

Baroness cancels Archery Road visit

by **Richard Morris**

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CAMPAIGNERS protesting against controversial plans to shoehorn 160 new homes into the former site of Hastings College had a set back this week.

A host of residents near to the site in Archery Road which has been earmarked for development are up in arms over what they say is a 'desecration' of the historic Burton St Leonards area.

Almost immediately after developers Gladedale revealed the plans, the concerned locals mobilised, forming Save The Archery Ground (STAG).

And today members of STAG were due to welcome the chairman of English Heritage, Baroness Kay Andrews, for a tour of the site and its surrounding area.

STAG currently boasts more than 500 members, and its main protagonists were hopeful the visit would help win some high-profile backing for the campaign.

However, the baroness - concerned she could be used as a pawn for a campaign she was not actively involved in -



Baroness Kay Andrews

pulled the plug on the tour.

Andy Brown, English Heritage regional director for the South East said: "Baroness Andrews has postponed her visit to St Leonards to ensure that English Heritage's position on the redevelopment of the Archery Ground is not confused with the position of Save The Archery Ground."

However, STAG did get some encouragement. Mr Brown added: "We have raised concerns about the scale and height of the current buildings being proposed by developers, Gladedale.

"We feel this proposed housing scheme as it stands, would not preserve or en-



One of STAG's banners flies high

hance the character and appearance of the conservation area overall.

"St Leonards is a special area which deserves top quality new development. We are hopeful that an improved scheme will come forward which we can support."

STAG chairman Martin Bloomfield reaffirmed its position. He said: "This plan mows through a beautiful wooded environment in a prized conservation area.

"The development will totally change the character of this unique area developed nearly 200 years ago."

- STAG has arranged a jumble tea to help swell its cam-

paign coffers.

It will take place at the Masonic Hall in St Leonards on Sunday, March 29 from 11am until 4pm.

And the campaign has been gaining national attention as well, with a story on page 12 of this week's edition of the satirical magazine *Private Eye*.

The editorial calls the plans "a monstrous overdevelopment of the site and entirely alien to the character of St Leonards."

For more information, or to find out how to get involved with the campaign, visit STAG's website at: www.savethearcheryground.org.