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**STAPLEFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEFORD PARISH COUNCIL** **held on** **WEDNESDAY 26th August 2020 at 7.30pm** **by virtual meeting**

Virtual meeting access:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87248637021?pwd=YWt1UGdDVWpYMUNGM2FVWUtUZERKdz09>

**PRESENT:** Cllr Howard Kettel (Chairman), Cllr Colin Greenhalgh, Cllr Barbara Kettel, Cllr Charles Nightingale, Cllr David Pepperell, Cllr Gillian Pett,

Stapleford Parish Council Clerk: Belinda Irons - Minutes

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South Cambs District Cllr Peter Fane

South Cambs District Cllr Nick Sample

Axis Partnership: Mr P Grant and Mr A Adams

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** There were 15 members of the public on line

**134.2020** Apologies Cllr Paul McPhater, Cllr Jez Raphael

**135.2020** Declaration of Member’s Interest: disclosable pecuniary/ pecuniary/personal

None.

**136.2020** Public discussion and presentation: An extended public discussion period was allowed to ensure all present had the opportunity to comment.

Mr Grant of Axis Partnership reiterated the Axis position that this application was exceptional and should take place to release the 50 acres for the country park for general use, and that services provided in the retirement village would be open for general use. He further commented that only use within the C2 category would be built.

A member of the Bridleways Group supported the provision of the country park provided access was available for all including horse riders. Release of existing housing stock would be advantageous.

The representative of the Magog Trust commented that whilst the Trust had reservations regarding encroachment into the Greenbelt, the expansion of chalk grassland would bring benefit. The Magog Trust disclosed that it had been approached to manage the land in perpetuity, should permission be granted, which would ensure the land would be open for public use. Freehold transfer would be reliant on permission being granted for this development.

Reasons for Objection:

Six members of the public registered their objections on the basis that:

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1. The proposed development is in the wrong place for connectivity, access to services and facilities, reliance on private cars, lack of parking for visitors to the retirement village and to the park.
2. Affordability: Members of the public had attended the public consultations held by Axis and were advised that NHS care would not be allowed on site for those in need. Further, a survey of other similar properties in nearby settlements had been carried out, and the average cost of a 2 bedroomed accommodation unit would likely be £500,000, leasehold, plus service charges plus ground rent. This was not considered affordable for local people and would not encourage downsizing in the village, thus not releasing any of the existing housing stock.
3. Intrusion into the Greenbelt: this development would set a precedent for development in the Greenbelt and would be the ‘thin edge of the wedge’ with the potential for further development to take place on the site in the future. Other landowners could use this as precedent to press for further expansion into the Greenbelt thus leading to further erosion of this important regulatory feature.

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1. Height, bulk and scale of the proposed buildings: the height of the main building is some 12m, close to the existing built area in the village, and will block light and views of existing dwellings.
2. Covid-19: services would not be open to the general public due to the risk to the residents of the spread of Covid-19.
3. Country park: this was seen as a ‘sweetener’ to obtain development. Comments were made that if the landowner was being altruistic, the land could be donated to a suitable management body without the strings of development attached.
4. Local need: the need for this development to benefit the local community was not demonstrated by a local assessment. Rather, the development would be open to anyone who could afford it. It was considered to be a private, exclusive development which would not want, for example, local children using the proposed swimming pool.

**137.2020 Planning:** Cllr B Kettel

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| --- | --- |
| 20/02929/OUT | Land Between Haverhill Road And Hinton Way Stapleford  Outline planning for the development of land for a retirement care village in Use Class C2 comprising housing with care, communal health, wellbeing and leisure facilities, public open space, landscaping, car parking, access and associated development and public access countryside park with all matters reserved except for access. |

Councillors made further comments:

1. The proposal is disproportionate in the context of Stapleford both in the height and mass of the buildings and also in the number of accommodation units being constructed. It will provide for better off people from all over South Cambridgeshire and

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could therefore be built anywhere in South Cambridgeshire without the need to compromise the Green Belt.

1. The development was in the wrong place and would be a carbuncle on the edge of the village.
2. The design was not conducive for older people to move to, as bungalows were in greater demand.
3. The impact on the street scene would be excessive and extensive. There are no similar sized developments as the main block within the village, and the bulk and scale was considered out of keeping with the vernacular.
4. The proposal appears to assume that the Cambridge South East Busway will proceed. In fact, it still faces several significant obstacles, for example, achieving an acceptable environmental survey and concerns expressed by the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, who favours the old railway line option and says that the Busway proposal does not accord with the Local Transport Plan. The local MP also appears to have concerns and has walked the old railway line option.
5. Lack of public transport to the site: residents would be reliant on private transportation to access facilities increasing congestion and on street parking within the village and concentrating around the doctors.

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1. There are several similar schemes in nearby villages which are struggling to fill vacancies. This development may become the same due to the costs involved in downsizing to ‘exclusive, private developments’.
2. The provision does not match any perceived local need, which has not been established.
3. Of the 50 responses sent to South Cambs District Council, some 10% were in support with comment from people who do not live in the parish. Some 80% were against, with 10% neutral.
4. The proposed development has not demonstrated that it has any special reason which would require it to be built in the Greenbelt, outside the development envelope for Stapleford Parish.
5. There are no guarantees that the country park would be managed for the benefit and use of the whole community – there are ‘promises’ only.
6. In his comments, the Axis representative admitted that there are some negatives associated with the Retirement Village proposal. These negatives will be experienced by all residents of Stapleford but only better off people and those not requiring NHS treatment will be able to benefit from the Retirement Village. This is divisive and does not sit comfortably with the values and community spirit of Stapleford.
7. So far as Axis's reference to the philanthropic nature of the proposal is concerned, the aspirations of the Magog Down Trust and of the Bridleway Group could be met by philanthropic access permissions and gifting of land which is not conditional on receiving planning permission for a Retirement Village.

**PROPOSAL: *That Stapleford Parish Council herewith objects to outline planning application* 20/02929/OUT**. PROPOSED: Cllr B Kettel, seconded Cllr Nightingale. AGREED AND RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY. The Clerk will produce a letter for circulation as a priority.

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Cllr Peter Fane agreed to ask that the application be submitted to SCC Development Management Committee for decision.

**138.2020** **Date of Next Meeting**: Virtual meeting at 7.30pm

PC Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of each month

14th October 11th November 9th December

*Meeting closed at 8.35pm*

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