

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Rob Sage 01749 850934 clerk@batcombe-parish-council-somerset.org.uk

You are Summoned to an Extraordinary Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council to be held on Wednesday 2nd January 2019 at 7.30pm in the Jubilee Hall, Batcombe

Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability), Crime & Disorder, Health & Safety and Human Rights.

Agenda

1. Apologies and Acceptance of Reasons for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

It is the Councillors' responsibility to declare any interests they may have in any item on the Agenda. If you are uncertain please ask the Clerk before the meeting. Please note that any Councillor who considers themselves a friend of the developer, the landowner or the immediate neighbours should declare it. [The definition of a friend is not precise but the question "Would you invite them to your daughter's wedding?" can be used as a rough guide.] Declaring yourself to be a friend of one of the interested parties does not prevent you from taking part in the decision. What does prevent you from taking part (and even being in the room) is any expected financial benefit (or loss) from the decision.

3. Planning Application:

Planning Application No: 2018/2819/FUL

Proposed erection of five social rented 3 bedroom dwellings
and one market housing 3 bedroom dwelling.

Land at Westcombe Stables Lane, Westcombe – Full Application

Councillors will be aware of the discussion at the June meeting of the Parish Council regarding a feasibility study for this development (Minute 4538) and the following informal discussions of five Councillors with the developer Mr Bridgeman and his agent recorded in Minute 4557 of the July Meeting of the Council. (Copy of the Minutes attached.)

Concerns have been raised about the application from some of the residents of Westcombe and some rather misleading information has been distributed to other residents of Westcombe and Batcombe. The following notes should make clear which concerns are relevant and which are not.

Housing Needs Survey - The Housing Needs Survey conducted in 2016 revealed eight households in the parish who considered they would have a need for affordable housing within the next five years. Nigel Humphries has asked the Parish Council to consider undertaking a new Survey and has indicated that members of the local community would be willing to cover the cost. However, with regard to this application the 2016 Survey is still valid.

Questionnaire - Nigel Humphries has let us know the result of the questionnaire distributed by the "concerned residents of Westcombe". In Westcombe 36 questionnaires were distributed and 21 were returned with 1 in favour of the application and 20 opposed. In Batcombe 61 questionnaires were distributed and 7 were returned with 2 in favour and 5 opposed. However, the misleading information that accompanied the questionnaire - which implied that there was no need for affordable housing; that there were no guarantees that these houses would remain as affordable housing; that the housing would be open to anyone who wanted to live in Batcombe; that this

development would lead to further development; and that there were other more suitable sites available - means that these results have to be taken with a certain amount of caution. It should also be noted that the application should be considered on planning criteria rather than simply the numbers of people for or against it.

Community Land Trust / Housing Association – As noted in the parish magazine without any offers of land the Parish Council was not able to consider forming a Community Land Trust or inviting a Housing Association to provide the needed affordable housing. The Parish Council has to consider this application on its merits rather than what might have been if other offers of land had been forthcoming.

Section 106 Agreement – It should be noted that development will only be allowed on the basis of affordable housing for people with a Batcombe connection. The Section 106 agreement is legally binding and applies to a private developer in exactly the same way it applies to a housing association. This requires the housing to be provided at an affordable rent to people with a Batcombe connection. There is no time limit on this requirement.

Noise – Concerns have been raised by Richard Calver that complaints about noise from the Westcombe Dairy site from residents in the new housing could lead to the Dairy having to shut down. The applicant has provided a Noise Impact Assessment undertaken by Acoustic Consultants Ltd of Bristol. The Assessment considers the noise impact to be low but recommends noise mitigation measures be applied in the construction of the wall, roof, windows and doors on the south elevations of the three houses facing the industrial units. The Parish Council may wish to recommend that the adoption of these recommended noise mitigation measures are a condition of the planning permission should it be granted.

Ecological Appraisal and Arboricultural Impact Assessment – The ecological appraisal of the land included with the application states that it has low intrinsic ecological value and recommends the retention of hedgerows and new hedgerows to replace those removed during construction and the installation of a low level lighting scheme. The land has one large oak tree, which now has a Tree Preservation Order on it. The application includes a tree protection plan. The County Council's ecology comment on the application recommends lighting designed for bats and the installation of a bat box.

Traffic and Parking - Concerns have been raised over the narrowness of the lane providing access to the housing. The County Council's Highways Department are being consulted on the application and will provide a professional opinion on the access. There could be an issue if there is inconsiderate parking around the Westcombe War Memorial. Concerns have also been raised that the provision of 18 parking spaces is excessive and will lead to increased traffic. However, this is apparently the standard for this number of three bedroom dwellings and does allow for a lack of on-road parking.

Drainage – Concerns have been raised over drainage from the site and that the development could result in rainwater flowing from the site into the grotto at Westcombe Stables, which is a listed building. There have been issues in the past during excessive rainfall of water running down the lane from Westcombe and into the grotto. It should be noted that the plans for the development include soakaways for water running off the car parking areas and that a land drainage engineer has been included among those being consulted by the District Council – who should be able to provide a professional assessment of the risk.

Heritage Assets – Concerns have been raised over the impact of the development on the surrounding heritage assets at Westcombe Stables and around the War Memorial. As noted in the application there is no direct line of sight between the assets around the War Memorial and the proposed development. The development will have an impact on the heritage assets at Westcombe Stables although this will be minimised by the hedges retained around the development and the landscaping of Westcombe Stables. The application also argues that the development may benefit the assets at

Westcombe Stables by shielding them from the industrial unit at Westcombe Dairy. Again the Conservation Officer will be a consultee and will make a professional judgement on this.

3 Bedroom Dwellings – Whereas the feasibility study suggested two 2 bedroom dwellings, the application has all 3 bedroom dwellings. Concerns have been raised that the proposed 3 bedroom dwellings do not reflect the need identified in the Housing Needs Survey. Of the seven households who gave permission for their preferences to be published five preferred a two bedroom house, one a three bedroom house and one a three bedroom bungalow. At Ash Tree Cottages the Parish Council were able to persuade the District Council's Housing Department to allow single people from Batcombe to rent the two bedroom houses instead of families from a neighbouring parish. This may be more difficult if there are only three bedroom houses (Three of those indicating a need for affordable housing in the Survey were single people. A copy of the Housing Needs Survey will be available at the meeting.

Five social rented dwellings – Concerns have been raised at the number of houses, with the suggestion that four houses would be a better. I understand that six houses is the minimum for one of them to be an open market house.

[Rob Sage – Clerk].

4. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

Wednesday 9th January 2019 at 7.30pm in the Old School Rooms, Batcombe

J Witcombe

Justin Witcombe – Vice Chairman

26th December 2018