**DIDDLEBURY PARISH COUNCIL**

**Chairman: Cllr D Hedgley**

Clerk: Mrs Jean de Rusett, The Grange, Leinthall Earls, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 9TS Tel: 01568 770640 "e" mail address: diddleburypc@gmail.com

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**MINUTES**

**Of the Extraordinary General Parish Council Meeting**

**held on Thursday 15th November 2018 at 7.30pm at Diddlebury Village Hall**

**130/18: Present and apologies for absence**

 Cllr. D Hedgley - Chairman, Cllr. A Watson, Cllr. T O'Boyle, Cllr. M Woodhouse, Cllr. M Thomas, Cllr. S Povall and Cllr. K Worthington

**Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr. R Povall and Cllr. S Thomas

**In attendance**:

The Clerk, Mrs J de Rusett, Unitary Cllr. C Motley and 27 members of the public

**131/18 – Declarations of pecuniary or personal interests relating to this meeting or dispensations in respect thereof.**

No declarations were made.

**132/18 – Public involvement session – 10 minutes allowed.**

No matters were raised which did not relate to Agenda Item 4 – planning application 18/04563/OUT.

**133/18 – Planning application 18/04563/OUT – an application for the erection of ten entry-level dwellings and seven self-build dwellings on land adjacent to The Moors and Moors View, Diddlebury**

133/18/1: The Chairman commenced by reminding all present this is a parish council meeting open to the public, not a public meeting.

He then outlined the procedure he proposed to adopt in dealing with this application. He will outline what the application seeks to do in detail; he will outline the current planning legislation which applies to it; he will deal with the Consultee Comments on the Planning Portal; he will summarize the 29 Public Comments on the Planning Portal objecting to the application and will then seek comments from the public if they wish to raise any objections not included in his Objections summary or to comment on the application. He will then close any further discussion from the public and the councillors will consider and vote on the application.

133/18/2 The Chairman explained the particular difficulties raised by this application in planning terms. The government-imposed National Planning Policy Framework made significant changes to planning in July 2018, particularly S.71 of the NPPF, which made changes to Local Plans, which have not yet been fully implemented by Shropshire Council into a revised Local Plan. Until the revised Local Plan is signed off, Shropshire Council is still working to the 2015 Local Plan – which is causing confusion. S.71 requires planning authorities to support planning applications on any “exception” sites, i.e. those which are not already included in Local Plans, in order to respond to local housing needs, thereby over-riding existing Plans. Planning authorities have received little guidance from the government on how to implement these changes. This particular site is currently designated as Open Countryside and thus any development is excluded, unless a case is made out for it to be an “exception” site.

A further difficulty with the application is that the applicants took no pre-planning advice from Shropshire Council, did not hold any consultation exercises with the Diddlebury community or parish council, do not have a professional agent DPC can liaise with, and the applicants have not attended either the meeting on 1st November nor this one to assist the council, but rather have sent letters to DPC. Since the 1st November the planning authority, and in particular the Housing Enablement Officer, have been working with the applicants and have advised them that the application cannot proceed without a full ecological survey, without revised drainage arrangements; and essentially without a full housing needs survey in order to provide their application with the vital “exception site” supporting evidence showing there is a need for entry-level and self-build houses in Diddlebury village.

However, no revisions have been made to the application nor supporting evidence adduced in respect of the application and thus DPC has to determine the application as it stands tonight.

133/18/3 The Chairman summarised the 29 Public Comments on the Planning Portal, noting the specific areas of objection to the application, which included:

* SAMDEV designates the area as “open countryside” and so this application contravenes both the Parish Plan and all up-dates to the PPSG’s Place Plans.
* There is no evidence that there is a housing need for either entry-level or self-build properties in Diddlebury.
* Contrary to the applicants’ assertions, the infrastructure at The Moors and Moors Views is insufficient for this development. The sewage system is unlikely to cope.
* The extra traffic from the development will generate additional hazards when turning onto or off the B4368.
* There will be insufficient parking for the existing residents and the proposed new residents.
* The scale of the development is far too large to be condensed into the available space.
* Contrary to the application’s statement, there is no bus route serving Diddlebury, so cars are essential especially as there are no shops within the village.
* There is no proposal for a play area for children.

On the positive side, one Public Comment supported the application on the basis that it will support the school, improvements to infrastructure are welcome and the area needs affordable homes.

133/18/4 As the Parish Plan Steering Group have taken a continuing and active role in the Parish Plan and Local Plans, Mr Ian Davies made the following statement:

Diddlebury Parish Plan

This is a personal comment and does not necessarily reflect the views of the PP Steering Group. The two DPC councillors currently on the group have recused themselves from any discussion on this application until the Parish Council considers it.

Many of the comments posted regarding this planning application make reference to the Diddlebury Parish Plan.

It may be worthwhile reminding ourselves of the process of the refreshed Parish Plan 2013.

The refresh process involved consultation, open days and events to identify the key issues concerning the parish residents.

This informed the production of a parish survey questionnaire (vetted by Shropshire Council staff) and which was issued to all households in the Parish.

The returns were analysed independently through Shropshire Council and data reports provided for each settlement in the Parish and the Parish as a whole.

The Parish Plan Steering Group summarised the key findings and concerns and drafted recommendations and action points.

These went to consultation for comment through two open events.

This then formed the basis of the final written Plan and with it a series of action points.

The Steering Group report regularly on progress to the Parish Council and update the action points.

Some of the data has been used by the Village Hall Committee to support their lottery grant to refurbish this hall.

In summary

The plan was commissioned jointly by this Parish Council and Shropshire Council.

The process behind the plan was robust, independent and evidence based.

It involved many many hours of volunteer time.

It reflected the aspirations and concerns of the local community including the question of housing development in Diddlebury.

The Plan, including the section on housing and development, was accepted by the Parish Council. This was built into the Craven Arms Place Plan and incorporated into the Shropshire Council SAMDEV planning document.

The Plan provided Councillors with clear guidance on important issues from the documented evidence of parishioner views.

The original Parish Plan findings in 2003, the subsequent consultation events and survey responses were all consistent: The inhabitants in Diddlebury Parish enjoy the countryside and rural way of life. They are concerned about housing over development. Specifically the survey responses from the parishioners in Diddlebury village itself showed a 65% vote for no new housing in the village.

133/18/5 The Chairman stated that the Place Plan provided for clusters of development in some hamlets in the parish; Diddlebury village was excluded from development, but the Place Plan went on to state that seven exceptional site affordable houses may be needed in due course for Diddlebury Village. Thus, a need for possible housing in the future was identified and accepted. That Place Plan was superseded by Shropshire Council – it was re-written without consultation with DPC and it took Diddlebury out of the “open countryside” designation, so we are left with clusters. Clearly, it is timely for a full housing needs survey to be carried out across the whole parish: thereafter housing needs can be evidence based.

133/18/6 The Chairman then closed the public participation part of the application and the councillors deliberated on it.

Cllr. O’Boyle felt DPC should object strongly to the application on, inter alia, the following basis:

* It contradicts all Place Plans, the Parish Plan and the PPSG:
* To support this application contradicts the views of many parishioners
* SAMDEV designates it as open countryside
* There is no evidence of any need for affordable homes or self-build homes in Diddlebury village
* If the applicants plan to sell this land to developers, developers need to be aware that DPC may not object to one or two affordable homes and perhaps one self-build if the housing survey evidence supports their need, but to turn this land into a housing estate out of all proportion to its size is unacceptable. We need to show developers the way we are thinking.

Cllr. S Povall felt that if a housing needs survey is carried out it will easily establish a need for affordable homes and self-build homes. He feels the village is stagnating with only older people moving into to it, to the detriment of the school and the community generally. He also felt the applicants had mis-judged the feeling of the community, they should have carried out a housing survey: there is a procedure to follow and they should have followed it.

Unitary Cllr. Motley confirmed that a Housing Needs Survey is essential for any development in a village. In the Corvedale S.C. wants to ensure there is the right mix of housing available so that any young people who have been forced to move away can come back.

Cllr. Watson felt it was a mistake to assume the occupants of the proposed new homes would automatically send their children to Corvedale School.

Cllr. Woodhouse supported Cllr. O’Boyle’s views. He felt it was essential for DPC to take more control of this site before it gets into the hands of developers.

Cllr. M Thomas felt what is needed is houses for rent – “affordable” houses priced at £180,000 are outside many people’s reach.

The Chairman felt that even if DPC can’t support this application tonight due to its procedural defects, this application will come back again and in order to deal with it DPC needs the benefit of a Housing Needs Survey, so should request that Shropshire Council carries out one for the whole of Diddlebury Parish.

Following these discussions:

The Chairman **PROPOSED THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:**

That Diddlebury Parish Council cannot support this application as it stands because it does not satisfy present planning criteria in that there is no clear evidence adduced by the applicants of need in an exceptional site for entry level housing, or self-build not being provided by Shropshire Council.

However, Diddlebury Parish Council does recognise that the need for possible future affordable housing was made in Diddlebury’s Parish Plan Steering Group’s survey of 2012 and was mentioned in the original Place Plan.

Diddlebury Parish Council needs to ascertain whether a need for affordable housing still exists and if so, how many houses are needed and what tenure and price range is indicated. If a similar planning application is made, Diddlebury Parish Council would then be in a better position to consider it from both a planning criteria viewpoint as well as a local viewpoint. Diddlebury Parish Council therefore requests Shropshire Council to conduct a Local Needs Housing Survey for the whole of Diddlebury parish.

The Proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr. K Worthington

**VOTE:** Six members voted to support the Proposal

 One member abstained from voting

**Proposal carried by a majority vote.**

**133/18 – Any Other Business (for dissemination of information only)**

No matters were raised.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.10pm

**Date and venue of the next Diddlebury Parish Council Meeting**

The next ordinary meeting will be on Wednesday 28th November 2018, 7.30pm in Diddlebury Village Hall

**MINUTES SIGNED BY Robert Povall**

**DATED 28th November 2018**