

Merton Parish Council held a planning meeting in the Clinton Hall on Tuesday 26th August at 8pm.

All Councillors were present and also three parishioners.

Councillor Horner (chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the purpose of this meeting was to discuss and approve or reject the planning application for 33 houses at the back of Malt Scoop.

Comments were then invited from the parishioners present.

Mr Alan Davison commented on the fact that to accommodate the coach houses at the eastern edge would require the removal of a wall believed to be listed. He also queried the pedestrian /cycle access onto Limers Lane. The Speed of vehicles travelling through the village was also queried.

Mr John Chandler – Old Bailey asked if the sewerage works would be big enough to allow for so many properties. It appears that there is new legislation in which SW Water would have to make the works bigger. Councillor Collins stated that sometimes the developers would be required to contribute to the cost.

Councillor Horner then proposed that the Parish Council support the planning application, which was seconded by Councillor Malcolm. A vote resulted in 7 for and 1 abstention.

It was agreed that comments would be sent with the reply of support and are listed below.

Councillor Horner proposed and Councillor Malcolm seconded that the council strongly supported the planning application and that it should be approved with the following comments.

The Parish Council considered the quality of design and layout, with a good mix of house sizes, was important to assist the integration of the development into the village. However the Parish Council would request that there should be no more than 33 properties, and if less, then the same mix of housing should be maintained. If there are any major changes of design or layout, then a re application must be made.

- a) Limers Lane should not be the pedestrian/cycle access to the properties as it leads onto a narrow country lane (without pavement) frequently used by large tractors and agricultural vehicles.
- b) The wall adjacent to the barn is of concern as it was pointed out that this may be listed and needs to be demolished to make way for some of the properties.
- c) If TDC are expecting 30% of the properties to be affordable houses (either for sale or rent) the Parish Council would like these to be subject to the local needs condition for Merton connection (as in the case of the 6 affordable houses recently built in the village at Coldstream Gardens). However since these houses were built to address the proven need for affordable housing in the Parish, this need may have been met.

So to increase the variety of affordable housing on offer, the Parish Council see a greater need for any such affordable housing to be as open market local needs - thereby encouraging more people with a local connection to enter the housing market and stay local. The Parish Council would like preference to be given to families with young children.

- d) Whilst the Parish Council understands affordable housing may be a standard planning request on such a development, in light of the recent affordable houses having been built in Merton, the Council would far prefer that the developers provide some sort of business/employment units on a separate site in the parish, instead of any affordable housing. Suitable sites have been identified with Clinton Devon Estates. The main issue identified by the council is the

need to encourage local sustainable businesses, which will in turn support the parish with some employment opportunities. This is currently felt to be a more important need.

- e) As the development may lead to an increase in children, which may increase the demand for and use of play equipment within the village, the Parish Council considers a contribution by the developers to the improvement and maintenance of the existing play equipment (which is on Village Hall land), would be better use of any section 106 funding than any on site provision. Therefore the Parish Council request consideration of a suitable contribution for upgrading and future repairs of existing play equipment in the village

Sandford; It was agreed a letter should be sent to TDC planning dept. stating that the building is not being built as originally planned. The councillors would like to make a complaint as this house is not in keeping with the other properties around. There are inconsistencies in planning in this conservation area.

Councillor Horner suggested a planning subcommittee should be formed with the chair and vice chair of the Parish Council who will look at comments made by the councillors on all planning applications forwarded to them by the clerk. They would then decide if there are comments opposing the application or suggestions made that a meeting would then be called to discuss the applications further.

The next meeting will be the full Council meeting on Monday 1st September at 8pm in the Clinton Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm