

TEMPLE SOWERBY PARISH COUNCIL

An extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council was held on Thursday 18th May 2017 in the Victory Hall at 7pm.

Apologies

No apologies received

Present were Kevin Overs (KM), Martyn Cannon (MC), Angela Mathers (AM), Jonathan Richardson (JR), Caryl Varty (CV), Henry Sawrey-Cookson (HSC), Caroline Fennell (CF), 28 parishioners

Request for Dispensations

None

Declarations of Interest

None

Adjournment of Meeting

KO indicated that plans were available to the side of the room in respect of Planning Application 17/0293 – Erection of 28 dwellings and associated infrastructure to the rear of Temple Sowerby Medical Centre, and opened the meeting to the floor, inviting comments from parishioners.

JR stated that he had spoken with the case officer, Mr Irwin to clarify the status of the current planning permission that is in place. Confirmed that this is for 25 dwellings, however Mr Irwin stated that he will be looking at this application in its own right, and the fact that there is current permission in place for 25 dwellings will have no bearing on the decision.

A member of the landowning family confirmed that the original planning application was for full planning permission due to its location in a conservation area. This had been granted with the following breakdown:

4 dwellings in the yard at Linden House
9 dwellings on the site of the piggery
16 dwellings on the green field site

JR sought confirmation that the current application would replace the previous application for dwellings on the piggery and green field site; but that the previous permitted application for a further 4 dwellings in the yard would still stand. This was confirmed by a member of the landowning family.

It was clarified that the current application has been submitted by Reiver Homes which is a branch of Story Homes. There were queries by the parishioners as to whether the number of dwellings would increase in the future if the application for 28 was passed.

It was stated that the current application was for a further 3 dwellings than the original application and also the removal of the amenity space. The feeling amongst parishioners was that the developers were maximising their profitability by substituting what parishioners referred to as the play area, for additional dwellings. It was widely felt that the development would benefit from increased open space, of which there was a distinct lack on the plans. Safety issues were raised regarding the number of children having to cross the road to access the current play area on the village green, and also the safety of them playing within the development given there was no open space provided within the developer's plans.

Parishioners asked for the views of the Parish Council on the development however it was made clear that while councillors had their own personal opinions the purpose of the meeting was to gain the opinions of the parishioners.

Concerns were also raised regarding the increased traffic this would bring to the village – approximately 56 cars, which was considered to be a lot on a daily basis, particularly when combined with the traffic in to and out of the surgery which uses the same access. It was felt that access could be a problem due to the at times already congested entrance in to Linden Park from parked cars using the surgery.

It was confirmed that since the original permission was granted (2013) there had been no further properties built in the village. Parishioners questioned whether any population surveys had been undertaken regarding ideal population for the use of the local amenities such as the school, pub, etc.

AM confirmed that she had spoken with the head teacher of the village primary school. The current capacity of the school is set at 56 children, with 47 children currently on roll. They were expecting a pre-school to start in late 2017 so the roll could possibly increase. The head teacher, who is not a resident of the village, does not object to the development, and is aware of previous developments within the wider area where the developers have assisted with funding to increase school capacity. This is something that was unanimously agreed should be considered as a clause on the application.

Questions were raised regarding the capability of the current sewerage system to cope with the increased demand that this development would place on it. Parishioners felt this was already an overloaded system. It was put forward by a parishioner that an infrastructure improvement charge on each property would go towards improving the infrastructure, including the sewerage. It was expressed that there is a need to make sure that this would happen and that there was a necessity for a review by United Utilities.

Concerns were raised by parishioners regarding the lack of one storey dwellings on the plans, whereas these had been evident on the previous planning application. It was highlighted that Story Homes had built bungalows on other sites such as the Appleby development. There was a requirement for the elderly not to be forced to leave the village when they became less able, and this viewpoint was extended to disabled individuals for whom there was also a requirement for housing. It was stated that “a good community is a mixed community”.

Questions were raised regarding local occupancy restrictions on the proposed development, and there was a unanimous agreement that there should be local occupancy restrictions in place in respect of the affordable homes, to allow young people to get on the property ladder and have families. A member of the land owning family confirmed that on the original planning application there was a local occupancy clause, which was staggered to allow for those people who had family in the village, were employed in the village etc.

There was a discussion regarding the suitability of building materials used on the plans. It was commented that PF&K noted that sandstone was the predominant building material, but there appeared little sandstone on the plans. JR queried what parts of the houses would actually be sandstone. A member of the landowning family stated that there were 3 different types of houses within the development that use sandstone on particular elevations. It was put forward that Story developments in Appleby and Clifton were well faced with sandstone and this would be more in keeping with the village.

A number of changes were highlighted since the original planning application for 25 houses had been passed. Not least that the bus service had now stopped running which could cause an issue for any low income families without a car needing to access employment ion places such as Penrith. It was also highlighted that on the new local plan Temple Sowerby was going to be a key hub, however this was now not possible due to the absence of a bus service and a village shop. CV stated that a statement made by EDC relating to new developments stated “developments are located to reduce the need to travel and to use sustainable transport”; however this is not possible due to the absence of the bus. It also states that “in general, it is not anticipated that the relative size of settlements would increase”.

It was stated by a parishioner that there was an opportunity for the development to be an asset to the village, and could bring new life to the village. However it was accepted that it is a big increase to the village and facilities need to be fit for purpose so that people can make full use of them. It was mentioned that developers have previously subsidised public transport. It was also stated that it could be good for the school if the occupancy levels could be addressed as it would encourage families to stay in the village.

Comparisons were made with the last large development in the village which was Eden Meadows and it was stated that lessons could be learnt form this

and addressed on any new developments. In particular the concern regarding open space was again raised as Eden Meadows had an area but this was planted with shrubbery and it was unquestionable that residents would rather have had this as open space for children to play.

It was stated that elements of the village infrastructure must improve with a new development such as the increase in superfast broadband. Parishioners questioned whether the Parish Council could approach Story Homes to work with them as to what improvements could be made to the village, such as the school and infrastructure. KO confirmed that the Parish Council would be happy to put this to the developers.

The chairman of the Parish Council asked parishioners to vote regarding their thoughts on the proposed development. In a show of hands, the overwhelming majority voted for 25 houses on the development, with nobody present voting for 28 houses, or in fact nobody completely objecting to a development. However, it should be noted that in this show of hands parishioners were given only the choice of 25 or 28 houses on the development or no development at all, they were not offered the option of a development of fewer than 25 houses.

It was stated that a number of letters/emails had been received from parishioners who could not be present at the meeting and these were read out by AM.

AM informed all present that parishioners as well as the Parish Council can make their thoughts known to EDC either via the website or in writing by 26th May. Parishioners were invited to spend some time looking at the plans at the end of the meeting.

Meeting closed at 8.35pm

Signed Date