

DRAFT MINUTES
ENSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Planning Meeting held on Thursday 25th April 2019 at
6.30 pm in the Main Hall at the Parish Hall

PRESENT:- Cllrs. N. Knott, P. Shaw, R. Parker, P. Johnson, M. Ivings, C. Glendinning, T. Gilbert, D. Robottom, District Cllr. Andrew Beaney and seventy-three members of the public

APOLOGIES: Cllr. A. Lee

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. Peter Butler (Applicant), Mr. Tim Martin (Land Logic), Mr. Paul Vicary (DevComms) and Mrs B. Sinclair (clerk)

Planning Application:-

Barnmead, Church Enstone, 19/00500/OUT – Outline planning application for retirement dwellings, community building and communal recreational facilities; access roads and pedestrian/cycle links; hard and soft landscaping; foul and surface water drainage systems; and other works.

Cllr. Knott welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited Mr. Vicary to speak for five minutes to give an update on the above planning application:-

- The proposal provides a unique opportunity to convert the existing house at Barnmead into a sustainable community hub for the whole Parish which would sit alongside low impact homes, specifically designed and available for older local people.
- Older local residents would be able to remain living and supported in the Parish, rather than having to relocate to larger settlements for retirement living accommodation.
- The planning application has been submitted in outline, to seek to determine the principle of the proposal and access to the site. All other matters, including the number of retirement homes and their layout and landscaping would be determined at the reserved matters stage. The documents submitted envisage no more than 33 retirement homes on site.
- The proposal is forecast to generate minimal traffic – the single site access from the B4030 would safely accommodate this traffic with appropriate visibility and would be combined with a new pavement along the site's frontage with the B4030, to link the site with the existing pavement into Church Enstone.
- A dedicated community bus service would be provided under the terms of a legal agreement and would operate throughout the day, with a service from the site to Chipping Norton and back, including a stop outside Enstone Stores and Post Office.
- Thames Water has not objected to the application, confirming that there is sufficient capacity in the foul water sewer on the B4030 and that the proposed means of managing surface water drainage on the site is acceptable.
- The proposal also includes a range of ecological and landscape improvements to deliver a net gain in biodiversity on the site.
- The site is located on the opposite side of the B4022 to a former landfill, which has been unused for several decades. A detailed Site investigation report has been prepared which confirms that the former landfill does not pose a significant risk.

- The proposals are compliant with WODC's Local Plan, specifically Core Objective CO6 and Policies H4 and H2, which support more specialist homes for older people throughout the District, subject to need being evidenced.
- Loneliness and isolation amongst older people is an issue of growing national concern and the proposal will allow residents to stay in their local communities in a suitable home. Revd. Mark Abrey has expressed his support for the scheme.

Cllr. Knott asked for comments:-

1. The perpetuity of the community bus – Residents who buy a property at the proposed site would have to pay for the local community to use the bus in a legally binding agreement.
2. There are many objections on the WODC's planning portal – 67 against the proposal and 6 supporting the proposal, of which three members of the public live variously in Bedford, London and Yorkshire – Mr. Butler confirmed that he knew these three people.
3. There is insufficient evidence supporting the need for this development and dialogue from the Developers has been insufficient, particularly to residents who live in Neat Enstone.
4. There is no affordable housing included in the proposal.
5. The Parish Council needs to be seen to be impartial in its response.
6. The proposals will be better suited to a Town.
7. The owners of the Village Shop explained that there had been no dialogue between the developers and themselves with regards to the bus stopping outside the shop.

Mr. Butler also spoke at the meeting and explained his reasons for this proposed development.

The following report from the Parish Council was put onto the WODC's planning portal on Monday 29th April. It would also go onto the parish website and Ensign magazine. Cllr. Knott thanked everyone for attending and the meeting finished at 7.40 pm.

Response from Enstone Parish Council on the Barnmead Outline Planning Application – 25th April 2019 6.30 pm – Enstone Parish Hall

Barnmead, Church Enstone, 19/00500/OUT – Outline Planning Application for Retirement Dwellings, Community Building and Communal Recreational Facilities; Access Roads and Pedestrian/Cycle Links; hard and soft landscaping; foul and surface water drainage systems; and other works

The Parish Council recognises that loneliness in old age is an issue which the proposed development of the retirement community at Barnmead, Church Enstone, seeks to address. In addition, it could free up some family homes in the village for young families. However, the proposed location for this type of development is remote from the services which would be required by an elderly community, such as access to healthcare services and shops. The village shop is over a mile away and the nearest health centre is in Chipping Norton over three miles away. There is no public transport near the development, the nearest bus stop being almost a mile away on the Oxford Road. It is also an unlikely place for a retirement community with steep slopes and narrow roads which are not easy to navigate on foot or mobility vehicles.

There are a number of specific concerns raised by the **Parish Council** regarding this development :

1. The Developer has failed to establish the need for this development in the Parish. The Planning application is predicated on meeting a need for *“purpose built housing for those aged 55 and over in Enstone Parish”* (Planning Statement Para 1.12). An open morning was held at the Parish Hall in December 2018, at which some parishioners expressed an interest, but the Parish Council is not aware that demand approaches the scale envisioned by this development. In a survey conducted at the event and subsequently online, 16 parishioners responded that the development met the needs of older people in the parish (out of a total of 26 who replied). Hence, the 33 dwellings proposed are unlikely to be occupied by many existing parishioners and will need to attract buyers from a much wider area in the District and beyond.
2. Community transport - this is a key part of the development proposal to transport the residents to the village shop and Chipping Norton to access services they will need as none are available at this location. The Developer has stated that this service would be run in perpetuity - this relies upon funding from the residents’ annual service charge and it is possible that costs could rise to uneconomical levels, thus rendering the service unviable.
3. Church Enstone is an historic village of around forty dwellings within a larger parish, some dating back to the 17th century. It is a small village within a large parish and the development would change the nature of the village through the proposed number of properties.
4. Surface water drainage to a proposed lake at the bottom of the site could lead to increased flooding on Cling Clang lane (the sunken lane to the south of the site). Flooding is already a regular occurrence during heavy rainfall.
5. Landfill site contamination and emissions from the neighbouring site need properly investigating by the Environment agency / Oxfordshire County Council. This was in use more recently than the date indicated by the Developer. There are concerns that such a development should be considered so close to a contaminated site.

Comments from **Enstone Parishioners** in the public meeting on 25th April

The key points raised were as follows :

1. The scale of Development is out of proportion to the existing community in Church Enstone. Church Enstone is a historic and unique village. It has a Norman Church and homes from the 17th, 18th & 19th Century. The development would result in a large increase and would change the historic nature and character of the village.
2. Is this an appropriate location for a retirement community or would it be better located in a larger town such as Chipping Norton? There are very limited services in Church Enstone.
3. There is minimal support for the development from anyone in the Parish. There are two comments from people in favour within the Parish and two from people outside of the Parish.

4. Concern about contamination in the landfill site next door which may still pose a hazard to any development nearby.
5. Concerns about the access to the site, and the additional volume of traffic that this development would generate.
6. Pedestrian access would be difficult for the elderly and infirm - the use of a mobility scooter cannot even be considered - steep banks with an almost impossible vehicle access from the blind road junction. Pedestrian access, crossing the B4030 from the site entrance and at the Heythrop Park entrance is dangerous - proven by the residents' traffic speed surveys.
7. Comments regarding the trees planted in conjunction with the Woodland Trust and what would happen to them. The agreement with the Woodland Trust runs until 2025.
8. Concern that the development would grow beyond the 33 dwellings proposed once outline planning had been agreed or would become just a general housing development if the retirement homes scheme was proven to be not economically viable.
9. Developer consultation – as part of the submission, the developer claims that extensive consultation has taken place with the local community, including sending out letters to the parishioners and consulting the local village stores owner. This was challenged at the meeting, including the Village store owner who had not been consulted. However, there was some support recognising loneliness amongst older people.
10. There were comments made in favour, including the need to provide housing for older people and the importance of developing our communities so that they do not remain too small to be relevant.

Parish Council Consultation

Every household in the parish receives a monthly copy of the parish magazine - The Ensign. This included an invitation to attend the public meeting on 25th April. Seventy-three members of the public did attend; two parishioners were in support of the development; three parishioners abstained. The remaining parishioners voted against the application.