

MINUTES OF THE WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2016 AT 7.30 P.M. IN ST MARY'S CHURCH, WOOLPIT.

**Present:** Mr Guyler (Chairman), Mr Howard, Mr Wheatley, Mr Lomax, Mr Hardiman and 81 members of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Mrs Parker, Mrs Cook and Mr Melvin.

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

### 3. Planning

**2112/16** Reconsultation. Erection of 49 dwellings (including 17 affordable dwellings) and construction of new access. Land on east side of Green Road.

The meeting adjourned at 7.34 p.m. for public comment. 21 residents made comment on the amended plans and voiced their concerns regarding the off-site highways work to make part of Green Road an informal priority system and the congestion this would cause, loss of parking spaces in the centre of the village and the adverse effect of this on small businesses, consequences on the historic buildings, pressure on infrastructure, increased traffic, road safety, problems for emergency vehicles.

The meeting reconvened at 8.24 p.m.

Mr Guyler has drafted a response which was passed to Councillors for consideration. After amendments, it was unanimously agreed to object to the proposal as follows:

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 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.

The proposed highway changes at this pinch point in the road are unacceptable as they will worsen the current traffic problems and create delays and hazards particularly with the lorries, buses, emergency vehicles and large agricultural vehicles which pass through this section of road with listed buildings next to the highway. Such a scheme is totally inappropriate in a Conservation Area. Contrary to policies GP1, H7, H15, T3, T10, cor5, cor6, csfr-fc1, csfr-fc1.1, nppf.

2. **Parking in the village centre.** The proposed changes to parking are unacceptable. They will lead to a reduction of parking spaces in an area which is very often full and affect trade at shops and businesses. The proposed kerb arrangements will make parking in the area more difficult and residents will have problems with deliveries. Woolpit is a busy village which has a shortage of parking already. With additional houses already approved elsewhere in the village increasing parking pressure, the last thing Woolpit needs is a reduction in on-street parking.

The road markings associated with the parking plan would be totally out of keeping in the conservation area. Contrary to policies HB1, HB8, HB12, H16, cor5, cor6, nppf, csfr -fc1, csfr-fc1.1.

3. **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 which will be harmed by the additional traffic. 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.

The adverse impacts on the character and setting of historic buildings and highway safety do not constitute sustainable development and it is not considered that any benefit to housing provision would outweigh the harmful impacts described. Contrary to policies HB1, HB8, GP1, H15, H16, T10, cor5, cor6, csfr-fc1, csfr-fc1.1, nppf.

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 during the nesting season contain birds of many species. A colony of Pipistrelle bats has recently been identified in the roof of Priory Cottage (a Listed Building) 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. Contrary to policy CL8, cor5
5. **Access from the Site into Green Road.** The positioning of the proposed new road access from Green Road into the site is unsuitable. Green Road has high recorded speeds of traffic, the junction is on a dangerous bend and the vehicular access and exit to Priory Cottage will be made hazardous. If the application is approved, the junction needs to be reinstated to the position proposed in the original application and improvements carried out to Green Road as required in the SCC Highways consultee report of 30 June 2016. An emergency exit from the site also needs to be considered. Contrary to policies GP1, cor5, nppf, csfcr-fc1, csfr-fc1.1.
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. Contrary to policies H7, CL11, cor5.
7. Traffic survey figures quoted by the applicant are surprising and hard to believe. Woolpit Parish Council invites MSDC to examine these in detail.
8. 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 34 letters objecting to the proposal and two supporting, show this to be the case. 107 residents attended the Parish Council meeting to discuss the original application in June and a further 81 for the revised application in December, with the overwhelming majority voicing their objections and concerns.
9. 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'. This application should not be considered in isolation but as

one of several at the application or pre-application stage which together could add some 700 homes to the existing 900 in Woolpit.

10. Woolpit has a Neighbourhood Plan under preparation and it is becoming very apparent that residents consider that any development should take place on sites on the northern side of the village, enabling traffic to access the A14 without traversing the centre of our medieval village. Woolpit Parish Council believes MSDC should consider the information coming from the evolving Neighbourhood Plan before determining this application.
11. There is no doubt development pressure exists on nearby villages in the A14 corridor. MSDC should look at the needs of the wider area and spread new housing so as not to put excessive pressure on any particular village which might appeal to developers.
12. MSDC should take into account the recent East Bergholt High Court judgement which determined that the District Council should consider the housing needs of the core village and its local environs rather than the needs of the district as a whole.

**3931/16** Reconsultation. Outline permission sought for the erection of one detached dwelling. Melbury, Green Road.

As nothing has changed other than the vehicular access has been drawn on the plan Cllrs still object to the proposal with the same comments.

**4750/16** Notification for Prior Approval for a Proposed Change of Use of Agricultural Building to a Dwelling House (Class C3) and for Associated Operational Development. Conversion of two barns to two dwellings. Barns at Grassy Lane Farm, Warren Lane - support.

**4. To consider a response to the consultation of the proposed one-way system in Mill Lane and take any necessary action.**

Concerns expressed by the Village Hall Committee regarding the possibility of vehicles using the car park for turning are noted however after discussion it was agreed to accept the proposal but request warning sign of oncoming cyclists at the Green Road junction with Mill Lane.

**5. Date of the next full Parish Council Meeting – Monday 16 January 2017 at 7.30 pm in Woolpit Institute.** Noted.

The meeting closed at 8.53 p.m.

Signed.....

Dated.....