

Shapwick Parish Council
Minutes of a meeting held on 1 September 2022
at 7.00pm at the Village Hall, Shapwick

22/23/57 Present: Frank Barnard, Steve Champion, Graham Croucher, Lesley Gaskell, Moray McGowan and Paul Rogers

22/23/58 In Attendance: Sue Williams (Clerk)

22/23/59 Also Present: Mr and Mrs Polden – Applicants 43/22/00007
 Darren Coombes – Applicant 43/22/00005
 15 Villagers

22/23/60 Welcome
 Graham Croucher welcomed everyone to the meeting.

22/23/61 Apologies for Absence
 Apologies were received from Gemma Pritchard.

22/23/62 Declarations of Interest
 There were no declarations of interest.

22/23/63 Planning Application 43/22/00007 The Old Forge, Blacksmiths Lane, Shapwick - Erection of single storey rear (North) extension

Open Session

The applicant was asked to comment. Steve Polden said that the application is for a small extension which will have minimal impact on nearest neighbours. Steve Polden said that he had spoken to his nearest neighbours and they were happy with the proposals.

Closed Session

Councillors were asked to comment.

Steve Champion said that the proposals are only for a small extension and that he could see why it was needed. Although not part of this proposal the recently built garage extension has been tastefully carried out and the same could be expected for this application.

Paul Rogers said he agreed with Steve Champion's comments and added that the proposed extension is in keeping with the existing property.

Frank Barnard and Moray McGowan agreed with these comments.

Lesley Gaskell said she thought the proposals are for a stylish extension.

Graham Croucher summarised Councillors' comments and proposed that the Parish Council support the application as it is in keeping with the existing property and there are no adverse effects on neighbours. Seconded by Paul Rogers. Unanimous.

22/23/64 Planning Application 43/22/00005 Land to the West of Mill Lane, Shapwick – Outline planning permission, with all matters reserved, for 14 dwellings

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- consider villagers' comments made at the meeting on 18th August 2022
- consider councillors working party findings
- reach a conclusion for reporting to Sedgemoor District Council

22/23/64 cont'd

Open Session

It was reiterated that this would be the only opportunity for villagers to comment and that once the Councillors were in closed session no further comments could be made.

Villagers were asked to comment.

Mary Tucker queried whether the previous proposal for 30 plus houses on this site had been a withdrawn application. It was confirmed that the previous proposal had not gone to the formal planning application stage.

Jenny Pritchard reiterated her comments made at the previous meeting that this application was causing her a great deal of distress – she is very concerned about the view from her sitting room window. The farm track, which is part of her property, will have a house right next the bordering hedge. Jenny Pritchard said that the aspect of her house would be changed.

Graham Croucher said views made by villagers will be taken into account when making the response decision.

Mike Beale asked for clarification on the boundary. He commented that there were lots of brilliant letters on the planning portal but some make reference to the settlement boundary and others the parish boundary and he questioned what Sedgemoor District Council's view would be of this.

Graham Croucher said that this point is central to the application. He explained the difference between the settlement boundary and the parish boundary. Under Tier 4 settlement policies building outside the settlement boundary is allowed provided certain criteria are met – one of the criteria is provision of affordable housing.

Steve Campion said he thought Sedgemoor District Council would be understanding of the intention meant by the letter writers. Graham Croucher said that Sedgemoor District Council understand the application and the housing department has objected to the application.

Mary Tucker said that with houses so close to the boundary there would be no privacy for residents of Mill Lane.

Stuart Dennes said people will rely on planning enforcement but to beware as they have no resources. Other local schemes have seen number of houses changed from the original outline planning. He said that 14 houses will not be the end of it as it becomes a developers 'game' – this is the thin end of the wedge.

Mrs Polden said that County Councillor Matt Martin, at the meeting on 18th August 2022, had said that Shapwick cannot keep being seen as a village that says no. Graham Croucher said he did to think that this was the case as there are examples where the village have supported infill development.

Anthea Beale said that Matt Martin said if anyone knows of a parcel of land that could be developed for affordable housing to let him know. Graham Croucher said the Parish Council had spoken to those who support/guide villages through working with housing associations. Stuart Dennes said that small scale infill is the way forward. Graham Croucher said that Statement of Support for the Vestey proposals shows there are other options. A newcomer to the village sought clarification – Estate ownership of the land behind the village hall which has policy D32 status was explained.

22/23/64 cont'd

Karin Leishman expressed concern about drainage. She also commented that aside from this as a village we are only custodians and should not change the village. She said that when looking at affordable housing younger people are conscious of looking after the planet so properly insulated sustainable affordable housing is what is required.

7.25pm Darren Coombes (applicant) arrived

Darren Coombes was invited to comment to the meeting – this was declined.

Closed Session

As a consultee the Parish Council has an important part play in the planning process but it is not the final decision maker.

Councillors were asked to present their feedback on the areas they had been assigned. These reflect areas of concern raised by villagers at the meeting on 18th August 2022. Graham Croucher reminded everyone that only material planning matters can be taken into consideration and gave two examples of matters which are not material – a right to a view and concerns about what might happen in the future.

Moray McGowan – Sustainability. Moray McGowan said much of his research related to concerns raised by villagers – loss of green space to housing, impact on traffic, drainage and infrastructure – these are central to the Sedgemoor Local Plan (2011-2032) and planning process.

Moray McGowan said that the application has a one page sustainability document which is very brief and unspecific – as this is outline planning this is legitimate but does leave areas of concern. Three areas were highlighted: 1) Transport – with public services decreasing the proposals would lead to an increase in car journeys which is against Local Plan policies of D13 and D14; 2) Services – the village has fewest services of all the local Tier 4 settlements and has no potential to increase – waste water will be an issue – Policy S4; 3) Climate – the applicant's sustainability document does address the Sedgemoor Climate Strategy – there will be mitigations later in the planning process but a carbon footprint will be left – the allotment space is unconvincing being only the size of a house. Moray McGowan said given these findings he thought the Parish Council should object to the application.

Steve Champion commented that as this is only an outline application that details can change but feels that there are a number of gaps which do not address the Sedgemoor District Council Climate Emergency Action Plan (2021).

Graham Croucher – Tier 4. Graham Croucher said the requirements of Tier 4 are very specific and that this outline planning should have been accompanied by a master plan.

Paul Rogers – Drainage and Foul Drainage. Looked at with Steve Champion. The discharge from the development would run into the foul water drain system which is already overloaded. No reference has been made to phosphates or how the drainage system would be changed – no definitive proposals on this provided. The proposed development will cause disruption to the current surface water 'run off' as well as the natural 'run off'. Steve Champion reiterated that the current pumping station cannot cope – data given to the village shows for 7% of the year the system has overflowed. The current system is at or above capacity.

Steve Champion – Environment. The parish boundary extends into a national nature areas – phosphates will be an area of concern. Natural England has confirmed that it is a RAMSAR catchment and phosphates must be mitigated /neutralised.

22/23/64 cont'd

Frank Barnard – Highways. This is a complex area. Somerset Highways has submitted a report which is on the planning portal. The site has been studied by the Parish Council. The proposed access points will be to the detriment of the current residents of Mill Lane and Church Road. Photographic evidence has also been collected looking at the area from a driver perspective. There will be an increase in traffic movements which will affect residents. Traffic in and out of the village is increasing – HGVs and farm traffic.

Lesley Gaskell – Effect on Residents. The Housing Need Survey established a need for affordable housing but this is an exception site which has a high threshold and this application does not meet the threshold. The application fails to address the effect on current residents. The access points will lead to disturbance, noise, loss of privacy. There will be a visual impact which will detract from the view when entering the village. The proposals are out of character with the village and its ladder system.

Councillors were thanked for their work. Graham Croucher said he had gone to great effort to envisage how such a proposal could work but feels that that application fails the village. He said it is a great shame that the advisors did not suggest a consultation especially given the popular view is against such a development.

Graham Croucher – Tier 4. When the application is tested against the policies it fails – this is supported by Lesley Gaskell's findings, Sedgemoor Housing department and CPRE – Campaign to Protect Rural England. In addition so many statutory authorities have either raised an objection or a concern- Housing Officer, SCC Highways, Environmental Health, Historic Environment Service etc.

Councillors were asked if there were any further comments. No further comments were made.

Graham Croucher proposed that the Parish Council object to planning application 43/22/00005 on the following grounds:

1. Noise, disturbance, loss of privacy and view
2. Non-compliance with Tier 4 criteria
3. Sustainability – Lack of services and increase in car journeys
4. Highways – Access points – leading to increased accident and injury and loss of privacy
5. Drainage – Over capacity of system
6. Foul drainage – No indication of how this will be mitigated
7. RAMSAR – No phosphate information
8. Heritage – Shapwick landscape - it is an important site
9. Archaeology – No survey has been carried out
10. Wildlife – Conflict in information – species rich hedgerows appear to be destroyed

Councillors had no amendments to the proposal. Proposal was seconded by Paul Rogers. Unanimous. Document for submission to Sedgemoor District Council to be collated.

22/23/65**Date of Next Meeting**

Date of next PC meeting will be Tuesday 20th September 2022 7.00pm Village Hall

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.00pm.

Signed.....

Date.....