

**BARTESTREE WITH LUGWARDINE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY  
29 APRIL 2014 AT 700 PM IN BARTESTREE VILLAGE HALL**

**Present:**

Councillors: Cllr W Soilleux (Chair); G Davies (Vice-Chair); D Greenow; P Wargent; N Shore; J Colley; Mrs J Karayiannis; Mrs L Hoppé and R Williams

**In Attendance:**

Mrs E Wilson (Parish Clerk)

Members of the Public:

**1. To Accept Apologies for Absence**

Cllrs M Wilson and M Postians

**2. To Receive Declarations of Interests and Applications for Dispensations**

Item 4 – Cllr R Williams – non-disclosable pecuniary interest as Member of Playing Fields Association (PFA) and Cricket Club (CC)

Cllr N Shore – non-disclosable pecuniary interest as Secretary of the PFA and Secretary of the CC

Cllr P Wargent – non-disclosable pecuniary interest as PC representative of CC

**Resolved:** Interests noted

**3. To Introduce the Public to each individual Councillor in attendance**

**Resolved:** Introductions made

*The Councillors considering Item 3 declared that they came to this Meeting with an open mind on this matter*

**4. To consider the following Planning Application**

140926/O Land to the South of the A438, Parcel No 0008 and part Parcel No 2308  
Outline proposal for the erection of 60 dwellings (including 21 affordable houses) and a change of use of land to form community open space

**Comments:** Prior to the Parish Council considering the planning application, the 30 members of the public in attendance were invited to make constructive comments. There was a detailed discussion between the members of the Parish Council and the local residents.

**Resolved:** The Parish Council agreed not to support this planning application with 8 of the 9 Councillors present voting against (the remaining Councillor was unable to vote as he had not been in attendance for the whole of the meeting) The Parish Council wish to submit the following comments:

A considerable number of the residents in Bartestree and Lugwardine are of the opinion that the villages would lose their current rural feel if further large developments were to take place beyond the considerable number that have taken place in the previous two plan periods. The group parish currently holds the position of the third largest village in Herefordshire.

They are also incensed that Herefordshire Council has failed to protect them from the present/imminent development by not being able to demonstrate the five-year housing supply required by the National Planning Policy Framework and thus rendering the saved Unitary Development Plan policies H1 and H4 ineffective.

## **Location/Impact on Village**

The proposed development site consists of 2 fields, which are the rural heart of Bartestree and define it as a village. If 60 houses are built on the site, Bartestree will become a suburb and lose its rural character. The centre of the village will be adversely affected and the development would not enhance it at all. The long distance views over the fields are superb and will be lost to the village if the development goes ahead. Currently sheep and horses are seen grazing in the fields, which add to the character of the rural settlement.

The proposed development abuts historic parkland and gardens; there is a listed building next to it and 3 Public Rights of Way through the site. There is also a long drive of unique evergreen oak trees, which add to the character of the area.

Historically almost all development is to the north of the A438 and it is strongly believed that the pattern should stay that way, leaving the south open and green. Any use of the fields should be for the community not for a large development. Most of the past development and the primary school are on the same (north) side of the A438.

## **Listed Building**

In order to allow visibility for access to and from the site, 3 large areas of hedgerow will have to be removed. Hedges will be removed from the opposite boundary of a Grade 2 listed property, Hagley House. Across from that building will be a 5 bedroom new property, which will overlook the original building. The owners of the listed building will be unable to screen the new development due to the regulations that apply and therefore the development would be detrimental to the setting around the building.

## **Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)**

If this development is approved it will have a huge impact on the NDP. The NDP Steering Group was set up by the Parish Council and a Questionnaire is to be circulated to the parishioners soon, which will result in a draft plan being prepared within a couple of months. Whilst the Plan may not be adopted yet, it will reflect the wishes of the residents. If the development goes ahead it will take no account of the work done by the Steering Group or the visions of the village.

The Bartestree & Lugwardine Action Group used a photograph of one of the fields on their brochure. This resulted in 825 people signing a Petition in agreement with their policy that the villagers should have some say in where development should be.

## **Water and Sewerage**

Although Welsh Water will have the final say, there are concerns that the current infrastructure would not support the development in terms of water supply, sewerage and surface water disposal. Correspondence with Welsh Water in relation to other proposed housing developments in the Group parish would indicate that those responsible for giving the go-ahead for these schemes are not fully cognizant of the many difficulties faced by residents in terms of low water pressure, sewage blockages and overflows. Indeed the Parish Council is in the process of arranging a meeting with Welsh Water to discuss the increasing concerns of the villagers in connection with these problems given the barrage of planning applications they are currently faced with.

Significant parts of this application lack detail, in particular how surface water and drainage is to be dealt with. One resident has a well only 25 metres from the proposed development and he is concerned that his water supply will be greatly affected. Another resident (Coach House) has had significant issues with water supply and has been without water for weeks at a time.

The owner of Stalls Farm has problems with surface water where heavy rain already flows through his barn. His fields already suffer from 'pooling' and a further 60 dwellings will add to the problem.

### **Traffic/Highway Safety**

The Traffic Manager's report rejects the application and the Parish Council endorses all the points made in that report. The high volume of traffic using the A438 travels at speeds regularly in excess of the 30mph speed limit. In 2013 the excessive speeds were confirmed by the West Mercia Safer Roads Partnership from the data collected from the Speed Indicator Devices located throughout the village. This resulted in the A438 through Lugwardine and Bartestree being designated an area of concern and triggered the implementation of a speed camera in the area.

Residents are already concerned about the volume of traffic using the A438 in both directions between 7.30am – 9.30am on weekdays. This varies from 900 to 1200 vehicles daily in that period and any increase in that number as a result of a building development would be of further concern. Residents who live in properties along the nearby section of the A438, or joining it from side roads, already experience delays and risk when attempting to exit their driveways on to the main road. With a further 60 dwellings it is not unreasonable to estimate another 120 vehicles that will need to join the A438 at peak times. With another 2 proposed junctions, close together, onto an already fast and busy road this can only add to existing problems.

Pedestrian access is poor. Any children attending the local schools (if they can find a place) will have to cross the road some 50 yards in the opposite direction from where they are headed. This is most likely to result in them trying to cross a dangerous busy road without using the pedestrian crossing. Any children using the local secondary school are already forced to cross in 2 different places, as there is no continuous footway.

### **Capacity**

Given the number of proposed dwellings, there will be a large number of children of varying educational ages who will need to travel to school. There is little or no provision for the range of education that will be required, which will result in there being a greater volume of traffic ferrying them to and from alternative schools.

### **Nature of Development**

There is little demand for this number of houses in Bartestree. The purchasers would not be employed locally but in Hereford or beyond. The needs of the people of the village have not been addressed. There are no houses with workshop space for studios or cottage industry, as would be appropriate in a rural setting to allow for local self-employment. The proposed houses are in the main large executive type houses. The plans indicate that the 2 fields would accommodate diverse housing. The western field yielding large executive-type houses and the eastern field, smaller semis and 'affordable housing'. The fields are not even linked.

There are no facilities for a play area for the additional children that would be brought to the new development. The existing facilities are well used by the community now but there are concerns that these would not be sufficient to serve the volume that 60 new houses would produce.

### **Community Space**

The offer of the playing field is considered to be a symbolic gesture. The ground is not particularly flat or good. It is believed that access to the space would be across a private

lane. The size of the ground would only accommodate a junior football pitch and nothing else. It would require a massive investment to make it playable. The surrounding area would be large executive houses and therefore there would be potential conflict with residents should balls land on their property. There are no facilities for parking should a pitch be to park at the Village Hall. This is highly likely to result in conflict over parking.

The 'woodland area' is a small and fairly unkempt copse. Adjoining the area is a number of houses and the area is likely to become a place where teenagers meet and hang out. A similar area fell foul of this some time ago near Wilcroft Park where antisocial behavior discouraged parents from allowing small children to go there and litter in the form of cigarette butts, condoms and crisp packets etc accumulated.

The suggestion that the "community land" be leased to the Parish Council for a period of 50 years is not attractive. Even at a low rent, the cost of managing the work to convert the area would be excessive, not taking into account the need for volunteers to see the project through. Given the huge profits that would be gained should this application be granted, it is considered that should the application go ahead, the developers should sell the land for a nominal sum rather than lease it and also increase the area they are offering.

### **Cumulative Effect**

The residents of Bartestree and Lugwardine, as well as the Parish Council, feel that it would be wholly unreasonable not to take into consideration the cumulative impact of this application. It should be considered in light of the fact that there are currently 3 applications pending. If these are approved on Appeal or at the Planning Committee then there will be 190 new dwellings in the village. If each application is only considered on its merits without looking at the cumulative impact then the problems that will arise regarding the traffic, school facilities, water and sewage will be immense and could not be reversed.

If this application were approved then the existing Playing Fields would not be able to expand in future for community space, as there is no other flat land nearby. Historically, enquiries have been made on several occasions to acquire this land for community use with the aim of increasing the facilities and recreational area around the Village Hall and Playing Fields and it is hoped that one day these can come to fruition. If this application is approved then there will be little or no space available for future projects.

The majority of the residents feel passionately that the green fields of the village should be kept green, possibly for future recreation. Once they have gone they can never be replaced and the village as they know it will disappear and the area will turn into suburbia.

Meeting concluded at 8:05pm

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Signature of Chair

Date: 13 May 2014