grandchildren a village (indeed several villages) famed for beauty and stunning wild landscape.

Science parks are popping up everywhere and not all enjoy longevity or fulfil their original purpose.

How could we, in good conscience, allow hundreds of acres of pristine countryside to be covered in concrete and street lights when there are so many brownfield sites in East Kent that need redevelopment? This irreversible, irresponsible condemnation of such special countryside must not slip through via the ambiguous "progress" banner. Much like global warming, you cannot turn the clock back.

Yours sincerely

Ben Moorhead