

## Draft response by Stapleford Parish Council to Rangeford Villages' pre-planning application consultation

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### What's going on?

Rangeford Villages has been granted outline planning permission to develop a retirement community and countryside park on greenbelt farmland between Hinton Way and Haverhill Road. Outline planning permission means that the principle of development for this particular use, in this particular location, has been given the go-ahead, so this is no longer a matter for debate. You might remember this site being previously referred to as the 'Axis development', because this was the name of the agent seeking permission for development. The land has now been sold to Rangeford to take the development forward.

Rangeford will submit a detailed proposal for formal planning approval in due course. In the meantime, it is inviting feedback on its draft plans to see what falls into or out of favour with the local community. Rangeford will be hoping that doing this now means that it will face a smoother ride through the planning approval process later on.

### What is this document?

This document is a draft version of what will be formally submitted by Stapleford Parish Council on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022 to Rangeford Villages' pre-planning consultation.

### How can I respond?

**Residents are requested not to copy this document for the purposes of their own feedback but to use it as inspiration.** You may feel more strongly about some issues than others or you may have completely different views. Either way, we encourage you to express them in your own words. There is nothing to be gained by everyone submitting the same wording or thoughts; in fact, it makes it look like a co-ordinated response and that is to be avoided.

Rangeford's 'virtual consultation' and accompanying feedback form can be found at [https://rangefordconsultation.co.uk/?fbclid=IwAR2SvANGzhk7faOF\\_o6GkONnDFDyqPINnqaIQGH7l4Ze-ZPX099K4YAW-as](https://rangefordconsultation.co.uk/?fbclid=IwAR2SvANGzhk7faOF_o6GkONnDFDyqPINnqaIQGH7l4Ze-ZPX099K4YAW-as).

If you prefer to email a response, please send it to [feedback@rangefordconsultation.co.uk](mailto:feedback@rangefordconsultation.co.uk).

**NOTE THAT THE CLOSING DATE FOR FEEDBACK IS MIDNIGHT ON 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2022.**

## Stapleford Parish Council's draft response

Q1: Do you have any comments relating to the countryside park and the potential additional access points?

1. On-road parking by Magog Down users who do not wish to pay the carpark charge is already a significant issue along Haverhill Road, blocking private farmland access points, turning green verges into muddy ruts, causing motorists and cyclists to swerve out to avoid them and their three-point turns when they drive away. Where will users of the countryside park leave their vehicles? No parking provision has been made. People travel to Magog Down from miles away. It's completely unrealistic to think that countryside park users will all walk there. On-road parking along Haverhill Road in the vicinity would be extremely dangerous, given the lack of lighting, road markings and poor walking route; other people will park on the Drift Track immediately opposite, which is private land, unsigned and already used by walkers avoiding Magog Down parking charges.

2. Where can cyclists leave their bikes?

3. (a) How will people cross safely from the walking route on the opposite side of the road to access the countryside park?

3. (b) The unmade footpath on the other side of Haverhill Road urgently needs improving if people are to walk safely to the countryside park and to be deterred from driving there.

4. How will you screen the cutting where the busway is planned to run (I know it hasn't yet had planning permission but you need to consider this in your plans)? A countryside park with buses running alongside it every few minutes isn't exactly a "green space to unwind and relax." Screening for noise and safety needs urgent attention.

5. Some mature tree specimens need to be introduced in the planting plan since trees do not make any notable contribution to carbon offsetting until they are mature.

6. Magog Trust needs to consider how users of Magog Down and the countryside park will walk safely from one area to the other within a single visit.

7. Will bikes be permitted to use the paths? Shared use on unlit, sloping terrain will be dangerous. If the busway gains planning permission, cyclists should be required to use the cycle path alongside the busway.

8. It's not clear from your consultation materials how non-retirement community residents will actually access the countryside park.

Q2: Do you have any comments relating to the scale of the development?

[Note that 'scale' means something quite specific in planning jargon, i.e. the height, width and length of each building proposed within the development in relation to its surroundings.]

1. Sight lines through and within the development, particularly at ground level, will be obscured both by the length of the majority of the built units and by the height of the units closest to Gog Magog Way. Introducing more gaps between rows of buildings running from approx. north to south would facilitate this and more closely reflect the wider style of accommodation within Stapleford. Chalk Hill is an exception to the more general semi-detached and detached nature of buildings within the village, notably along those parts of Gog Magog Way and Haverhill Road nearest to the development site, which have views between buildings to green spaces beyond. Basing the scale of your design upon Chalk Hill alone would not be appropriate.

2. Views from Magog Down and the route along Haverhill Road into the village are historically significant to Stapleford's location. Having so many linked buildings running from north to south across the development site effectively removes these views forever.

#### Q3: Do you have any comments relating to the layout of the development?

1. You have an opportunity through appropriate layout to create new sight lines from Haverhill Road looking north and east over rolling chalk hills. This would better embed the development within the village and its surrounding landscape.

2. Views from Magog Down and the route along Haverhill Road into the village are historically significant to Stapleford's location. Having so many linked buildings running from north to south across the development site effectively removes these views forever. [This point is relevant to Q2 and Q3 so is replicated again here.]

#### Q4: Do you have any comments relating to the appearance of the development?

1. There shouldn't be any gates at access points into the retirement community to ensure that it looks and feels part of the village and not separate from it. If additional security is needed (e.g. for residents with dementia), then this should be at the exit points of specific buildings.

2. Whilst the rural/village setting of the development has been considered, the proposed design does not take the existing built vernacular of the village into sufficient consideration. There is a Design Guide for Great Shelford which is still timely (given that not much has changed since it was published) and, in very many respects, is highly pertinent to its 'sister village', Stapleford, too, since there are several points where the two villages blend directly into each other.

3. The variety in the proposed appearance of the buildings is good. However, anything that looks or feels like development within the newly built areas of Trumpington is not desirable for our village location.

4. Any design features which are merely aesthetic and not functional (e.g. very high chimneys) and which reduce countryside views across and through the development are not desirable.

5. It would have been nice to see some photos of properties with sustainable features embedded in them, e.g. permeable surfaces, electric charging points, bike racks, solar panels, solar gain, rainwater harvesting systems. These are essential features of any new and sustainable community. It's good to focus on landscaping to improve biodiversity, but you must also consider the environmental impact of the buildings themselves and make them as sustainable as possible.

Q5: Do you have any comments relating to the landscaping proposed?

1. 'Wild' areas, rather than just ornamentally planted ones, are needed within the development as pathways for wildlife and to link wildlife to the surrounding countryside and new park area. Hedgerows around the perimeter are insufficient to achieve this goal.

2. Stapleford Parish Council leaves many verges within the village unmown and supports NoMowMay. If the retirement village is to blend into the wider village, it needs to embody these features and values in its landscaping.

3. When Chalk Hill was built, there were drainage problems at the site. Clearly, this is anticipated within the retirement complex by your inclusion of an 'attenuation basin'. How is this different from a genuine pond that will benefit wildlife?

4. You propose 'new structural planting' along 3 sides of the development, where existing high and very mature hedgerows already exist. Does this mean that the latter will be removed and what justification can there be for this? It would be far better to retain the existing hedgerows and infill with complimentary hedging species. Not only would this be far more environmentally friendly, but it would help to screen larger buildings from view from the outset, rather than waiting years for new landscaping to establish.

5. The inclusion of new allotment space for residents is a positive feature.

6. All planting should be suitable for an increasingly dry environment and sustained by onsite rainwater harvesting.

Q6: Do you have any general comments about the reserved matters proposals?

1. Where is the affordable retirement housing in your plan? We have a need for affordable retirement accommodation in Stapleford and Great Shelford, freeing up larger properties for families to purchase and maintaining the community by allowing different generations of the same family to live near each other. As of April 2019, there were 13 applicants aged >60yrs in Gt Shelford and Stapleford on the housing register, and 247 applicants aged >60yrs on the housing register in S Cambs as a whole. More recent data will no doubt show an increased need in both respects. How do you plan to address this need?

2. Residents are rightly annoyed by a lack of reference to community-accessible facilities, including a swimming pool, which were offered in initial plans submitted for outline planning approval. Please make it clear whether such access will be a feature of your

forthcoming planning application. Without such shared facilities, the retirement community will remain an exclusive entity separate from the rest of Stapleford. Your 'next steps and community benefits' section makes it very clear that the extensive 'communal' facilities of the development are only for residents' use.

3. Will the pedestrian/cycle access point from Gog Magog Way be for residents only or can other people pass through the retirement community en route to the countryside park? The latter would help to incorporate the retirement village into the wider community and provide a valuable off-road route to the countryside park for all.