

Notes of a public consultation meeting to discuss proposals for the development of the Oakland / Glebeland site and three associated sites

Chair:

Councillor R Hudson : Chair, Bayston Hill Parish Council Planning Committee

Present:

Parish Council members Cllrs Breeze; Ryan; Jones; Clode; Lewis and Clarke;
Michael Watney; Balfours LLP (Agents for Lichfield Diocese)
Approximately 50 members of the public

Note Taker:

Caroline Higgins, Parish Clerk

Introduction

Cllr Hudson introduced the Parish Council members present and reminded those attending that the Parish Council is only a consultee. He urged residents to send their views to Shropshire Council in addition to sharing them with the parish council.

He briefly summarised the proposals and history of the proposal development then invited questions and comments from the floor on each of the four planning proposals in turn. The following is a summary of the points raised:

Hybrid development of Oaklands School / Glebeland site - residential and community building - Application Ref 19/01873/OUT

Access for construction traffic – Assurances sought that this would not be provided from Lyth Hill Road which is needed for access for existing properties – *Note: M Watney offered to include this as a contractual condition on the sale of the land*

Loss of privacy for properties on Eric Lock Road – Previous outline layouts indicate maintenance of a separating distance to existing dwellings. Residents have suggested an alternative site layout to preserve a buffer zone for wildlife. It was suggested this alternative would increase the overall amount of greenspace by reducing the length of the access road required.

Loss of Green Space – The development of the Oakland School is acceptable as it is a brownfield site but the Glebeland site is greenfield and a wildlife corridor which supports a wide variety of wildlife species. Much of the greenspace is occupied by hedgerows which are unlikely to be retained as part of gardens.

Social benefits of open spaces – The benefits to the physical and mental health of young people would be lost. The Glebefield is the only open space in that part of the village.

Ownership and management of the green space – A resident expressed concern that the open space would be seen by the new residents as 'private' space and those residents who have

traditionally used it will be unwelcome, including scouts and guides which presently use it for a variety of activities.

Use of Glebeland as a sports field – A resident stated that the Glebefield was designated as a playing field in 1949 and that all subsequent uses of the land have been approved subject to retention of the facility to play sports. There would not be space for a football pitch on the open space provided on the master plan. *Jack Parry spoke on behalf of Christ Church and stated that planning permission had been granted for use as a playing field. This was different to designation as a playing field.*

A resident asked who would determine whether ball games would be permitted on the open space and how it would be used. He observed that apart from the scouts and guides it is unusual for groups of children to be seen playing on the Glebefield these days although they used to do so much more in previous years.

Another resident stated that it was suggested that it is morally wrong to build on a playing field.

Accuracy of Tree Survey & Ecological Survey – A resident identified inconsistencies in the tree report and ecological survey reports in which trees have been missed, mis-identified or mis-clarified. He questioned why no breeding bird survey had been undertaken.

Distribution of new development – A resident stated that development on the edge of the village is preferable to infilling open space within the village.

Principle of Development - A resident stated that having resisted developments on the edge of the village it would be hypocritical of the Parish Council to support this development. He considered there was sufficient space for a small development with community facilities on the Oakland Site without developing the Glebefield. He suggested that the Diocese should submit a separate application with an access through its own land.

Another resident questioned why Shropshire Council has taken so long to submit an application to develop the Oakland school. He expressed concern about the Parish Council being involved with the Steering Group discussions which suggests acquiescence with the proposals. He considered there was considerable opposition to the proposals and that residents would fight strongly to protect the open space for children.

Proposed housing mix – The proposal to include 2.5 storey houses was questioned as there are none elsewhere in the village and these would be out of context with the vernacular.

Community Benefit – A resident proposed a larger community building, possibly incorporating a GP Surgery, a dentist surgery and children's play provision. He considered the proposed Community Hub to be too small. He challenged the Parish Council to look at the needs of the community as a whole and take a lead on such matters. *The Chairman observed that it regularly feeds its views into Shropshire Council and will generate a response based on the views of the public and what it considers to be the best option for the village.*

Financial Contributions - A resident challenged the church to demonstrate the significant benefit to the community of developing the two sites together. *Michael Watney stated that without the*

financial contribution by the Diocese there would not be sufficient funds from the development of the Oakland site to fund a community hub.

The resident then challenged the Parish Council to confirm that it would consult with residents before making a financial contribution to the project. He cited the consultation carried out to support the contributions to Shropshire Council to support the library and Lyth Hill Country Park as examples. *The Clerk observed that those projects required an increase in the Precept. Should the Council decide to consult on an increase in the Precept in the future it would be carried out in a similar way.*

Right to sell Glebeland – A resident challenged the Diocese’ justification for selling the Glebefield; *M Watney confirmed there is no restrictive covenant to prevent the sale of the land by the Diocese of Lichfield. Glebeland was traditionally provided to generate an income for the incumbent vicar but is now held centrally and the Diocese has an obligation to make the most of their glebe land.*

Drainage – The capacity of the surface drainage and sewerage was questioned. It was stated that there have been three incidents of overflow from a manhole in Yew Tree Drive in recent months.

Groundwater – The high water table on the site was a concern as there are natural springs on the Glebeland site.

Infrastructure Capacity – A resident estimated the development would bring an extra 150 residents to the village. The capacity of the local primary school and medical practice were questioned. *The Chairman stated that both had indicated they had sufficient capacity for the predicted increases as a result of the proposed development*

Highways Infrastructure – A resident questioned why the Church did not fully utilise its existing parking provision. He also questioned the need for three access points from Glebe Road where there is presently only one. *It was noted that a second access already exists which has previously been used for parking.*

Concern was raised about the capacity of the junction of Hereford Road and Lyth Hill Road which already suffers from traffic queues at peak times.

Proposed library site redevelopment – Ref 19/01859/OUT

Density of development - A neighbour to the existing library expressed concern about the number of houses proposed. He suggested two rather than three was appropriate and that they should be single storey dwellings.

Access - He also expressed concern about the locations of the proposed access driveways. He stated his own application to construct an access had been refused on safety grounds. He expressed concern about the volume of traffic using Lythwood Road which he did not think had been taken account of by the Highways Authority when making their assessment of the proposals.

Principle of development - He also questioned whether a restrictive covenant existed on the library land which had previously formed part of the plot occupied by his property.

He stated that the lack of investment in the existing library building had created a justification for relocation that would not have existed had they continued to maintain the building properly.

Residents questioned whether the relocated library would provide equivalent space to the existing. *It was noted that the space for books was roughly equivalent but that the space previously used for the mobile library and currently used for storage would not be replicated.*

A resident questioned what provision would be made for disabled parking. All the parking bays appeared to be located some distance from the community hub entrance. It appeared that residents would need to walk along the footpath to access the community hub.

Proposed Vicarage – 19/01865/OUT

Principle of development - A resident questioned the need for a new vicarage. *Michael Watney responded – The decision to provide a new vicarage was taken to comply with the Church’s modern standards that require a vicarage to provide a family home with an office that does not impose on family life. The new vicarage would also offer greater privacy as it would have two separate entrances.*

Proposed Scout and Guide Hut – Ref 19/01866/OUT

Importance of Scouts & Guides – A resident stressed the important function the Scouts and Guides had in providing play opportunities and developing social skills amongst young people. He was concerned that without adequate funding the scouts would be forced to close.

Funding - A resident asked how the new hut would be funded. *Michael Watney explained the scouts owned part of the land they occupied and leased the remainder from the Diocese. If they agreed to vacate their lease early the Diocese would compensate them for the remaining 7 years. This would provide seed funding for the scouts to raise further funding.*

Asset of Community Value – Michael Watney confirmed the scout hut is listed as an asset of community value. This gives the scouts the right to bid to purchase the land if put up for sale and to delay a sale for up to six months to find funds to do so.

Community Access to Scout Hut – A resident asked whether community groups would be able to use the new scout hut if it replaces the existing community building at Lythwood. *The Clerk responded that the Scouts had stated their intention to make it accessible when not being used for youth groups to meet.*

Suitability of Site – A scout leader expressed concern that the proposed site would not provide sufficient space for storage of the equipment that can be stored at the current site. The scouts currently store their canoes off site but this facility may not be available indefinitely.

Parking Provision – Would there be enough parking at the Lythwood site?

Conclusion and Summary

The Chairman thanked residents for attending and again urged them to submit their comments to Shropshire Council.

The Clerk was asked to summarised the main points raised

The meeting closed at 8:10pm