

**Minutes of the 726th meeting of Toft Parish Council
Meeting held on Monday 13 June 2016 in The People's Hall, Toft at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillors: M Yeadon (Chairman), J McCarten, P Gouldstone, E Miles, P Ellis-Evans G Pugh and A Tall.

In attendance: 19 parishioners and Mrs C Newton (Minutes Secretary, LGS Services).

Open public session including reports from the County and District Councillors
None.

1. Apologies for absence and declaration of interests

1.1 To approve written apologies and reasons for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from two residents.

1.2 To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda

None.

1.3 To receive written requests for dispensations (if any) and to grant any dispensation as appropriate

None.

2. S/1220/16/OL – Land west of Hardwick Road – Outline planning application for construction of 30 dwellings together with associated garaging, parking, public open space, landscaping, access, highways drainage and infrastructure works – all matters reserved except access

RESOLVED, having discussed the application at length and considered the residents' views gleaned from the public exhibition (94 submissions, 73 opposed to the development), that the Parish Council objects to the application. (Prop MY, 2nd JM, unanimous)

1 Overview statement

Toft Parish Council unanimously objects to the application and recommends the District Council refusal of the Outline Planning Application for 30 houses off Hardwick Road, Toft.

Furthermore, it recommends that it is considered by the full Planning Committee for the following material reasons:

- It does not comply with the LDP.
- Overlooking/loss of privacy
- Highway safety
- Traffic
- Effect on listed building and Conservation Area
- Nature conservation for impact on protected trees or the landscape.

2 Further detail on the reasons for the recommendation for refusal:

2.1 Compliance with the Local Development Plan

- Toft is designated as an infill village, which recognises the limited services and facilities available in the village. This proposal well exceeds the amount of development acceptable for an infill village.
- The proposed development is outside of the village framework.
- It is not a designated site within the new LDP.

Although we recognise that the SCDC LDP is not fully approved, it, presumably, is SCDC's current strategy for development in the area. Approval of this development would, we believe, invalidate the plan and make it difficult to refuse any further development proposed in any location.

Furthermore, the development of 90 dwellings at Bennell Farm, which is within Toft's Parish, will provide more than enough homes and affordable housing for the local area's needs and will already put considerable strains on all local services, infrastructure and facilities.

2.2 Location

The location of the proposed development, which is a pleasant meadow, currently provides a pleasing transition between the village and the intensely farmed land beyond. In addition it provides a selection of natural habitats and natural features. This includes nesting Barn Owls. There is a lot of intensive farming around the village and the loss of this meadow is very undesirable. It would also have an adverse effect on the environment and visual appearance of the village entering from Hardwick.

Residents living adjacent to the proposed site have expressed a serious concern about the risk of the new proposed properties overlooking their properties, leading to a loss of privacy.

In the Planning Statement 4.58, it is noted that this development is appropriate to an 'urban edge location'. Toft is a rural location and therefore the location is inappropriate.

There is a concern on the detrimental impact on the location on the local listed buildings.

2.3 Highway and safety concerns

There are a number of specific concerns about the development which we believe would be difficult or impossible to design away.

The site has very poor access to the village. The access to the site is via Hardwick road, which is already a busy junction and is considered by parishioners to be a potentially hazardous location. This junction is on the route for pedestrians and cyclists travelling to and from Cambridge, including pupils for Comberton Village College and Meridian School. (It should be noted there is no school bus service for primary school age children from Toft to Meridian School. They are expected to walk and to negotiate the junction.)

The proposals do not make it clear how pedestrians or cyclists would get to the village pedestrian pathways and cycleway. There is virtually no verge by the side of the road near the proposed site and the path it would join is only about 1m wide and unsuitable for cycles, buggies and indeed pedestrians. There is no other agreed access to the site. We do not believe a suitable pedestrian/cycle access is possible.

At best the access to the site would mean that the development would be very isolated from the village as it will be a considerable distance from most of the proposed houses to the centre of the village.

2.4 Surface Water and Flooding

The meadow which is the location of the proposed development gives protection to the village from flooding from the fields above the site. Although the report addresses issues of flooding in the proposed development, it inadequately addresses the impact on adjacent properties and the rest of the village. There is already a problem from water running off the fields into the back gardens of the houses on the north side of the village and down Hardwick road into the centre of the village. The proposal is to discharge surface water via an existing culverted drainage ditch but the technical report recognises that the service and structural condition of the ditch will need further investigation. There is considerable evidence that this ditch will not cope with the current surface water volumes. The report suggests that if it is found that the ditch is inadequate then the public sewer could be used. This would further exacerbate the problems already encountered with the village's foul water system (see below). The lack of clarity about

how the surface water could be managed highlights the inappropriateness of the site for development.

2.5 Foul Water Provision

Anglian Water claim in their report as part of the application that Haslingfield can cope with the additional sewerage from the site. However, the pumping stations in Toft and Comberton continue to have issues of flooding and tankers are still used by Anglian Water to remove waste to alleviate that flooding.

The Anglian Water report does not recognise there have been recent problems with flooding from the pumping stations in Toft and Comberton. The Parish Council is not aware of any improvements to the system. It should be noted that the reference in the report to a Toft Parish Council minute that described an improvement related solely to repairs to damage to the grass verge which had been caused by the tankers.

2.6 Sustainability

Toft is most likely to have an additional 90 dwellings in its parish with the development at Bennell Farm. Toft Parish Council believes this new site at Hardwick Road is not a sustainable site. Having an additional thirty houses in a Parish of just over 200 houses, i.e., over 50% more houses, will fundamentally change the nature of the village and put strains on all the services and facilities.

The doctors' surgery and the dental practice in Comberton are already at breaking point and, we understand, cannot be extended. Car parking at the surgery is also a serious concern. There are no preschool facilities in Toft, the Meridian Primary School can only realistically be reached by car. There are only minimal and specialised employment opportunities in and around the village. Contrary to 5.8 in the Planning Statement, we would note that the small businesses in Toft are of a specific technical nature and are unlikely to offer any new employment opportunities.

Contrary to 5.8 in the Planning Statement, Toft is not well served by buses. There is a bus service into Cambridge but it is only once per hour, takes a long route into town and the service finishes early in the evening. There is no Sunday service. Furthermore, it cannot be practically used for the Doctors and Dentist in Comberton or for pupils travelling to Comberton Village College or Meridian School. The cycle route is in fact an unsegregated path to Comberton and beyond. It is not adequate, it is in poor condition generally, it crosses several junctions, it is not lit for the majority of it and it runs beside a derestricted highway. Nowhere does this unsegregated cycle path meet the preferred effective minimum width.

3 The view of the Toft Residents

At an exhibition held on behalf of the applicant, the Parish Council independently collected the written comments from the attendees. Applicants were asked whether they supported the proposals or not. There were 94 written submissions, of which 73 were opposed to the development.

4 Summary

In light of the above reasons and the strength of feeling among the majority of parishioners who oppose the application, the Parish Council urges South Cambridgeshire District Council to refuse this application. If the Officer is minded to recommend that the application is approved the Parish Council would like this application to go to the Planning Committee please

3. **Closure of meeting**

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

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