

WILCOT and HUIISH (with OARE) PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Wilcot and Huish (with Oare) Parish Council at Oare Village Hall on Wednesday 25 January 2017

Present:

Councillors:, Mr C. Bartlett, Mrs N. Fleet, Mr R. Fleet, Mr L Giddings, Mrs P Smith and Ms D. Wilson (Acting Chair), Cllr P Oatway.

Also present:

14 members of the public attended.

17/20 **Apologies for absence**

Cllr B. Lawson, Cllr D. Nix

17/21 **Declarations of interest on any agenda item to be discussed**

None given

17/22 **To agree the minutes of the meeting of 11 January 2017**

Resolved: to approve and sign as a true record the minutes of the meetings of the Parish Council on 11 January 2017. Proposed Cllr CB; Seconded Cllr RF; All in favour.

17/23 **Public question time**

Since there was only one item of planning on the agenda the public attending were given ample opportunity to put forward questions relating to the application. A representative for the Architects and the landowners were also present and responded to the questions directed to them.

17/24 **Planning Applications**

To review and provide feedback on new planning applications from Wiltshire Council (Town and Country Planning Act 1980, schedule 1, para 8)

Applications: [16/12121/OUT](#) Hare Street Wilcot Wiltshire SN9 5NN, Proposed development, Outline application for Access for residential development of 4 number detached custom/ self-build dwellings.

Members of the Public and Cllrs put their questions to those attending representing the application. (See item 17/23) The Chair encouraged individuals to record their specific comments on the Wiltshire Planning Portal.

The Chair asked for a show of hands of those attending who supported this application. Four responded in favour, the remainder opposed to this application. There were no abstentions recorded.

Members of the public then left the meeting while councillors considered their response.

The Parish Council acknowledges that there is positive support for this application by two residents seeking local housing. This is however outweighed by the number of residents not in support of the application on a green field site. The principle concerns were:

- This is a proposal for 4 dwellings on an agricultural field that is not infill but represents an elongation of the village.
- This is outline planning for access only and as such there are no specific details on what would actually be built.

WILCOT and HUIISH (with OARE) PARISH COUNCIL

- No convincing evidence was presented of the need for a 4 property self-build development in Wilcot at this time. It is **noted** that one family is seeking property of this sort in the village. It was also **noted** that in earlier consultations a number of these houses were to have been starter homes.
- The impact that the self-build, which inherently has a longer timeline than a development with one developer, will have on the neighbouring listed properties and businesses.
- The impact on the conservation area, environment and ecology.
- The application does not demonstrate whether other possible infill sites have been identified. Natural England require this before considering a green field site
- The apparent lack of an infrastructure plan.
- The impact of the access via a narrow lane (Hare St) opposite an existing busy camping ground, near to a complex road junction which is congested with parked cars.
- The level of support that would justify going against the default core principles on development in a small village has not been demonstrated.
- A more detailed response is appended to these minutes. See Appendix 1

17/00005/FUL Conversion of car port at School House Wilcot

At a meeting on 25 January 2017 Councillors considered this application and raised no objection to it.

17/25 **Dates and times of meetings**

- 11th March - Village Clean Up
- 22 March 2017
- 5 April Parish Meeting
- 23 April St Georges Day Village Walk
- May 4 election
- May 10th Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

Planning Committee Meetings will be held as required.

The meeting closed at 20.20.

Signed _____ Dated _____

WILCOT and HUIISH (with OARE) PARISH COUNCIL

Appendix 1

Application 16/12121/OUT Hare St, Wilcot. Parish Council Response The Wilcot and Huish (with Oare) Parish Council has reviewed the plans and proposals provided and considered the views raised by residents, verbally or in writing, prior to and at a public planning meeting held on 25 January 2017. We have the following concerns about this development.

1. The building plots proposed are not within the existing built area of the village. The 30mph signs on Hare Street are close to the pub, and the two houses proposed with a frontage facing at the pub are beyond speed limit sign, so cannot be considered to be in the village proper. As this is not an infill site, it would have the effect of elongating the village by using a green-field site on the edge. The fact that it is contiguous with the rest of the field, and there is no barrier or covenant that would be enforceable, means there would be little to stop future development happening at the back of the site once it is established. Overall, it does not meet the criteria for development in small villages as stated in the Core Strategy.

2. We object to the piecemeal approach of the proposal with the request to grant access before a firm plan is put in place. There is no formal design statement provided and, with the site being selfbuild, each developer would be likely to want to undertake their own design, agreed directly with county planning without further consultation with residents or Parish Council. The proposal provides no concrete information on appearance, build materials or sizing and as such, does not allow those affected a proper consultation. The village is being asked to consider a development in an ecologically significant area in an AONB, next to listed buildings in a conservation area, with no information on the final design or construction of the properties. We feel this is unacceptable.

3. Self builds can be notoriously slow and given at least four separate plots, which may be developed at different times, this proposal could lead to significant disruption at this end of the village for many years to come. There is also the question of how services are to be connected and provided to four independent and financially separate plots. While this may be considered an issue for building regulations it is significant in that it is not covered in the proposal. The self-build example refers to a settlement somewhat larger than Pewsey that is not in an AONB. While that example may have some relevance to Pewsey, we object to this being used to try and override a core principle that applies to small villages.

4. The proposal makes much of the buildings being spaced so as to still provide the view of the trees on the ridge and the feel of an open space in the centre. However, in the provided plan there is a garage in the middle of the view which, given the gradient of the site, will be very prominent and will damage the rural feel of this end of the village.

5. The Heritage statement suggests that The Golden Swan pub is not very visible when approaching along Wilcot Road from Pewsey. However, on reaching the village, or when approaching from the other end of the village, the pub sits in isolation from the other houses. Given the proposals include two quite large dwellings to be placed immediately across from the pub this prominence will be lost. We do not believe that this is appropriate to the curtilage or environment of a Grade II listed building, or the others that are opposite it. The closest building to the Golden Swan in the proposal is half the distance of any existing dwelling and significantly affects the setting of that building. All but one of the 24 buildings around the green is either listed or significant, this concentration is unusual and diluting this ratio with new build does not contribute to preservation. We note that the applicant appears keen to fit with the existing styles and while this may be sympathetic it does not necessarily represent enhancement.

6. The ecological study attempts to suggest that this project would enhance the natural environment and that the houses should be built. Firstly, this report should simply provide the data and guidance on what may or may not be lost and what amelioration should be undertaken to protect the various species that will be disturbed. Secondly, we do not understand how covering large areas of the proposed site with houses, drive ways, garages and urban gardens will enhance species diversity. As Parish Council, we find the loss of

WILCOT and HUIISH (with OARE) PARISH COUNCIL

habitat of concern, the argument that this is only a small loss of ecological area and there is a lot more area around the village is unconvincing.

7. The proposal for a small meadow in the front of the development looks attractive - but the field is already present. It is not necessarily a planning issue but we have concerns over who will maintain this area and how its character will be maintained. The Parish Council and precept payers have not asked for such a facility nor for the costs that will arise from its establishment. The plan, we understand, is for those purchasing the plots to jointly maintain this area, this seems ill considered for a "public space" in the long term.

8. The proposal makes much of the lack of traffic on Hare Street, a very narrow partially sunken green lane, but does not take account of existing parking issues in the area. The proposal does note increased traffic in the summer but this road is well used all year round, including by agricultural vehicles. Vehicles turning in and out of the proposed site will conflict with existing traffic and there is little that can be done to stop residents and visitors to the proposed properties parking on the road as well. This junction of multiple lanes also has issues with very unclear rights of way and reduced visibility because of parked vehicles.

9. The proposal relies on the suggestion that some 30 people looking for self builds out of the 60 or so registered in Wiltshire want to live in Wilcot or nearby. When the data is analysed it's clear that the 30 are comprised mainly of those who wish to live in the east, or possibly anywhere, in Wiltshire. There is no direct pressure for Wilcot to provide 4 of the 60 odd self-build sites. Even though the Core Strategy is silent on the subject it is not reasonable to extrapolate that Wilcot should take 6% of the total requirement for self-build properties in the county, particularly since there are other suitable brownfield or infill sites within the county that would be better suited to self-build. The Parish Council does recognize that there is at least one family who have requested a suitable site in Wilcot or close by - and also recognizes that a significant majority of representations are against the development, some of them strongly so. We also note that there are some residents who are neither for or against, but do not feel strongly enough to make a submission. We have not seen a level of support which would justify departing from the core principle of only allowing genuine infill development in a village of this size.

10. The environment statement provided states that there are conditions that must be met to gain a Natural England Licence for development in an ecologically sensitive site such as this. One of the conditions is that there must be shown to be no alternative site available. The report provided says that this is the case in Wilcot, but we don't believe that this statement is necessarily true and no evidence has been presented to substantiate it.

11. The housing stock in Wilcot has a high proportion of owner-occupied (with several changing hands each year), a significant range of rented accommodation, some housing association and a few second homes. The largest site suitable for development in Wilcot has already been used for larger homes. The original plan presented to residents and the Parish Council focused on starter homes and that has now been dropped in favour of quite large family houses. The Parish Council would have preferred to see that aspect of the plan retained. The current plan doesn't really offer the village anything that it needs, which would be affordable, smaller houses. We do note that the applicant has responded to some concerns raised during the initial consultation. For instance, it was sensible to drop the idea of front access to houses from the main Pewsey road on safety grounds, and that self-build was considered as an alternative to starter homes.

12. As the Parish Council we are particularly concerned by the precedent that this development would set. Building on a new area at the edge of the village as sensitive as this one suggests that any other less sensitive sites around the village would now be open for development.

13. Wilcot is largely a strip village with houses fronting directly onto the road and we object to this approach of using a back road, or drive, to open up new areas for development.

WILCOT and HUIISH (with OARE) PARISH COUNCIL

Parking arrangements in Wilcot are varied but this creation of a private drive to form a cul-de-sac would be unique.

14. We believe the proposal must satisfy the letter and spirit of the following criteria in the core strategy. In the settlement hierarchy, Wilcot is defined as a 'Small Village'. Core Policies 1 and 2 set out that, in such settlements, only infill within the existing built area to meet the needs of those settlements should be permitted. CP1 says that Small Villages have a low level of services and facilities, and few employment opportunities. Development at Large and Small Villages will be limited to that needed to help meet the housing needs of settlements and to improve employment opportunities, services and facilities. CP2 says that development will not be permitted outside the limits of the built area, as defined on the policies map. The limits of development may only be altered by the identification of sites for development through subsequent Site Allocations Development Plan Documents and Neighbourhood Plans. For Small Villages, development will be limited to infill within the existing built area normally large enough for a single, or possibly two, dwellings. If a development fulfils the above criteria it will only be approved if it complies with the following:

- i) Respects the existing character and form of the settlement;
- ii) Does not elongate the village or impose development in sensitive landscape areas;
- iii) Does not consolidate an existing sporadic loose-knit area(s) of development related to the settlement.

For the purposes of Core Policy 2, infill is defined as the filling of a small gap within the village that is only large enough for not more than a few dwellings, generally only one dwelling. Exceptions to this approach will only be considered through the Neighbourhood Plan process or DPDs. If a site did not meet these criteria and was not locally supported, via the Neighbourhood Plan process, this would carry weight according to CP2 and would be a legitimate ground for resisting an application.

15. There is limited evidence to support a housing need in Wilcot as mentioned in CP1, and we give greater weight to known local requirements than vague national or county ones. This proposal would open up for development part of a large and distinct parcel of land at the edge of the village which has no history of buildings. The number of houses is also more than usual for infill development in a small village, so this is not compatible with CP2. Further it fails

- i) above in that there are concerns about the impact on the conservation area. It also fails
- ii) in that it elongates the village and there are landscape concerns. The proposal quotes government policy in that it "...wants to ensure that any village in England has the freedom to expand in an incremental way, subject to local agreement."

The applicant has held a public open evening to consult with the village, but has so far failed to demonstrate significant local support for this extension to the village.

At a meeting on 25 January 2017, Wilcot and Huish (with Oare) Parish Council resolved unanimously to object to this application.