

MINUTES OF THE WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 7 JUNE 2016 AT 7.30 P.M. IN ST MARY'S CHURCH WOOLPIT

Present: Mr Guylar (Chairman), Mr Howard, Mr Lomax, Mr Hardiman, Mr Melvin, Mr Jones and 107 members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence

Were received from Mrs Cook, Mrs Parker and Mr Wheatley.

2. To receive declarations of interest. There were none.

3. Planning

2016/16 Erection of replacement two storey detached dwelling and detached garage following demolition of existing two storey dwelling, utilising existing access. Guiting House, Wood Road, Borley Green – support..

2112/16 Erection of 50 dwellings (including 18 (36%) affordable dwellings) and construction of new access. Land on east side of Green Road.

The meeting adjourned at 7.33 p.m. to allow members of the public to comment on the application. 34 residents made comment on various concerns regarding the application including road safety, pedestrian safety, the pinch point along Green Road near Mill Lane only being single lane, traffic through the village and Conservation Area, access to the development, no emergency exit from the development, loss of character of the village, development will ruin country feel of the lane, no play space on the site, development in wrong area of the village, concern for the amount of development in the village, village infrastructure, cost of affordable homes for local residents, the need for some housing in the village. 20 comments from members of the public had been received before the meeting with similar concerns and 1 comment received in favour of the development.

The meeting reconvened at 8.37 p.m.

Mr Guylar has drafted a response which was passed to Councillors for consideration. After amendments it was unanimously agreed to object to the proposal for the following reasons:

1. Traffic in Green Road

The narrow section of Green Road (just to the north of the junction with Drinkstone Road to past the junction with Mill Lane) will be required to take an unacceptable level of traffic. The road is narrow and dangerous at this point already and is effectively one-way unless passing vehicles mount the footpath, which is what occurs now, creating a dangerous point on the road. An increase in traffic at this narrow position, as will result from the proposal, is totally unacceptable. 76% of correspondents making comments to WPC raised this issue.

2. Traffic in the Conservation Area and Impact on listed buildings

Increased traffic from the development will result in even more congestion in The Street, a road which is at the heart of the conservation area and contains many listed buildings. The Street is already frequently blocked by commercial vehicles, buses, through traffic and shoppers' cars and is unable to accept the additional vehicles this proposal will create.

3. Play Space on the Development

There is no on-site play space provision. Mid Suffolk's own open space, sport and recreation policies requires an area for play on developments of this size. An offer to contribute to improvements of the existing children's play equipment in the village centre does not relieve the developer of an obligation to provide a local area for play on the site.

4. Wildlife Habitats

Insufficient study has been made of wildlife habitat and the loss that will result.

The ecological report states that there is no pond on site whereas in fact a linear pond runs along the edge of the site next to Green Road. This has produced frog spawn in the past and could be a habitat for newts.

Skylarks have recently been seen over the site but no reference is made to this in the survey. Only blackbirds and pigeons were reported as being on site whereas the boundary hedges at this time of year contain nesting birds of many species.

A colony of Pipistrelle bats has recently been identified in the roof of Priory Cottage which is in Green Road opposite the site. Consideration needs to be given to the effect of the development on the bat population.

A more detailed ecological survey is required.

5. Access from the Site into Green Road

With the high recorded speed of traffic along Green Road and the proximity of the bend at Priory Cottage, the junction of the site access road into Green Road is dangerous. The junction needs to be redesigned. An emergency exit from the site needs to be considered.

6. Loss of valuable agricultural land

There would be a loss of valuable agricultural land. The site is outside the existing settlement boundary and this development would be an encroachment of the village on the hamlet at Woolpit Green.

Additional Comments

Comment 1

Woolpit Parish Council is concerned at the potential rate at which this and other possible developments could produce new housing in the village. The general infrastructure of Woolpit requires time to evolve and absorb new residents at a reasonable speed as development takes place. There is unease that new developments will result in Woolpit losing its 'village feel' and for it to become 'a town'.

The PC asks that MSDC seriously considers this when it makes its planning decisions.

Comment 2

There is no doubt development pressure on nearby villages in the A14 corridor. MSDC should look at the needs of the area as a whole and spread new housing so as not to put excessive pressure on any particular village that might appeal to developers.

Comment 3

Woolpit Parish Council believes that there is a need for additional houses within Woolpit but that it should not be necessary for traffic created to pass through the core conservation area of the village in order to reach the A14.

Comment 4

In its Planning Statement Artisan says that: 'It is considered that there is support locally for the proposed development and that the full extent of it will become clear during the application's formal determination'.

The applicant does not have significant support locally. The comments made to the Parish Council by residents, with 20 letters objecting to the proposal and one supporting, show this to be the case.

107 residents attended the Parish Council meeting to discuss this application with the large majority voicing their objections and concerns during the public comment section.

Comment 5

Traffic survey figures quoted by the applicant are surprising and hard to believe. Woolpit parish Council invites MSDC to examine these in detail.

Comment 6

The proportion of accommodation provided under so call affordable housing is disappointingly low.

4. **To approve accounts for payment.** There were none.

5. Date of the next full Parish Council Meeting – Monday 20 June 2016 at 7.30 pm. Noted.

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

Signed.....

Dated.....