

MINUTES OF THE WOOLPIT PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 7 AUGUST 2017 AT 7.30 P.M. IN ST MARY'S CHURCH.

**Present:** Mr Guyler (Chairman), Mr Wheatley, Mr Howard, Dr Geake, Mr Hardiman and 131 members of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Mrs Cook and Mrs Parker.
2. **To receive declarations of interest.** Mr Wheatley declared a prejudicial interest in appl 17/02767 as a resident of Rags Lane and duly signed the interest book.

**3. Planning.**

The meeting adjourned at 7.35 p.m. for public comment on the first 4 applications. Concerns were expressed regarding the additional access onto Green Road from the new dwelling land north of Melbury. This is onto a dangerous bend.

The meeting reconvened at 7.37 p.m.

**17/03200** Erection of cart lodge and boundary wall. Clear View, Bury Road – support

**17/03261** Erection of pitched roof to replace existing flat roof (in association with conversion of attached garage/outbuilding to living accommodation). Amberley, Rags Lane – support.

**17/03608** Installation of temporary office building with associated car parking for BBUK use. Woolpit Business Park, 24 Windmill Avenue – support

**17/03855** Full planning application for the erection of 1 two storey dwelling, ancillary detached outbuilding and new vehicular access. Land north of Melbury, Green Road – object. New vehicular access onto bend on dangerous road.

Mr Wheatley left the meeting at 7.43 p.m.

**17/02767** Full planning permission – Erection of 60 dwellings, access, open space and associated infrastructure. Land on the South side of Rags Lane

45 comments have been received by WPC prior to the meeting with 44 objecting and 1 undecided.

The meeting adjourned at 7.45 p.m. for public comment on Rags Lane development. Residents stated concerns regarding the density of housing being out of keeping with the village and against MSDC policy, the public space provided is two drainage ponds and the danger this poses to children, road safety in Rags Lane, Drinkstone Road, Broomhill Land and Green Road, additional congestion vehicles would cause in The Street, suggested route for construction vehicles through residential area, infrastructure unable to cope, sewage and drainage issues, loss of wildlife area and ancient hedgerow, previous applications on this site have been refused and should be again, effect on the historic core of the village.

The meeting reconvened at 9.02 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. **Housing Density.** The density of 43 dwellings/hectare is excessive. Mid Suffolk policy H15 sets a density range of 23 – 37 dwellings/hectare. The density proposed is totally out of keeping with housing adjacent to the site and would be greater than anywhere else in Woolpit.

2. **Public Open Space.** The provision of a public open space, consisting of two drainage ponds, is wholly unsuitable and inadequate. It is not possible to imagine the area being used for its 'open space' purpose and in fact it is probable that parents will consider it a dangerous location which their children should avoid.
3. **Children' Play Area.** No children's play area is provided. A saved policy of the Mid Suffolk 1998 Local Plan requires new facilities to be provided as part of new development unless adequate facilities already exist nearby. No such facilities exist nearby.
4. **Drinkstone Road / Green Road Junction and Green Road Pinch Point Improvements.** The proposed scheme is unworkable and any highway changes in this area should be the subject of wider consultation. The statement from the applicant about the highway proposal that 'a no priority one way working scheme will be trialed and priority signs will be installed at a later date if found to be required' clearly indicates that the changes have not been properly researched.
5. **Alternative Traffic Route.** The suggestion that 'To avoid the village centre, Green Road south, Heath Road and Steeles Road could be used as an alternative to get into and out of the area, which is only a slightly longer route' (3.1.18 of applicant's Transport Statement) is unacceptable. This would take additional traffic through the residential area of Steeles Road with its many parked cars, children and pedestrians and then past the school and Health Centre where there are already serious traffic problems. Heath Road is also an HGV route.
6. **Broomhill Lane Traffic.** The proposal for Broomhill Lane to be accessible to only the vehicles of residents is unacceptable. Such a move would result in the existing Broomhill Lane traffic using Rags Lane, Drinkstone Road and the main village street and add to the present serious congestion in the conservation area. This proposal should be the subject of separate consultation outside of the application. A survey should be carried out of the vehicles using Broomhill Lane, together with their origins and destinations, to determine the impact on the village centre and other roads.
7. **Contribution to the Community.** Policy CS5 of the MSDC Core Strategy Development Plan encourages development to make a positive contribution to settlements and the historic environment. This proposal contributes nothing to either and makes no attempt to do so. The applicant refers to public consultation but has not met or attempted to meet with the Parish Council or liaised with the Parish Council in any way to determine how its proposals might be integrated within the village.
8. **Housing and Layout Design.** The urban style of housing proposed is out of keeping with the open rural setting of the surrounding area. The design in no way meets the requirement of Saved Policy GP1, 'to principally maintain and enhance the character of the surrounding area'.
9. **Loss of Habitat and Destruction of Ancient Hedgerow.** The proposal will result in the unacceptable destruction of a considerable section of the ancient hedgerow in Drinkstone Road which contains 14 plant species. The hedgerow is approximately 30 feet high and very wide as it has been uncut on the inside for many years. It provides an excellent wildlife habitat. Wildlife identified on site include jays, green woodpeckers, spotted woodpeckers, sparrowhawks, kestrel, warblers and yellowhammers (a red listed endangered species), frogs, grass snakes, muntjac and roe deer.
10. **Construction Traffic.** The route for Construction Traffic is unsuitable. The proposed route will cause considerable pollution and congestion on Heath Road, with the school and Health Centre, and Green Road which has on-street parking in the built-up area. Green Road, which is barred to HGVs, already

has significant traffic problems which will increase further if the Green Road application (2112/16) is approved.

11. **Rags Lane Safety.** As it is without footpaths, the narrow Rags Lane is already unsafe for pedestrians and will be dangerous for residents of the new development who will have to use the route to walk or cycle to the village centre.
12. **Drainage.** There is concern that the already strained drainage system in the area will be unable to cope with the additional demands of this development. Local flooding already occurs and there is run-off from this site into adjacent properties.
13. **Previous Applications for Development of this Site.** A previous application for 12 dwellings on this site was refused on the grounds that a) the junctions of Rags Lane with both The Street and Broomhill Lane have substandard visibility and the junction of Drinkstone Road (formerly Plough Lane) with Green Road is similarly substandard. Dangers would be created by a material increase in the slowing and turning movements b) that foul sewerage in the area is inadequate to cope with the proposed 12 dwelling development which if approved would cause sewerage problems downstream c) the development would extend the village into open countryside to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area and the amenities of the residents of adjoining properties. Nothing has changed since this refusal.
14. **Unsuitability of the Site Location.** Whatever modifications are made to the design of the Rags Lane site it will remain unsuitable for development because most of the traffic it creates will go through the already congested historic core of Woolpit.
15. **Conservation Area.** This development will bring a substantial increase in traffic to the historic core of Woolpit and bring harm to the setting of its conservation area and 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. The distinctive centre of Woolpit is a jewel in the crown of Mid Suffolk and is admired and enjoyed by all who live here and visit. The increased traffic that this development will bring to the centre of Woolpit must not be allowed to inflict irreparable damage to our heritage.

**4. To consider asking the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to call in planning applications 2112/16 Green Road, 4489/16 & 4491/16 Land North of Old Stowmarket Road, 1636/16 land South of Old Stowmarket Road and 17/02767 land on South side of Rags Lane and take any necessary action.**

It was proposed to investigate what the consequences would be before taking this action and at joining with other parishes along the A14 corridor for a joint approach.

**5. Date of the next full Parish Council Meeting – Monday 4 September 2017 at 7.30 pm. Noted.**

The meeting closed at 9.30 p.m

Signed.....

Dated.....