

STON EASTON PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council
Fiona Lyons

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Minutes of additional PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held at **Ston Easton Village Hall**
Tuesday 28 January 2014 commencing at **7.30pm** to consider the following business:

Present: Tom Osborne (Chair),
Martin Carver, Steve Huckle, Tom Killen, Dave Watts, Rob Winkworth
Fiona Lyons (Clerk)

1. Apologies and declarations of interest

Apologies had been received from Mark Long
There were no declarations of interest

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January were agreed with no amendments.

3. Public participation

TK gave a brief introduction to the application and the planning procedure. The following points were noted:

The application site is 0.4 acre. There have been two previous applications for static caravans and lodges on the site, both have been refused.

The Parish Council is a consultee and can only make a recommendation to Mendip District Council, other consultees are near neighbours, Highways etc.

Laura MacKay is the Planning Officer for the application, she will take national planning policy and all representations from consultees into account and make a recommendation. If that recommendation accords with that of the Parish Council the application can be determined under delegated powers. If the Planning Officer's recommendation is contrary to the Parish Council's, the application will be referred to TK as Ward Member who would then make a decision on whether to agree with the officer or to request the application be sent to the Planning Board for determination. The Ward Member cannot overrule the Planning Officer.

Under the national policy MDC has been allocated a large number of pitches - 93 permanent and 80 transit.

Only material considerations such as the impact on the local community, landscape, highways etc. will be taken into account when the application is determined. Objections such as loss of view, devaluation of property etc. cannot be taken into account.

The Chairman opened the public participation and asked all speakers to identify themselves for the minutes.

John Blatchford – owner of Emborough Quarry asked whether the police had been consulted on the application and also queried whether a wildlife preservation order could be placed on the site as newts are present. Mr Blatchford also felt that the application would affect his human rights.

Mr Roper from Mendip Villas made the following points:

The boundary of the land was moved by approximately 10' by the previous owners. That additional land is owned by SCC but was sold as part of the site. At the appeal meeting for the previous application the current owner stated that he was not aware of this issue.

Would amenities such as a footpath, street lighting and a crossing have to be provided and, if so, who will pay for them?

There is no provision for waste disposal in the application

There are newts and adders on the land

The land is marshy, how/where will it be drained?

Would storage of bottled gas on site contravene the Explosives Act?

The application is for two pitches but there could potentially be up to 15 caravans

SCC spent £250k building a site at Lydford which was ripped apart within a few weeks

What would stop the applicant putting up a wall or bund around the site ?

Coal dust was tipped on the site by a previous owner but no ecological or environmental survey has been carried out.

Pete King from Ston Easton urged residents to refer to the National Planning Policy Framework when making representations and to stick to what the document refers to as material considerations.

Sustainability issues are paramount in the document and this site does not fit any of the criteria in Section 58 which states that:

Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;*
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;*
- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*
- safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and*
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.*

As a small community it is important that each person write individually to object to the application. One of the major points is the need for these pitches in the area but there is already a gypsy site which has been on the market for some time in Binegar (only 1.9 miles from the proposed site).

Residents of Stanton Drew successfully ran a campaign to oppose a gypsy site in that village and there is valuable information to be gained from their experiences.

Mr King said that he had written to all neighbouring Parish Councils, as well as English Heritage, Natural England, Mendip Hills AONB, Somerset Wildlife Trust etc. to make them aware of the application

Mr King went on to say that he felt that application was misleading in that it states that there will be zero car movements and does not address wildlife or drainage issues. He urged the Parish Council to ask for a full ecological and environmental survey on the site.

Michael Harris, Old Gore Lane confirmed that he had written to the Planning Officer and circulated a summary of the key points.

Paul Trippick from Emborough asked how much weight was given to representations from neighbouring parish councils and wondered whether it was better for each person to write individually.

Kay Trippick felt that the applicant should be asked to justify why he is putting in an application for a gypsy site in Somerset when he lives in Wolverhampton.

Caroline Lane from Emborough asked whether the area was classified as Green Belt. TK confirmed that this was not the case.

Steve Parsons from Ston Easton queried whether uncertainty about the ownership of part of the land would stall the application. He also asked what conditions would be put in place for the dispersal of storm water drainage and whether foul water percolation tests had been carried out. He pointed out that there is already an issue with flood water from farmland in Ston Easton. Mr Parsons also felt strongly that amenities such as a bus service and street lighting should be provided in the village before money is spent on provision of facilities to serve this site.

Roger Killen from Old Gore Lane said that the ground on the site is very boggy. He queried whether the Environment Agency would allow the applicant to carry out his own percolation tests. The particulars for site that is currently on the market in Binegar state that the purchasers would have to create a cesspool which is a great worry if this will also be the case on this application as the water course close to this site runs down through Chewton Mendip and on to Chew Valley Lake. Roger felt strongly that the need to find the number of pitches inflicted on the District by the Government meant that local opinion will not be taken into account and the quality of life for local residents will be badly affected.

Linda Killen queried whether the 173 pitches allocated to the District reflected actual need or was just an arbitrary number decided on by the Government. She was also concerned that businesses will be affected if consent is granted and that it will also prevent people from coming to live in the area.

Paul Lane, Emborough felt that it was disappointing that the applicant had chosen not to formally engage with the Parish Council or the local community. He asked whether MDC had identified sufficient sites to meet their allocation of 173 pitches and queried the Council's position relating to a single application such as this against an as yet unapproved Local Development Framework when larger sites could be considered to be more appropriate.

Brian Clothier pointed out that considerably fewer people would be at the meeting if the application had been for two standard dwellings. He was concerned that the quality of life for local residents could be affected if consent was given for this application. People are already worried as crime in rural areas is increasing. He also queried how rubbish generated on the site would be dealt with.

Fiona Swainston from The Dower House, Ston Easton was concerned that MDC would be forced to pass sites that are even more unsuitable than this one in the future in order to meet their allocation and asked whether any sites had been identified within the District.

Judy Foxwell from Old Gore Lane queried what would happen if consent was granted for two pitches but the site was then occupied by a greater number of caravans.

Mr Fearey from Ston Easton agreed that the application was misleading as it did not state that there would be a minimum of 2 pitches but this has been stated elsewhere by the Agent. This would appear to indicate that the intention is to have more than two.

John Blatchford asked that the minutes reflect that the clerk had notified the applicant's agent of the meeting but did not receive a response.

TK made the following comments in response to some of the queries raised:

- It is not usual for the police to be consulted on applications as that would be making an assumption about the people who would live on the site if consent was granted.
- MDC has no gypsy sites allocated at the moment and any site subject to an application would have to be judged on its own merits.
- MDC has just submitted its local plan - which includes a policy for the provision of gypsy sites - to Government for approval and consultation will take place later in the year.
- Fewer larger sites across the District may seem to be more appropriate than a greater number of smaller ones but these larger sites also have a negative impact on local communities.
- The number of pitches allocated to the Mendip District was the result of an independent assessment.
- All representations from neighbouring parish councils will be taken into account.
- Processing of the application would not be delayed because ownership of part of the land may need to be clarified. Anyone can put an application in on another person's land and, if land has been taken as a result of the boundary being moved, it would be up to SCC to take steps to get the land back from the applicant.
- The number of pitches and other details on the application would be covered by conditions on any planning consent.

It was noted that the deadline for submitting objections was 31 January.

4. **2013/2499/FUL – Old Gore Wood, Old Gore Lane, Emborough**

Use of land for the stationing of caravans for residential purposes for 2 no. gypsy pitches together with the formation of additional hard standing and utility/ dayrooms ancillary to that use.

TK confirmed that he had considered the information before him at this meeting but had not predetermined the application.

The Parish Council voted unanimously to recommend refusal of the application for the following reasons:

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIONS

1. Negative impact on other dwellings and character of the area and would dominate the local community
2. Site is not in a sustainable location and is not well related to schools, local services and other facilities
3. Proposed site does not include a refuse collection point or defined play area and it has not been shown that there is access to a drinking water supply
4. There would be negative impact on the health and well-being of gypsies on site due to proximity of A37
5. Does not address any identified local need
6. This is a speculative application and is not from a traveller or gypsy
7. Site is in designated open countryside
8. Landscaping will not enhance the site and will promote feeling of enclosure for occupants

9. Not shown that it will not have a detrimental impact on biodiversity and wider natural environment
10. Size of site would accommodate far greater numbers than can be controlled
11. Type of site is not preferred by gypsies
12. Possibility of unauthorised expansion leading to increased costs for local authorities
13. History of planning application refusals
14. No safe walking route from development
15. Limited employment in area
16. Site not on recognised traveller routes
17. The site is possibly contaminated due to spreading of waste in the past.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

SN10 – Long Term Residential Sites for Gypsies and Travelling People

Would be contrary as:

1. There would be impact on other dwellings and the character of the area
2. The site is not well related to schools and other community facilities
3. The site does not include a refuse collection point or defined safe play area for children and has not been shown that a drinking water supply will be provided.

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites

Would be contrary as:

1. Not a sustainable location with remote access to schools and health services (paragraph 11)
2. It has not been shown that the development would reduce the need for long term travelling (paragraph 11)
3. There would be a negative impact on the local environmental quality on health and well-being of any travellers that locate to the site due to the proximity of the A37 (paragraph 11)
4. The site would dominate the nearest settled community comprising the houses in Old Gore Lane (Policy C)
5. It does not address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection as this is a speculative application and it has not been shown that there is an actual need for the site. (Policy D and Policy H – para. 22(a))
6. The application has not been submitted by a gypsy (Policy H – para. 22(e))
7. The site is in open countryside (Policy H – para. 23)
8. The site is not previously developed land (paragraph 24 (a))
9. Landscaping will not enhance the environment and openness (paragraph 24 (b))
10. The site does not promote a healthy lifestyle (paragraph 24 (c))
11. The development will lead to an enclosed site (paragraph 24 (d))

Emerging Development Policy 9 : Gypsies, Travellers and Show People

Would be contrary as:

1. Does not meet an identified need with no illegal encampments in parish or surrounding area
2. Does not have suitable access to a range of transport modes and essential services and local facilities
3. Not environmentally compatible with surrounding land uses
4. Has a significant adverse impact on landscape, character and appearance of surrounding area
5. Has not been shown that it will not have a detrimental impact on biodiversity

Policy Q1 – Building in Quality

Would be contrary due to:

1. Impact on the landscape
2. Adverse effects on the function of the open spaces around the development
3. Impact on the amenity of neighbouring buildings and land uses
4. Lack of amenity provided to occupiers of the development

Policy S1 – Settlement Policy

Development does not benefit economic activity, maintain or enhance the environment and does foster growth in the need to travel.

Policy Q6 – Air Quality

Development will be adversely affected in terms of the environment provided to the users of the land or buildings by an existing permitted source of air pollution, i.e. traffic on the A37.

Policy Q13 – Noise Sensitive Development

Users of the development will be adversely affected by noise from existing noise generating uses, i.e. traffic on the A37.

Policy Q14 – Light Pollution/Outdoor lighting

No information has been provided on outdoor lighting.

Policy EN3 – Protected Species

It has not been shown that this is complied with.

Policy EN4 – Nature Conservation outside designated sites

It has not been shown that this is complied with.

National Planning Policy Framework – Paragraph 14

For the reasons stated above, the application is not consistent with the development plans and any adverse impacts will considerably outweigh any benefits of granting permission.

5. **Matters for report and items for the next meeting.**
6. **Date of next meeting – Tuesday 11 March at Ston Easton Village Hall.**