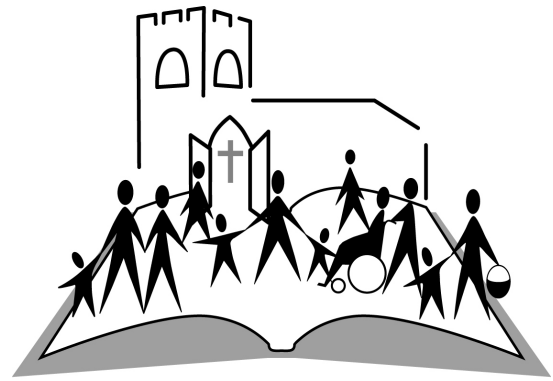


Letter sent to local representatives
and all known interested parties
details of whom are included below

25th November 2009



St Lawrence's Church . Biddulph

Dear

I hope this finds you well.

I'm sure you will have been aware for some time that Vodaphone has identified Biddulph North as an area in which it is looking to locate a new G3 phone mast. St. Lawrence's Parochial Church Council was approached by an agent acting for Vodaphone and confirmed our interest in considering possible use of the church tower, particularly when it emerged that the alternative site being considered was just across from the church in Congleton Road. At the time we knew this would be a decision that would cause a certain amount of local opposition.

Since the PCC took this decision in March we have not heard back from Vodaphone to indicate whether they want to take this any further or not. However you are probably aware from publicity in the local press that a group of local people recently staged a protest outside the church to demonstrate their opposition to a phone mast on the church tower. The church's response to this was fairly reported in the Biddulph Chronicle and is available in full on our church website www.biddulphchurch.co.uk.

The line the PCC has consistently taken from the very outset of this discussion reflects our conviction that phone masts are essentially safe, and a necessary part of the network required for us all to use mobile phones, but that communities should have a say in where they are located. It remains our conviction that of the two sites currently being mooted, the church tower is by far the better option. We have however in correspondence with Vodaphone's agent asked them about other possible sites in Biddulph North and specifically whether the Sewage works on Marsh Green Road or the Hirst Quarry have been considered. There is no doubt in my mind that if either of these proved to be viable alternatives the PCC would give its support to either, rather than pursue using the church tower (even though by doing so we would lose significant rental income.) We do not know for certain because we have not been heard from Vodaphone, but I would presume their interest in the church tower is only because these other sites are not actually viable alternatives.

/ cont

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I doubt there is any “ideal” location for a phone mast since by definition they need to be reasonably near to those for whom they function. The PCC is mindful of some the issues involved in trying to find a suitable location, including the proximity of St. Lawrence’s Pre-School and Woodhouse Middle School. We think the church tower has several features in its favour and embraces some of the precautionary principles that guide these decisions; it is not a bad site, but we appreciate it may not be the best site in Biddulph North.

At the moment we feel that we are actually in a helpful position since our involvement ensures there will have to be face-to-face public consultation. If Vodafone do contact us again then the PCC is not going to move this matter on before Vodafone have come in person to speak to us and to address at least one public forum. However, since they have not yet contacted us and are not pressing us to decide anything, we also feel that the community of Biddulph North as a whole has the opportunity to give this matter some thoughtful consideration.

Our most recent press release asked the question: is there a better location? My reason for writing to you personally is to put this same question to you and/or the organization you represent. If there were to emerge from the community as a whole, a broad and reasonable consensus to identify another better site in the locality, then St. Lawrence’s PCC would obviously consider supporting that consensus rather than pursuing use of the tower. Our current position to those protesting is that it is simply unreasonable to expect the church to forgo the possibility of significant rental income when the alternative site being proposed is a lamppost on the road outside, 50m down from the church.

I appreciate that December is not the best time of year to be asking for any kind of immediate response, but may I invite you to reply in writing to St. Lawrence’s PCC by Friday 8th January with any specific suggestion you may wish to make regarding alternative locations to site a phone mast. This would help us in our own deliberations, and we’re happy to bring them into discussion should Vodafone decide to contact us again.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter at a busy (but profoundly significant as we celebrate the birth of Christ and welcome him afresh into our lives!) time of year.

Yours sincerely,

Revd. Martin Cannam

cc Mrs. Dawn Wood – St. Lawrence’s Pre-School
Mr Brian Mirza and Chair of School Governors - Woodhouse School
Mrs. Helen Roberts and Mr. Rob Hart – Biddulph Valley North Community Association
Mrs. Charlotte Atkins MP
Cllrs. Jim Davies, Linda Deaville, Tony Hall, Andrew Hart - Biddulph North Councilors
Mr. Paul Baker – Biddulph Grange National Trust