

Homes site looks like Battle of the Somme: Councillors concern over Hawkwell site

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Drainage concerns –

John and Christine Mason with plans for the site in Hawkwell

COUNCILLORS say they are concerned a lack of drainage on a new housing development could increase the risk of flooding for neighbouring residents.

The Clements Gate development is being built by David Wilson Homes, at a site in Hawkwell previously known as Christmas Tree Farm.

Independent councillors for Hawkwell West, John and Christine Mason, are concerned over the drainage of the site, which will provide 175 new homes.

The site has been cleared in preparation for building, with a set of drainage pipes to take water away from the site and store it before regulating flow into Hawkwell Brook. The concern is it is not yet connected.

The Masons set up a meeting with the Environment Agency on Monday, following concerns from residents after Hawkwell Brook, which runs alongside the site, burst its banks last August.

Mr Mason said: “The Environment Agency were very surprised to hear the drainage system had not been connected.

“Everybody knows clearing land causes less water to be retained on site and more runs off.

“The cleared land looked like the Somme until recently when they pumped the water off.”

Kathleen Ward, of Thorpe Close, which neighbours the Clements Gate site, said she was worried about the risk of flooding.

She said: “The bottom of our garden has been soggy since last August. Even when we have dry weather, it just doesn’t dry out.

“They have just been moving mud around on the site since August hoping it will drain, but they had to pump it out eventually.”

A spokesman from the Environment Agency said: “We are aware of the ongoing issues at the housing development near Hawkwell Brook.

“Our role has been to advise David Wilson Homes, the local authorities and Anglian Water on the best course of action to resolve the problems.

“We are hoping the work required will be undertaken as soon as possible and we will continue to monitor the situation.”

David Wilson Homes said final permissions will shortly be issued to allow the drainage system to be fully connected.

A spokesman said: “We are working hard to get the permanent drainage system in place for the development.

“In the meantime, there is a temporary drainage system in place which all statutory bodies, including the Environment Agency, are fully aware of and have been consulted on.”