



**Minutes of the meeting of the New Housing Development Committee held on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at the Band Hall, Gravel, Downton at 6.30 pm.**

**Present:** Cllr Quarmby (Chairman) and Cllrs Cordell, Ford, Hayward, Lacey, Mace, Sutcliffe and Yeates.

Mrs Nikki Wilson, Mr Richard Fishlock and Bev Cornish, Parish Clerk.

Seven members of the public were present.

**Public Question Time:**

Mrs Jenny Saxby thanked Cllr Quarmby for meeting with the neighbours to discuss and understand the terms to be contained in the lease for the land in the Memorial Gardens.

She raised further concerns about:

- the noise and hours of use of the extended play area which had not been recommended to be conditioned by the Planning Officer in his report to the Strategic Planning Committee. She said the neighbours and others who had commented on the Noise Report all recognised that it contained inaccurate information and yet the information was not subsequently revised and corrected which meant that residents were left unprotected.
- Whether neighbours would be consulted when the school sought the Parish Council's permission to use the extended playground for out of hours and weekend activities. She said she was not trying to stop the school from using the playground for ad hoc activities but she said the neighbours wished to have some say over regular activities.
- Whether there would be any further consultation with residents if any revision to the planning application was to be made after formal permission had been given and what would the Parish Council do if the school wished to extend further.

Mr Bryan Morris raised the issue of the current admissions policy and the map and boundaries used to apply it. He said he believed that the current admissions policy boundaries used by the school were the ecclesiastical rather than civil parish boundaries. He also said that the point he wanted to make was that the land being given to the school was to ensure that all parish children could attend it so the Parish Council should ensure that in applying those different boundaries, all children within the civil parish of Downton could still attend the Primary School.

**NHD45/15: Apologies:** Mrs Alison Small.

**NHD46/15: Minutes:** Cllr Yeates proposed, Cllr Mace seconded and it was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2015 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**NHD47/15: Declarations of Interest:** None.

**NHD48/15: To consider the following planning application and make recommendations to the Parish Council in terms of its response:**

**15/10781/OUT for Land at Rivermead, Breamore Road, Downton – Erection of 36 residential units, construction of an access road from Breamore Road and associated works.**

A lengthy discussion was held and members made reference to a list of issues on the planning application drawn up for consideration and circulated prior to the meeting by Cllr Mace in formulating the response. Subsequently, Cllr Mace proposed, Cllr Yeates seconded and it was RESOLVED that the following comments on the application be recommended for submission by the Parish Council:

Downton Parish Council strongly objects to the planning application for the following reasons:

- It is contrary to the Wiltshire Core Strategy which still has a further 10 years to run;
- It is contrary to the Downton Neighbourhood Plan;
- Development exceeding the allocated numbers will have a detrimental impact on the Special Protection of the New Forest National Park due to its proximity to Downton.
- The Parish Council can see no exceptional significant community benefit to be gleaned from the application to divert it from its objection and allow the allocation figure of 190 to be exceeded when it is only 2015 and the above plans run until 2026.

It also objects for the reasons contained in the separate headings below:

**Neighbourhood Plan & Wiltshire Core Strategy Allocation of 190 dwellings**

The policies contained in the Downton Neighbourhood Plan, which will shortly be formally submitted to Wiltshire Council for consultation, state as follows:

**NP policy LH1** - Housing Development must be aligned with the Core Strategy allocation of 190 homes (2006-2026).

The development is of a larger number than favoured by the community in the NP.

**NP policy LH6** - Future residential development should be evenly phased over the life of the adopted Core Strategy.

If it were approved, this development would mean that all homes in Downton would be 'front loaded' at the beginning of the Core Strategy period rather than throughout as proposed in both the Core Strategy and the Neighbourhood Plan:

**NP Policy LH2** - For any remaining residential development required to meet Core Strategy requirements from the date of acceptance of the Neighbourhood Plan, small scale development, as preferred by the community (between 15 and 25 houses and including infill), should influence the planning decision.

Furthermore, the development does not show a willingness to exceed the basic minimum requirements for green energy as preferred by the Neighbourhood Plan:

**NP Policy LC3** - All new development and any alterations to existing buildings must achieve the highest possible level of energy efficiency and sustainability, taking account of the visual impact and its position in the landscape.

### **Design & Access Statement**

**Affordable Homes Point 4.6** - According to the Downton Housing Needs Survey conducted in December 2013 and Wiltshire Council's change of policy to give preference for affordable homes to local people, the 30% affordable homes contained in the allocated 190 houses will be sufficient to meet local needs and therefore there is no requirement to go beyond the 190 threshold. Downton does not need to meet the housing needs of the whole of the southern area.

**Education Point 4.10** - The Primary School's planning application is not yet approved and so the Parish Council must continue to object on the same grounds as it did for Charles Church and Scotts House.

**Site Preference Point 4.11** - **"it is important to note that the current applications are for sites of lesser preference ranking within the Downton Neighbourhood Plan."** - This statement is misleading because there are many factors which form the preference for a site. For instance, the Primary School is at capacity and Foreman Homes is only proposing to provide at most £264,843, which is nowhere near the amount of money required to fund the school's extension or to largely fund the Memorial Hall extension to make up for the loss of the Memorial Gardens, as Charles Church have proposed to do. The Charles Church planning application provides a much greater benefit to the community than the Foreman Homes planning application.

**Point 4.11** **"... recent appeal decisions have shown that an excess of housing supply in a particular area does not in itself represent a harmful impact"**. Downton Parish contests that none of the example appeal decisions are comparable to Downton.

**Point 5.3** **"CP2 – States at least 190 homes needed in Downton Local Service Centre."** - The Wiltshire Core Strategy does not state "at least 190" but just "190".

**5.4** **"The Downton Neighbourhood Plan sets out the preferred development sites within the village. This is split into bands, with our site falling into the upper band as the second-most preferred site. The first-most preferred site is small, has capacity for limited number and at present is undeliverable. As such, our site has been ranked the best site within the area for a more significant contribution to the housing need of Downton."** And;  
**7.0** **"The application is ... supported by the emerging Downton Neighbourhood Plan."**

The Parish Council attests that this planning application most definitely is not supported by the Downton Neighbourhood Plan as it fails to meet the requirements of Neighbourhood Plan policies LH1, LH2, LH6 and LC3. With regard to LH1 in particular it was very clear from the community engagement work that residents strongly expressed the view that they do not, at this stage, want any more housing than the 190 homes allocated to the Plan area.

## **Flood Risk Assessment**

The Parish Council considers the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) carried out by Foreman homes to be too generic in content, deficient and totally inadequate. Its list of comments on the FRA are as follows:

- The applicant has not tailored the FRA to the local conditions nor looked at more detailed evidence.
- The applicant has not taken account of the impact of surface water nor the existing groundwater flooding problems which have been experienced in recent years at the Trafalgar School and the backing up of the sewerage system in the neighbouring houses to the site. This will mean that the connections and surface water solutions ie the swales on the new development will not work, thereby creating more problems for their surrounding properties.
- The applicant needs to carry out borehole monitoring and groundwater modelling similar to that carried out by Charles Church for its application and further consider the efficacy of proposed drainage systems in re-writing its FRA.

## **Transport Statement**

### **2.2 “At the proposed point of access the speed limit on Breamore Road changes from 30mph in the north to 40mph in the south.”**

The Parish Council requests that when this application is reconsidered in the future that the 30 mph sign be moved farther south to ensure that traffic is slowed down before it reaches the entrance to the development.

**2.5** The bus stop shown at the Trafalgar School is misleading as it is only used for school buses.

### **3.4 ... the (parking) provision is marginally below the standards.**

The Parish Council asks that the applicant provides parking to the required standard rather than rely on SMART targets, as set out in point 4.9, which may never be achieved.

The proposed development will go beyond the 190 provision in the Core Strategy. Before any further development is considered, the Parish Council believes that more work is required to assess the impact of traffic flow and congestion on Downton and surrounding communities, particularly at peak times. The Neighbourhood Plan highlights long queues entering Downton from Salisbury at the evening peak and the impact of pinch points at various locations through the village as a result of road narrowing, traffic lights and residents' parking. It also recommends that the number of new entrances on to the A338 should be limited to prevent further congestion and back up on this primary route. To have confidence that further development will not result in traffic grinding to a halt, a detailed assessment with traffic modelling should be carried out rather than a simplistic trip assessment carried out by the applicant.

## **4. Proposed Access Arrangements**

Whilst the Parish Council accepts that the visibility splays are more than adequate for the entrance, it is concerned that the location of the access to the site, being set between the entrance and exit for The Trafalgar School, is likely to create traffic problems in the rush hour.

It also acknowledges that the School's response to the application raises concerns about the access to the school by large vehicles, with the proposed siting of the Pedestrian Refuge which, having measured it to scale on the plans, it

regards as not wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair and pedestrian safely on what is a very busy A road.

### **External Noise Assessment**

**“It should be noted that the calculations have been made with the proposed windows closed.”**

The Parish Council seeks clarification on the provision being made for residents for the summer months when their windows may need to be left open.

### **Statement of Community Involvement**

It is the Parish Council’s view that the applicant did not carry out proper engagement with the local community. Its public meetings were not adequately promoted and they were held at times which were inconvenient for working residents and, as a consequence, were poorly attended.

**NHD49/15: To receive a report from Cllr Quarmby on a meeting with neighbouring residents to Downton Primary School regarding the Lease for the land in the Memorial Gardens and to agree on any further actions to be taken:** Cllr Quarmby gave a brief report on a helpful meeting with the neighbours to the school at which the following issues in particular were considered:

- It was unclear whether the lease was to be with Wiltshire Council or the Diocese of Salisbury so the word Leaseholder was to be used;
- No parking of vehicles would be permitted on the land.
- The wording of the use of the extended playground was to be in line with that contained in Warren Simmonds’, the Planning Officer’s, report to the Strategic Planning Committee.
- It was difficult to foresee what the village would look like in 99 years’ time and so at either the end of the lease or termination of the lease the wording of the reversion clause should provide a legally enforceable position ie ‘To be agreed by full Parish Council meeting after consultation with the parish) but with flexibility for agreement for a different scheme on reversion.
- Written approval would be required for permission sought by the school not just approval.
- There should be a clause containing wording re the Primary School’s Admissions Policy having as a core objective the provision of school places to all applicants within the Civil Parish of Downton.

Cllr Sutcliffe proposed, Cllr Hayward seconded and it was RESOLVED that the above proposed amendments to the terms of the Lease be approved and submitted to the Wiltshire Council legal team for consideration.

Mr Richard Fishlock said that the main point the governors wished to raise was that the use of the school’s car park needed to be based on a ‘fair use’ policy which would need to be drafted. Cllr Quarmby said he appreciated the concerns governors may have but the car park would be used solely by users of the Memorial Hall outside school hours only and as far as he was concerned that should be regarded as ‘fair use’.

A further discussion was held on the admissions policy for the school and how it would manage admissions between the completion of the school extension and the completion of the housing developments. Cllr Ford said the Parish Council’s whole purpose for the project was to enable all children within the parish to attend the school so it was important to understand how this this could be achieved.

Mr Richard Fishlock said that the school would be consulting on its Admissions Policy for 2017/18 shortly and it was looking at ways in which it could manage the process if there was a gap between the completion of the school and completion of the developments. Following a question regarding a map for the current admissions policy, Mr Fishlock said that he was unsure whether there was a map, as it had not previously been needed, but if he could, he would send one to the Clerk.

Cllr Quarmby said it would be useful to have as much information as possible so that councillors could be better informed before they responded to the consultation on the proposed admissions policy.

**NHD50/15: To consider and recommend to the Parish Council for ratification a further revised version of the Downton Neighbourhood Plan, being the final version, for formal submission to Wiltshire Council:** Following two requests for minor changes to be made to the text and further clarification and a minor change sought by Cllr Yeates on the stated church parking spaces permitted under the s106 agreement at Church Leat, Cllr Hayward proposed, Cllr Mace seconded and it was RESOLVED that a recommendation be made to the Parish Council that it should ratify a further revised version of the Downton Neighbourhood Plan.

**NHD51/15: Next meeting:** Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at 8.15 pm at the Band Hall, Gravel Close, Downton.

With no other business, the meeting closed at 8.40 pm.