

BARTESTREE WITH LUGWARDINE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2015 AT 7.00 PM IN BARTESTREE VILLAGE HALL

Present:

Councillors: Mrs W Soilleux (Chair); G Davies (Vice-Chair); R Williams; Mrs L Hoppé; Mrs F Matthews; P Wargent; Mrs J Karayiannis and M Wilson.

In Attendance:

Mrs E Wilson (Parish Clerk/RFO);

Members of the public: None

1. To Accept Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Cllrs D Greenow and N Shore

2. To Receive Declarations of Interest and Applications for Dispensations

Items 6 Cllr R Williams – non-discloseable pecuniary interest as Member of PFA and Cricket Club

Items 5 Cllr P Wargent – non-discloseable pecuniary interest as Village Hall Representative

Items 5 Cllr Mrs F Matthews – non-discloseable pecuniary interest as Village Hall Representative and Member of Football Club Committee

Items 4,5,6 Cllr M Wilson – non-discloseable pecuniary interest, stepson owns development land in the area

Resolved: Interests Noted

3. To appoint a nominated Trustee to the Lugwardine Charity

Comments: Cllr M Wilson nominated Cllr W Soilleux. Seconded by Cllr M Wilson

Resolved: Cllr W Soilleux appointed as Trustee to the Lugwardine Charity

4. To receive a presentation from Roger Sweetman of Sweetman Developments relating to land in Lugwardine for 9-12 private dwellings

Comments: Mr Sweetman introduced himself and explained that he specialised in small developments and details of his business can be found on their website. Pre-application advice is ongoing with Herefordshire Council.

The proposed development is for 5 3-bedroom houses and 2 3-bedroom bungalows on land adjacent to the north of Traherne Close, Lugwardine. Mr Sweetman produced draft drawings and circulated these. He invited suggestions or ideas from all those present.

Mr Sweetman pointed out that the properties were well spaced with generous gardens. The existing hedgerow would remain as would the public footpath and there is an opportunity to include community space. It was confirmed that there would be main drainage and that Mr Sweetman has been advised that there is adequate drainage available.

Anyone interested or possibly affected by the proposed development was urged to contact Mr Sweetman to discuss. He confirmed that he would allow 21 days before filing his application to allow for further consultation.

Resolved: Mr Sweetman was thanked for his attendance and presentation

5. To consider and discuss the proposed location of the Football Stand on the Playing Fields adjacent to the Village Hall

Comments: Details of the proposed position of the stand had previously been circulated. Mr Ingram (The Chair of the Football Club) pointed out that the position of the floodlights

had already been approved. It is intended that there will be new Dugouts. It is proposed that the football stand will be situated further up the pitch so that it is at the side of the Village Hall and less obtrusive near the entrance. A query was raised as to why the stand was not positioned at the other side of the football pitch. Apparently there have been problems with the existing Dugouts where youths have gathered to the rear of these, making it difficult to be seen by the public. There is concerned that if the new football stand were situated at the other side of the pitch, it would be more susceptible to vandalism. It was suggested that the colour of the cladding of the stand should be a subtle green to ensure it 'blended' into the environment. The Parish Council was assured that this could be arranged.

Resolved: 6 Councillors voted in favour of the position of the football stand; 1 voted against and there was 1 abstention. The location was therefore agreed as presented.

Before discussing and voting on the following items the Councillors stated that they had attended this meeting with an open mind on this matter

6. To consider the following Planning Applications:

143720 Land to the south of the A438 Parcel No 0008 and part Parcel 2308, Bartestree

Proposed erection of 40 dwellings including 14 affordable houses and change of use of land to form community open space

Comments: Prior to the Parish Council considering the planning application at an Extraordinary Meeting on 3 February 2015, the 47 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.

It was noted that this Application is an alternative to Application No 140926, which is currently under appeal. The Application under appeal relates to a development site of 60 houses on 2 fields. This Application proposes a development of 40 houses on the eastern field with the western field being gifted to the Parish Council for use as community open space.

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 large 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 land 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 1 field, which forms part of the rural heart of Bartestree and defines it as a village. Many residents feel that If 40 houses are built on the site Bartestree will lose its rural character. They feel that the density of housing is too high and that the number of houses proposed are disproportionate to what the village requires and the busy A438 can stand. The centre of the village would be adversely affected and the development would not enhance it at all. The long distance views over the fields are superb and some of these 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.

It was noted and acknowledged that the offer of the western field to the Parish Council for community open space was very generous and would benefit the residents of Bartestree and Lugwardine.

The proposed development abuts historic parkland and gardens; there is a listed building next to it and a Public Right of Way through the site. There is also a long drive of unique evergreen oak trees, which add to the character of the area. These trees are now subject to a Tree Preservation Order dated 16 January 2015 No. TPO575.

Historically almost all development is to the north of the A438 and it is strongly believed by many residents that the pattern should stay that way, leaving the south open and green. Compared to the previous application only one of the fields would be used for development.

Listed Building

There are 3 Listed Buildings in the immediate area, which would be adversely affected – Hagley House, Hagley Court set in historical parkland and The New Inn public house. The proposed development would detract from the traditional rural setting of all these buildings and fundamentally change the character and appearance of the area.

The site is a fairly large proportion of undeveloped area to the south of the A438 that is visible to the public and enjoyed by the residents of and visitors to the village and many residents feel that if planning permission is approved the open setting and beautiful views would be lost to the residents and public forever.

Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

In June 2014 The Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group circulated a comprehensive Questionnaire to the residents of Lugwardine and Bartestree. The response was 75% and the views expressed by the residents support the findings of the Parish Plan, namely that future developments should be moderate, in-fill and/or brown-field sites. It is strongly believed that any Greenfield development should be a last resort and not a default option.

Unfortunately the first public consultation of the NDP has had to be postponed, due to delay of the Herefordshire Council completing the SHLAA Assessment for the village.

Water and Sewerage

Residents of Bartestree and Lugwardine are increasingly concerned and frustrated that Welsh Water and Herefordshire Council continue to take the view that the existing drainage infrastructure in the villages is adequate for existing and future developments. The reality is that residents are experiencing very unpleasant incidents with sewage and flooding. Indeed, on 8 February 2015 local residents contacted the Parish Council to advise that there was raw sewage running down the A438 from a main drain. Welsh Water has finally acknowledged that there are issues with the sewerage and water supply networks in Bartestree and Lugwardine and that it is necessary that development be phased later in the plan period, in line with Welsh Water's next capital investment programme.

It is not surprising, therefore, that many residents are concerned how surface water supply and drainage are to be dealt with.

Traffic/Highway Safety

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 40 dwellings it is not unreasonable to estimate another 80 vehicles that will need to join the A438 at peak times.

Pedestrian access is poor. Any children attending the local schools (if they can find a place) will have to cross the road in the opposite direction from where they are heading. 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 footpath.

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

A large number of residents consider that there is little demand for this number of houses in Bartestree. The purchasers would not be employed locally but in Hereford or beyond and that the needs of the people of the village have not been addressed.

However, it is noted that the proportion of affordable and intermediate housing is reasonable and that the larger executive houses have been kept to a minimum.

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 6 applications pending. If these are approved on Appeal or at the Planning Committee then there will be 290 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.

This application is one of 6 planning applications received in the last 12 months. If all applications were approved a total of 290 new houses would be added to a Group Parish which currently has a core of 650 dwellings. This would mean a potential increase of 45% in 5 years and two and a half times the increase recommended in the LDF Core Strategy of 117 dwellings over 20 years.

The Group Parish and Herefordshire Council have supported and approved applications for 13 dwellings since 2011, which complies with the recommended increase in development.

Conclusion

It is recognized by the Parish Council and the residents that effectively this Application is an alternative to Application No 140926. Application No 140926 seeks permission for 60 dwellings on 2 fields with a small area donated for community open space. This current Application restricts development to one field with the other field being gifted to the community. It has been acknowledged that this is an unusual and generous gesture by the developers.

The Parish Council asked the residents present to indicate their response to this Application and of the 47 present, 17 voted for and 15 against. The mood was split with those supporting the application appearing to do so reluctantly but acknowledging that there will have to be some development in the villages.

Resolved: The Parish Council voted in favour of the application in outline and subject to appropriate arrangements being made for dealing with water supply, sewerage and the disposal of surface water. In accordance with his Declaration of non-discloseable pecuniary interest Cllr Wilson did not vote.

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143771 Land at Longworth Lane, Bartestree Hereford, HR1 4BA

Site for development of up to 100 dwellings with associated open space and community orchard with all matters reserved, except for access

Comments: Prior to the Parish Council considering the planning application, the 47 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.

All of the residents who attended the meeting and a considerable number of 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 large 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 and 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 is to the south of the A438 and west of Longworth Lane. It represents development outside the settlement boundary in open countryside, which the Parish Council understands is contrary to saved policies from the UDP.

The site of the proposed development is very close to Hagley Hall – a Grade II Listed Building and encompasses unregistered historic parkland and a traditional orchard. It is a valuable contribution to the setting of the village. If 100 houses are built on the site this will devastate the setting of the village of Bartestree, which will become a suburb and lose its rural character. Indeed, development of this size would totally damage the historic environment.

The site's landscape character is that of Principal Settled Farmlands where there are hedgerows used for field boundaries and groups of trees and orchard. The overall strategy is to 'conserve and enhance the unity of small to medium scale hedged fields'. This is relevant to the site and development could well result in significant loss or damage to existing vegetation. The historic landscape is extremely valuable to both the community and visitors and change on such a dramatic level as the proposed development would be devastating and irreparable.

Public Footpaths

There is a public footpath LU13 that crosses the site and it is apparent that the proposed development would significantly alter the character of the setting and the views currently enjoyed by its many regular users. Another Public Right of Way (LU29) runs alongside the western boundary of the site and there are several Public Rights of Way to the north of the site. These are well-used footpaths and a valuable public amenity. Such a large development would damage the green infrastructure and setting of the village.

Orchard/Trees

The northern part of the proposed development includes old traditional orchard with a mixture of 35 trees, some of which are dead and moribund – a suitable habitat for a range of invertebrates. It is noted from the Ecological Appraisal prepared by FPCR Environmental & Design Limited dated December 2014 that there is a substantial likelihood that Noble Chafer beetle may still occur in some of the apple trees. The Noble Chafer is a species of principal importance [S.41 NERC Act 2006]. The design of the proposed development would mean that the orchard remaining in its current location is not possible. The hedgerows, traditional orchard and wood pasture and parkland

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represent priority habitats at national and local level. Any proposals to relocate all or some of the orchard/hedgerow are highly likely to have a significant adverse affect on the trees and habitat.

At the southern end of the site are mature trees that form part of the unregistered historic park and garden of Hagley Court. Some of these trees have the potential to be considered veteran – 1 oak and 1 lime – with several others, particularly limes, coming very close to that category. The NPPF says that planning should be refused if development results in the loss of, inter alia, veteran trees, unless the need for development outweighs the loss. That is certainly not the case here.

On 16 January 2015 a Tree Preservation Order 575 was made on 21 individual trees and 3 groups of trees in the immediate and surrounding area of the proposed site. Please see map attached.

Listed Building

There are several Grade II Listed Buildings in the immediate area, which would be adversely affected – The Forge, Bartestree Court, Hagley House, Hagley Court set in historical parkland and The New Inn public house. The proposed development would detract from the traditional rural setting of all these buildings and fundamentally change the character and appearance of the area.

Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

In June 2014 The Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group circulated a comprehensive Questionnaire to the residents of Lugwardine and Bartestree. The response was 75% and the views expressed by the residents support the findings of the Parish Plan, namely that future developments should be moderate, in-fill and/or brown-field sites. It is strongly believed that any Greenfield development should be a last resort and not a default option.

Unfortunately the first public consultation of the NDP has had to be postponed, due to delay of the Herefordshire Council completing the SHLAA Assessment for the village.

Water and Sewerage

Residents of Bartestree and Lugwardine are increasingly concerned and frustrated that Welsh Water and Herefordshire Council continue to take the view that the existing drainage infrastructure in the villages is adequate for existing and future developments. The reality is that residents are experiencing very unpleasant incidents with sewage and flooding. Indeed, on 8 February 2015 local residents contacted the Parish Council to advise that there was raw sewage running down the A438 from a main drain. Welsh Water has finally acknowledged that there are issues with the sewerage and water supply networks in Bartestree and Lugwardine and that it is necessary that development be phased later in the plan period, in line with Welsh Water's next capital investment programme.

It is not surprising, therefore, that many residents are concerned how surface water supply and drainage are to be dealt with.

Proposed Site Access

The proposed access to the development is totally unsuitable. All traffic would emerge onto a very narrow lane – Longworth Lane. The visibility splay on the plan is 40 metres, which should in fact be 60 metres. Visibility in any event is very poor along this lane. The plans show a lane width from the site exit to the right of 4.4 metres. This is one of the widest parts of the lane. Attached are some photographs and a map that has been overlaid onto Google earth, which have been supplied by a local resident. Measurements were taken from outside The Coach House (opposite the proposed site entrance) to the end of Longworth Lane past Longworth Hall. It can be seen that in a short distance the lane narrows to such an extent that two vehicles cannot pass. The potential to have a further 180-200 vehicles on this road would be irresponsible and a danger to all who use it.

Longworth Lane is a busy road as it is, used regularly by farm vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. It is a country lane and wholly unsuitable for further heavy traffic. It is noted that the developers are suggesting that all traffic from the site will turn left onto the A438 (already a very busy road – see below). However, it would be foolish to believe that all drivers would simply turn left and form a queue to wait for quite a while at peak times to get onto the main road. Human nature being what it is, there will be those drivers hoping to beat the queues by driving down either Longworth Lane towards Longworth Hall, or an even narrower lane at Lower Bartestree to get onto the A438 to Ledbury.

A new development onto the already narrow Longworth Lane is likely to encourage even more traffic, using it as a rat run to Fownhope/Ross etc. Further, the lane is totally unsuitable for heavy construction traffic and the impact on the village during construction would be massive.

The potential traffic turning left from the site to the A438 and from the A438 to the site is very likely to cause congestion at Gateway Nursery. The proposed footway is unsuitable and if this was widened it would take precious space from the already narrow highway.

The plan shows an 'emergency exit' from Hagley Hall onto the A438. This is not appropriate and the Parish Council and residents are at a loss as to how this would be policed. The driveway at Hagley Hall is a designated turning area to serve only 4 properties, not a built-in rat-run. There is a junction, St James Close in close proximity on the opposite side of the A438. Also any further traffic using the Hagley Hall driveway would be a further strain on the busy A438.

Traffic/Highway Safety

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 100 dwellings it is not unreasonable to estimate another 180-200 vehicles that will need to join the A438 at peak times.

The local bus service between Hereford and Ledbury has recently been reduced. It is not possible, using this service, to reach Ledbury before 8:00am and the last service from Hereford on Monday to Thursday is 7:15pm. This forces residents to use their cars thereby increasing the volume of traffic on an already very busy main road..

Pedestrian access is poor. Any children using the local secondary school (if they can find a place) are already forced to cross in 2 different places on the A438, as there is no continuous footpath.

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. The primary school and secondary school are either at or over capacity (as at June 2014). The nearest primary and secondary schools in Hereford are also at or over capacity. There is therefore 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 children to and from alternative schools.

Amenities

The Design and Access Statement is incorrect. Bartestree has a small village shop, a hairdressers and a specialist Fine Furniture shop. The New Inn has closed, which means that there is now only one pub and that is situated in Lugwardine. There is no doctors' surgery as suggested and indeed no surgery within walking distance or on a direct bus route. It is inappropriate to say that St Michael's Hospice is an amenity in the context of this application.

Nature of Development

There is no demand for this number of houses in Bartestree. The purchasers would not be employed locally but in Hereford or beyond.

A large number of residents feel that the density of housing is too high and that the number of houses proposed are disproportionate to what the village requires and the busy A438 can stand.

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 6 applications pending. If these are approved on Appeal or at the Planning Committee then there will be 290 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.

This application is one of 6 planning applications received in the last 12 months. If all applications were approved a total of 290 new houses would be added to a Group Parish which currently has a core of 650 dwellings. This would mean a potential increase of 45% in 5 years and two and a half times the increase recommended in the LDF Core Strategy of 117 dwellings over 20 years

The proposed development is on a green-field site and is so large that it would provide 85% of the recommended number of homes in only 2-3 years.

The Group Parish and Herefordshire Council have supported and approved applications for 13 dwellings since 2011, which complies with the recommended increase in development.

Consultation

The alleged consultation by the developers was extremely poor. The Parish Clerk simply received an email with leaflets attached for distribution to the Councillors. The residents received leaflets and an invitation to email their observations/queries. The developers did not request a meeting to discuss the proposed development with the community. Of the residents who attended the Extraordinary Meeting, 17 had emailed Gladman Developments with comments and had received no response from them. This could not be described as engaging with the community.

Conclusion

The large majority of the residents in the parish feel passionately that the historical rural character of the village should be kept. Once this has gone it can never be replaced and the village as they know it will disappear and the area will turn into suburbia. The proposed development is totally out of proportion to what is required and no consideration has been given to the area or its residents and is simply a money making exercise.

Resolved: There was no support for this application amongst the residents present. The Parish Council voted against the application. In accordance with his Declaration of non-discloseable pecuniary interest Cllr Wilson did not vote

Meeting concluded at 9.30 pm

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Signature of Chair

Date: 10 March 2015

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