



# Codford

## Extra help to save cemetery

A Battle to save war graves from housing developers has been given a boost from Down Under. A cemetery for Australian and New Zealand soldiers built after the First World War has been threatened by plans to

build nine houses on adjoining land.

Now relatives from the other side of the world have been pledging support after the housing bid was highlighted in national Australian newspapers.

West Wiltshire District Council rejected the housing bid in December but developer FPD Savills is preparing to mount an appeal.

Campaigners have already received 12 letters of support from relatives after articles appeared in *The Australian*, the *Geelong Advertiser* and *The Otago Daily Times* in New Zealand just two weeks ago.

Romy Wyeth, chairman of Codford Parish Council, said: "The Anzac war graves are a sacred place of pilgrimage and should remain in a tranquil state.

"The support we are getting from relatives in Australia and New Zealand is overwhelming and welcomed."

FDP Savills has refused to comment on the appeal.

The land is owned by a Codford man.

*(Wiltshire Times – Friday 30 January, 2004)*

### Homes 'will ruin serenity of graveyard'

Housing developers are mounting a second attempt to build beside a war graveyard in what villagers are calling an 'act of vandalism'.

The first bid to build nine houses in Codford was rejected last year by West Wiltshire District Council over fears the development would spoil the tranquility of the neighbouring Anzac war graves.

The cemetery is the final resting place for 31 dead Australian soldiers, 66 from New Zealand and two fallen British men who died in the First World War.

Relatives have since inundated parish councillors with written support after the housing threat was highlighted in three Australian newspapers in January.

Now property agent FPD Savills, which is responsible for the application, has launched an appeal against the council's decision made in December and villagers are preparing to fight again.

David Shaw, chairman of Codford and Parish British Legion, said: "It would be sacrilege and an act of vandalism to put those houses so close to the graveyard.

"We have hundreds of Australians visiting the graves every year

and every single one of them praise how peaceful and tranquil this corner of the countryside is.

"The graves and cross of sacrifice are not being developed on but we have serious objections to the proximity of the houses and the access road which would damage the special ambience of the graveyard."

Over 15 letters from angry relatives in Australia and New Zealand have been sent to Codford Parish Council chairman, Romy Wyeth and will now be used as evidence of the level of opposition against the housing project.

She said: "We have been collecting evidence and will be submitting our opposition to the appeals inspectorate and will be backed up by letters from Australians supporting us.

"The Anzac war graves should remain a place of tranquillity and we have a lot of evidence and backing that will be submitted at the appeal.

"We have been expecting the developers to make an appeal for some time."

The land south of Beanis path, adjacent to the Anzac war graves, currently serves the village as allotments.

Landowner Josh Stratton has refused to speak to the press over the application for appeal.

FPD Savills was also unavailable for comment.

*(Wiltshire Times – Friday 12 March, 2004)*

### **Developer appeals decision**

Developers planning to build houses next to war graves claim the project will have no detrimental effect despite the local MP labelling the move 'insensitive'.

An appeal has been lodged against the decision by West Wiltshire District Council to stop nine homes being built beside the Anzac War Graves in Codford.

Ex-Navy Surgeon Commander and Warminster British Legion member, MP Andrew Murrison, visited the site on Saturday.

He said: "The cemetery is the final resting place of 97 soldiers from New Zealand and Australia who died in the Great War.

"It is a special place, visited by hundreds of people every year and I consider that adjacent development to be highly insensitive."

But developer FPD Savills is confident that the appeal will not be turned down this time, as it believes it is not harmful to the cemetery.

A spokesman said: "The appeal process would not detract from the war graves cemetery.

"The appeal site is separated from the cemetery by a significant parcel of land and as a result the nearest proposed dwelling would be 13 metres from the closest boundary to safeguard against any detrimental impact."

Representations on the plan must be handed into West Wiltshire District Council before April 9 and the final decision will be taken by the Planning Inspectorate.

(*Wiltshire Times* – Friday 26 March, 2004)