

**Bawdsey Parish Council**  
**Minutes of Planning Meeting**  
 Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2015 at 6:00pm  
 Bawdsey Village Hall

<b>In Attendance – Graham Turner, Jill Mercer, Lydia Calvesbert, Elizabeth Mark, Brian Johnson, Christine Block, (District councillor) Jenny Webb (Clerk)</b>	
<b>Absent – Rawdon Saunders, Richard Baker, Alex Mann</b>	
<b>Members of the public present: 43</b>	
<i>Meeting called to order by Chair Graham Turner at 6:00pm</i>	
	<b>Action:</b>
<p><b>1. Chairman’s Welcome</b></p> <p><b>2. Open Forum:</b> Given the controversial nature of this planning application, Chairman GT allowed any member of the public who gave their name to the Clerk to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes. A speaker on behalf of Bawdsey Primary School supported new housing in principle but was concerned with traffic management, the development’s proximity to the school with attendant safeguarding and light pollution issues, the density of the dwellings and drainage issues. Other speakers reiterated these fears and questioned the suitability of the site itself so close to the Coastal Foot Path, within an AONB and outside the village envelope. It was seen as the “green lung” of the village. The proposed new footpath within the site and emerging onto the Street was felt to be a danger and could entail the removal of or damage to the holm oaks on the site. The need for a new housing development of this size was questioned when there was a brownfield site in the village. A lack of trust between developers and villagers was expressed. The additional traffic the development would bring was felt to be detrimental to the village. Other speakers felt it was not part of the Local Plan, would bring no benefit to the village and was being done for financial gain only. Devolvement of the car park and water treatment plant to adjacent sites was felt to be inappropriate and the new position of the car park would entail children crossing the road to the school at a dangerous point where cars would be turning from School Lane. Other points made by speakers from the floor included a fear that change of use from agricultural to residential land could form a precedent for future development and the fact that there are no local jobs or traffic infrastructure to sustain the development. A housing needs survey has not been carried out.</p> <p>The planning agent and architect for the landowner spoke last saying that the design was a proposal only, that 30% of the 20 units would be “affordable” and that several consultations had already been carried out to gauge village concerns. He addressed some of the points made by the previous speakers. The housing units would be environmentally friendly and low energy with triple glazing and solar panels. Regarding drainage concerns, there would be a granular soakaway and a foul water scheme draining into a southern field. SCC Highways had advised the footpath through the woodland, 15 metres of hedging would be removed but 60 metres of new hedging would be planted. Six trees would need to be removed but ecological regulations would be followed and owl boxes installed and a badger sett would not be impacted. Landscape screening would be planted and a green space in the middle of the development would be created. Thirty eight new parking spaces would be created and 15 for school parking. The District Councillor asked whether the developers could guarantee that the hedge screening would be in perpetuity and whether the district council had responded to the new proposal to site a footpath going through an area of trees covered by a TPO. There was some uncertainty about these issues.</p>	
<p><b>3. Apologies: Rawdon Saunders, Alex Mann (interested party)</b></p> <p><b>4. Declarations of Interest: GT and Tony Osmanski declared they were school governors.</b></p>	

**5. Planning Matters:** DC/15/0901/OUT Use of land for erection of 20 new residential units, with associated vehicular access. Construction of new parking and drop off area for Bawdsey Primary School. *Given the complex nature of this application, the Chair decided to consider it under various headings. He asked parishioners not to interrupt the council's discussions.*

**Relationship of Local Plan and Physical Limits Boundary**

Councillors expressed the view that the proposed development lies outside the PLB and Bawdsey Parish Council has not asked for this to be extended. They therefore stand by the existing PLB.

**Appearance of the houses and relationship to the village as a whole**

It was noted that Bawdsey is a linear village with a large proportion of 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> houses. Councillors thought that the design of the proposed development is more suited to a suburban development which is inappropriate within the village setting; it would create a significant imbalance. The scale of the houses is wholly out of place in an AONB and one so close to the coastline. The adjacent houses are of 19<sup>th</sup> century origin and are single-storey.

**Environment** The National Policy Framework and Core Planning Principles which relate to the intrinsic character and beauty of an area and the impact of new developments on a sensitive environment are relevant in this situation. These principles aim to protect and enhance valued landscape. The site is in an AONB and therefore a development of 20 houses would be detrimental to the environment. It was pointed out that the hedgerows along School Lane are very ancient, part of the area's historic legacy; a hedgerow survey has indicated a variety of species living there and councillors would like it to be maintained. Part of this hedgerow will have to be removed to allow access into the development.

**Sustainability**

Councillors felt strongly that the proposed development was not sustainable since there is no transport infrastructure in Bawdsey. The Link bus is heavily oversubscribed with some people experiencing a wait of 6 days to book a lift. This entails an almost total reliance on the use of private cars. The additional traffic which the proposed new development will undoubtedly bring will be detrimental to a road system which is already extremely heavy with farm traffic and with visitors in the summer months. Sustainability is further compromised by the fact that there is no shop in the village and it appears that the one in Alderton will shortly be closing down. There are very few employment opportunities in the village, hence people will have to drive to their places of employment. *Significantly, there is no evidence of housing need in Bawdsey. No housing survey has been conducted to justify this development*

**Density and Plot size**

This aspect of the development caused councillors the highest level of concern. It was felt that to cram 20 houses into an area of 0.7 hectares of useable land would mean that the density would be 27 units per hectare in stark contrast with similar new developments nearby. It was noted that Cavell Close in Bawdsey has 17 houses per hectare and Mill Hoo in Alderton has 20. Councillors concluded that the proposed development is out of balance with current housing practice. The size of the plots is very small with some houses having virtually no garden, reflecting their suburban design. This is in contrast with most houses in the village.

**Loss of Amenity**

Councillors expressed the view that the loss of amenity would have an impact not only on the residents, especially those who live adjacent to the plots, but the dense proximity of the proposed housing is a serious issue for the primary school. The loss of light and privacy to pupils and teachers alike will have an impact on the staffroom and meeting room situated right next to the perimeter of the site. The location of houses close to the large holm oaks along the western boundary of the site would result in those houses being in substantial shade for a large part of the day. It was deemed that this would interfere with the operation of the proposed solar/PV panels.

**School Car park and Traffic Issues**

Councillors were concerned that the original proposed school car park which was situated inside the development itself, allowing pupils to safely access the school on the same side of the road had been altered. It was felt that its new positioning in an area opposite the school in an open field is fraught with danger. There would be a huge danger to children crossing the lane at this point where cars would be turning sharply from

School Lane into East Lane. The area itself is in an open field and even with screening hedging will look completely out of place. It would be a blot on the landscape, entail the loss of agricultural land and could be used by walkers in the area. Councillors saw the new position of the car park as development leaking out of the original site, adding to the suburbanisation of the village.

As far as traffic issues are concerned, councillors thought that the occupants of 20 new houses, potentially with two cars per household, would generate much more traffic in the village. The narrowness of The Street and the adjoining lanes means that there have already been gate posts and walls knocked down by vehicles overtaking parked cars. Furthermore with little employment in the area, people drive towards Woodbridge where the traffic at Wilford Bridge in the mornings is already very heavy with cars sometimes backed up for a quarter of a mile at the mini roundabout.

#### **Surface and Foul Water Issues**

Councillors felt that the positioning of the water treatment system off the development itself and situated opposite the site was another example of development “leakage” and could lead to further unwanted development. The water table is very high in this area, exacerbated by heavy rain.

#### **Access**

Councillors were concerned about the decision to allow a footpath through the green space in the development to The Street. It is shown to emerge on to the Street where there is no pavement, close to a blind bend, constituting a serious safety hazard. Since it is so near High House Farm, there are heavy tractors going to and from the farm during school hours collecting grain. It was pointed out that most school traffic turns left into School Lane and exits via East Lane so the volume of traffic at certain times of the day is very high.

Parking is very restricted within the development and does not allow for visitors. There is no bespoke visitors’ parking area which would mean any visitor would have to park on School Lane, adding to traffic congestion.

#### **Housing Need**

Councillors felt that there is no evidence of housing need in Bawdsey. No housing survey has been conducted to justify this development. Many councillors expressed their concern that with 67 second homes in Bawdsey, the highest proportion in Suffolk, that some of the proposed units would be bought as investment properties. Few would be “affordable” in the real sense to local people. There is a brownfield site to the north of the village which would be much more suitable for housing and would avoid all the problems inherent in this application.

Council voted unanimously to object to this outline planning permission.

*At this point, the general public and the developer’s representatives left the meeting.*

The Clerk was instructed to enquire of the Planning Officer in her letter of response whether further submissions to the planning inspector could be made to the District Council should it go to Appeal. A fear was expressed that the national need for more housing could override local needs and feelings.

**The Clerk**

#### **6. Financial Matters:**

- i. Council voted to accept the Howlands quotation for the analysis of holes at the Amenity Site, estimated at £1,750 + VAT
- ii. Council voted to accept payment to Chick and Partners for design work up to £1,800 +VAT. There are adequate funds in the BCAA account to pay both these bills.
- iii. Council discussed whether they should employ a consultant to present the PC’s case when the above outline planning application goes to Committee or Appeal. It could be very expensive and might not be cost-effective particularly since the developer could put in a new application with fewer houses at any time. It was felt this application will go to Committee but the timing is crucial given the forthcoming council elections. Since Bromeswell PC has faced similar situations regarding I housing developments, the clerk

<p>was asked to find out the potential costs of employing a solicitor specialising in housing law from the parish clerk in Bromeswell. It was felt that costs could be well over the £2,000 mooted as an acceptable amount of money to spend.</p> <p><b>iv.</b> Council voted to approve spending on a new large aluminium notice board from Greenbarnes to match the existing board, given the fact that the one near the village hall door is too small for all the notices which need to be displayed. Clerk will order one immediately.</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p> <p><b>Clerk</b></p>
<p><b>7.</b> Council voted a new date for the APM to be held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May at 7pm in the village hall when wine and nibbles will be served afterwards. Clerk will put together an agenda with consultation with the Chairman. The AGM will take place as decided upon at the last regular meeting on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May at 7pm.</p>	
<p><i>Meeting ended 8.45pm</i></p>	

Signed: ..... Date: .....

*Graham Turner*  
*Chairman of Bawdsey Parish Council*

Draft Until signed