



# Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**SOLVE DEFENDS THE SARCASTIC & DISINGENUOUS ATTACK ON BASINGSTOKE BY PHILIP COLLINS OF THE TIMES NEWSPAPER.**

SOLVE has responded vigorously to an editorial in the Times Newspaper on September 1<sup>st</sup>, in which the Times columnist Philip Collins called on the nation to accept that large scale building of new homes on the edge of Basingstoke was an inevitable and positive result of the UK's development.

Under the headline 'Calm down, it's the edge of Basingstoke we want to build on, not Sca Fell', he suggested there was no natural or environmental reason that people who live in and around Basingstoke should object to more house building around our town, and that we should be prepared to lose our hedgerows so more homes could be built.

In a response to The Editor of The Times, Clive Pinder on behalf of SOLVE made it clear "It's not just 'The Hedgerows' we're worried about, It's our Living Standards". He went to say that "Philip Collins opinion piece (September 2) fails to address some critical facts that are at the core of why over 75% of people in Basingstoke stated in a Council consultation exercise that

they did not want to see large scale housing development on greenfield sites on “the edge of Basingstoke”. It’s not just the hedgerows we are worried about, it’s the fact that we already live in the most populated part of Europe. That our water and sewage systems already fail national and international quality standards. That our transport, schools and healthcare facilities are already overstretched, and nobody is guaranteeing to fix these issues before building more homes. He also failed to mention that there are nearly 740,000 empty homes in the UK. That residents in London and the South east continue to accept the greatest numbers of new home building than anywhere else (12, 664 in the last quarter alone while the whole of Wales managed only 613 and the North east 806). Or indeed that Basingstoke has consistently exceeded the housing targets set by the last government and has enough appropriate ‘Brownfield’ sites to meet the new housing targets being proposed by our elected Councillors. Finally, he conveniently forgot to mention that “the edge of Basingstoke” includes precious SSSI status sites, just as Sca Fell is; including the River Loddon which is equally world renowned as one of five remaining north flowing chalk streams in Europe. Basingstoke has already contributed more than its fair share to the UK’s housing numbers and is suffering the consequences. It’s time Cardiff, Newcastle or Birmingham do their bit. Pick on them next time Mr. Collins, and if you must rustle a few hedgerows, do so in a more balanced and honest way.”

-End-

**SOLVE (Save Our Loddon Valley Environment) is a non-political group set up by local people to represent residents who believe our unique eco-systems and historic sites of national significance are as important as our economic aspirations, and should be protected for the continued enjoyment of the wider Basingstoke community.**

[www.SOLVEloddon.org](http://www.SOLVEloddon.org)