

# VOICE

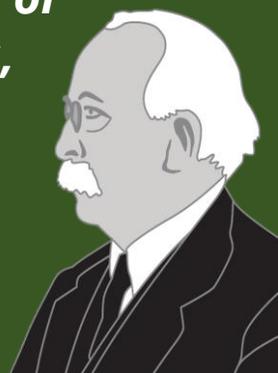
of the community

How the residents and advocates of Welwyn Garden City have come together to show their concern and anger against overdevelopment and unsustainable development in the town.



**“** The people of the Garden City will not for a moment permit the beauty of their city to be destroyed by the process of growth.....The town will grow; but it will grow in accordance with a principle which will result in this - that such growth shall not lessen or destroy, but ever add to its social opportunities, to its beauty, to its convenience. **”**

**Ebenezer Howard**  
Founder of Welwyn Garden City



# Welwyn Garden City – a Unique Place

The residents of Welwyn Garden City care deeply about their town and understand its value in promoting a unique sense of place and wellbeing.

They also know that this sense of place is fragile and can be easily overwhelmed by inappropriate development that is not in keeping with the principles and ethos of the garden city movement on which the town was founded.



Welwyn Garden City has a distinct sense of place, character and heritage that is known around the world. Indeed, there is no finer example of a garden city to be found anywhere, it is a unique place.

The town's garden city principles are studied by planners and architects and used as examples and inspiration around the globe.

Of course, building styles evolve and this is to be expected, as long as they add to the beauty of the existing and are rooted in the original garden city ethos.

Welwyn Garden City celebrated its centenary in 2020. 100 years as the finest example of the garden city movement anywhere in the world.

# The Biopark Application & Response

The people of the town are not against the redevelopment of the Bio Park site. However, on seeing the proposals that were submitted, residents instantly realised that the design of development was radically out of place and out of keeping with Welwyn Garden City.

Neighbour Representation - Without Personal Information		
78 Broadwater Road, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 3BZ <a href="#">Objection 13-01-2021-Redacted.pdf (0 kb)</a>	Objection - 78 Broadwater Road Welwyn Garden City AL7 3BZ -Redacted	13/01/2021
88 Penn Way, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 3EF <a href="#">Comment 13-01-2021-Redacted.pdf (0 kb)</a>	Comment - 88 Penn Way Welwyn Garden City AL7 3EF -Redacted	13/01/2021
45 Broadwater Road, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 3EG <a href="#">Objection 13-01-2021-Redacted.pdf (0 kb)</a>	45 Broadwater Road Welwyn Garden City AL7 3EG -Redacted	13/01/2021
<a href="#">WEL HAT PLANNING - BIOPARK.pdf (0 kb)</a>	Objection - Empire House, Times Square, Bessemer Road, Welwyn Garden City	14/01/2021
18 Fillingham Way, Hatfield, AL10 8QE <a href="#">Objection 18-01-2021-Redacted.pdf (0 kb)</a>	Objection - 18 Fillingham Way Hatfield AL10 8QE -Redacted	16/01/2021
<a href="#">planning comment.pdf (0 kb)</a>	Comment - Attachment - 68 Penn Way Welwyn Garden City AL7 3EF -Redacted	17/01/2021
68 Penn Way, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 3EF <a href="#">Support 17-01-2021-Redacted.pdf (0 kb)</a>	Objection - 68 Penn Way Welwyn Garden City AL7 3EF -Redacted	17/01/2021
<a href="#">Objection - Flat 34 Griffin Place Broadwater Road WGC -Redacted.pdf (0 kb)</a>	Objection - 34 Flat Griffin Place Broadwater	18/01/2021

Well over 800 neighbour and public objections were received by the Council, more than for any other recent application.



Over 300 residents attended the DMC meeting where the planning application was heard, discussed and rejected.



People are against development that is too high, too dense with limited green spaces that will forever be an eyesore on the skyline of the town undermining its special standing as a garden city.

# The Biopark Application & Response

The story was picked up and reported on by local press, national press and across social media.

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## Welwyn Garden city's planned high rises rejected

© 10 September 2021



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**Features**



Chris Mason: Can weakened Johnson turn things around?



WHTIMES.CO.UK

### Controversial Welwyn Garden City high-rise development proposal refused

A controversial proposal for a new high-rise development at the BioPark site in Welwyn Garden City has been refused.



# WANT TO LIVE IN WELWYN CONCRETE CITY?

Help us fight the planning applications that will destroy Howard's vision for Welwyn Garden City forever

The first of these, the Biopark, will be decided by the Council on 12th August. So we need to take action, fast

News | Hertfordshire News | Welwyn Garden City

## Protesters bring hearse as controversial plans for 289 homes in abandoned BioPark site thrown out

A campaigner leaning on the hearse lowered his hat in a symbolic gesture while holding a shovel

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By **Matthew Smith** Local Democracy Reporter  
10:36, 10 SEP 2021

1 COMMENT

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Welwyn Garden City residents against over-development

Community NOT Concrete



10 September 2021 · 🌐

I am so pleased the planning application for Biopark was rejected last night. I was so impressed with the turn out and all our combined hard work.

Was fabulous seeing the little children outside with their placards, 'I love WGC and no to high rise'.

I will be forever haunted by that enlarged screen image of those balconies on the proposed flats at Biopark identified as places for children to play!!! Along with the roof terrace gardens!!!! That image alone is a driving force for change.

The Biopark application prompted the townsfolk into action. As of 10/06/22 there are over 2,100 members of our protest and action group.

# The Save WGC Protest

Since the Biopark application was rejected in September 2021, there has been a marked increase in resident engagement with the community groups – the people of the town have come together.

This culminated in the biggest community protest that the town has seen in many years and possibly in living memory.

## SAVE WGC Community Protest

A family-friendly protest march for residents & supporters to show concerns about Welwyn Garden City over-development and the council's failure to protect the town  
**Saturday 23rd April 2022 - 1.45 to 3.15pm**

### WHAT WE ARE PROTESTING ABOUT

#### HERITAGE & CHARACTER

The threat to the heritage of WGC from high rise and high-density, badly designed tower blocks, that are not in keeping with the town's character, setting and Garden City ethos

#### UNFAIR BURDEN ON WGC

The unfair allocation of homes in the Local Plan, meaning WGC is left targeted by developers for intense overdevelopment.

#### NO TOWN VISION

WGC becoming little more than a London overspill with a dying Town Centre and little amenity or heritage value

#### SOCIAL HOUSING

The lack of social housing to provide much-needed homes for local people

#### COUNCIL APATHY

The Council's indifference towards the legacy of Ebenezer Howard, allowing proposed tower blocks on Broadwalk Road, Wheat Quarter and Side sites. Developers are asking to go higher and

#### INFRASTRUCTURE

The impact of thousands of flats on health and well-being, surgeries, schools, parks, traffic and other infrastructure



Let's come together on Saturday 23rd April to show WHBC how much we care about this town and the changes they need to make to protect WGC for future generations

- 1.45 - Meeting Point: The Campus
- 2.00 - March to Ebenezer Howard Statue
- 2.15 - Ebenezer Howard Statue
- 2.30 - March to Howards Centre
- 2.40 - Gather at Howard Centre for speeches
- 3.15 - Event ends



This is a family friendly event so bring the whole family.



If you're not able to march, join us at any point on the route.



Placards will be available, but why not make your own?



Why not wear green to show your support for a GARDEN CITY.



SAVE WGC badges will be available for a small donation.



Please help us by taking your placards and litter with you.



# SAVE WGC

Community Protest

This event is organized by Keep the G in WGC, the Welwyn Garden City Heritage Trust and the Welwyn Garden City Society

Attended by residents from every corner of Welwyn Garden City. Every age group and demographic was represented.

Organised and run by a team of like-minded community volunteers.



On a Saturday afternoon, over 700 people marched from the Campus to the Howard Centre, via the statue of Ebenezer Howard.

# The Save WGC Protest



This was not an anti-development protest. It was about...

## HERITAGE & CHARACTER

The threat to the heritage of WGC from high rise and high-density, badly designed tower blocks, that are not in keeping with the town's character, setting and Garden City ethos

## UNFAIR BURDEN ON WGC

The unfair allocation of homes in the Local Plan, meaning WGC is left targeted by developers for intense overdevelopment.

## NO TOWN VISION

WGC becoming little more than a London overspill with a dying Town Centre and little amenity or heritage value

## SOCIAL HOUSING

The lack of social housing to provide much-needed homes for local people

## PLANNING APATHY

The indifference towards the legacy of Ebenezer Howard from some planners & developers. Producing proposals for tower blocks on Broadwater Road, Wheat Quarter and South Side sites. Developers are now asking to go higher and denser

## INFRASTRUCTURE

The impact of thousands of new flats on health and wellbeing, GP surgeries, schools, parking, traffic and other infrastructure

The Biopark application fails on many of these and is typical of the lack of understanding of the needs of WGC.

# The Save WGC Protest



The Save WGC protest galvanized the past, present and future of Welwyn Garden City – the community spoke with one, clear voice.

# Voice of the Community

People here are proud of their town and want to see proposals that respect and fully demonstrate the garden city principles, creating beautiful buildings and spaces that reinforce community and will stand the test of time. The views of the people should matter and the people of Welwyn Garden City overwhelmingly oppose this scheme.

Perhaps the final word should be left to the guest speaker at the SAVE WGC protest, the great granddaughter of the founder of WGC, Ursula Howard.



**“** *What I have inherited from my great grandfather is the sense that a garden city is a beautiful and precious place. And it's wonderful to see all of you people here with your love of Welwyn (Garden City), your loyalty to the place you live, and your fierce determination to keep it as beautiful as it is.* **”**

**Ursula Howard**

Great Granddaughter of Ebenezer Howard

# VOICE

**of the community**

This document has been created by Keep the G in WGC and the Welwyn Garden City Heritage Trust. June 2022

