

A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNTTESTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL WAS HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, STATION ROAD COUNTTESTHORPE ON MONDAY, 22ND FEBRUARY 2010 AT 7.30 PM. WHEN THERE WERE PRESENT:

Chairman Mr. M. Smith
Vice Chairman: Mr. D. Ball
Mesdames: C. James, J. Jennings, G. Farrands, J. Weatherstone
Messrs: T. Blood, A. Collis-Smith, D. Jennings, K. Mason
Mrs. J. Adcock Clerk to the Council
Mrs. P. Mount Deputy Clerk to the Council

There were 152 members of the public present.

2010/51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Were received from Mrs. M. Baum, Rev. M. Gillespie, Mr. F.E. Duffield, Mr. I. Paterson, Mr. B. Smith, Mr. A. Clifford and Mrs. B. Forecast.

2010/52. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST ON THE AGENDA

Listed below are Councillors who wished to declare an interest in the following:-

Planning:

Mr. D. Jennings (Planning Blaby District Council & Leicestershire County Council)
Mrs. J. Weatherstone (Planning Blaby District Council & 3 Oakes Housing)

Mr. D. Jennings stated that together with Mrs. J. Weatherstone he was unable to pass comments at this evening's meeting as they were District Councillors. They would reserve their comments for the meeting at Blaby District Council. It was more than likely that the planning application in question would be heard at the meeting on the 18th March 2010. This date with the officers comments would be posted on the Blaby District Council's planning web site 10 days prior to the meeting. If it is not heard on that date the next date would be 15th April 2010.

2010/53. PLANNING APPLICATION 09/0780/1/OX - PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (MAXIMUM 120 DWELLINGS) ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING AND INFRASTRUCTURE WITH ACCESS FROM WILLOUGHBY ROAD (OUTLINE) – LAND AT WILLOUGHBY ROAD, COUNTTESTHORPE

The Chairman Mr. M. Smith welcomed members of the public and stated that he would allow residents to voice their opinions before members of the Council discussed the plan in question. He emphasized however that only the application before them tonight could be discussed and not any other previous applications.

Resident stated that he thought the purpose of planning laws was that applications should be balanced. However, it appeared that the south of Leicester was taking most of the new development. In the case of Countesthorpe, before any new developments take place, the infrastructure should be improved. The roads are unable to take the volume of traffic at present without more. Industrial sites within the village have gone and been replaced with housing thus reducing the number of people employed in the village. Should Blaby District Council not use rate payer's taxes to contest appeals made to the Secretary of State by builders when their applications have been refused in the first instance by the District Council.

Chairman The reason for these applications is a government requirement for the East Midlands to provide more homes. In the first instance Blaby District Council's quota for Countesthorpe was 300 new houses to be built between 2006 and 2026. Applications to date that have been accepted now total 339. The Planning Officer has now stated that the 300 is a minimum figure.

Resident How can we the rate payers inform our elected representatives of our objections to this proposal and tell them that the facilities in and around the village are unable to sustain more development i.e. roads, health centre, schools etc.

Councillor Quoted the number of houses required for the whole of the district. Government requirements for the Blaby area have increased by 60% per annum.

Resident Gave mention to the environment around the allotments being destroyed and was also concerned about the storm water balancing pond.

Chairman explained that the storm water balancing pond is designed to control the amount of water entering the storm drains and further along the line the rivers thus helping to preventing flooding.

Councillor stated that Blaby District Council would be responsible for looking after the pond.

Resident Do the ponds work?

Councillor They have been used in other areas and appear to do so.

Resident Why are the Council rushing these planning applications. Why is the building of 120 dwellings being considered in a green belt with access onto a road which was considered too dangerous to allow a development of 12 flats?

Councillor Stated that the highways department make decisions on road traffic matters. When a planning application is made a decision has to be made by the District Council within 13 weeks. Consent can be given by default if a decision is not made within this time scale.

Resident Will the highways department be made aware of all the facts.

Allotment Society Chairman Countesthorpe is lucky to have such a lovely environment for its allotments. Do we want this destroyed? If this planning application is granted it will open up the area for further development. The land that is proposed by the builders for additional allotments is known to be subject to flooding.

Councillor The ownership of Glebe Drive is still in question. Blaby church sold the Drive in the early 1900's and since that time it has passed through several hands. No one appears to know who actually holds the deeds to date. The church does not have the right to allow passage along Glebe Drive as they do not own it.

Resident I feel that this one application should be looked at so that issues do not become confused.

Councillor stated that up to 150 houses could access a site from one entrance/exit.

Residents highlighted their concerns about the increase in traffic throughout the neighbourhood and stated the closing of Hospital Lane during the last week which caused serious traffic jams in the village.

Resident My home was severely flooded a few years ago. As my property abuts the proposed building site what precautions will be taken to prevent this happening again.

Resident Was concerned about the line of trees on the proposed site which he believes has a preservation order on them.

A resident No one wants the development. The powers that be are not concerned. The only way to stop this development is to find a legal loophole. Is the telecommunication mast not considered a health hazard.

Chairman The government do not consider such masts to be a problem.

Resident Has the wild life in the area been assessed?

Chairman An ecological appraisal has been submitted by the builders.

Resident Does anyone validate the reports and appraisals submitted by the builders or indeed contest them?

Chairman Reports submitted by the builders are looked at by the officers in the planning department.

Resident What type of houses are going to be built near to existing houses.

Chairman explained that the plans received are only outline planning. If the application is accepted the builders will then submit what they intend to erect. Each phase of the development may alter. The Chairman also gave mention to 106 monies. This money is used to improve the facilities in the area. Many agencies make claim to this money e.g. Primary Health Care Trust, Highways, Libraries, Schools, Parish Councils etc.

Resident Should tax payers not be able to request expert advice to help them fight such a campaign.

Chairman The Parish Council would be unable to fund legal advice. The time scale would also be prohibitive.

Resident What objections should be raised in letters to the District Council.

Chairman

- Make enquiries of officers at Blaby District Council
- Highway considerations
- Wild Life
- The fact that Countesthorpe is already committed to 339 dwellings. District Council should support the original figure of 300 houses.
- Is there a demand for this amount of housing?

Resident The allotment society has joined the Council for the Protection of Rural England who have noted three shortcomings with the applications. A copy of this letter has been forwarded to Blaby District Council.

Councillors proceeded to discuss the application and the following observations were to be made:

The Parish Council is categorically against this application on the following grounds:-

1. An increase in traffic, particularly at the staggered crossroads of Cosby Road and Willoughby Road. It is felt that this junction in particular is busy and dangerous at times, currently without the added cars that a development of 120 will incur.
2. Construction traffic along Willoughby Road together with slow-moving farm traffic will prove dangerous and hazardous particularly for the number of school children who use the Parish Council's playing fields adjacent to the proposed new development.
3. A blatant intrusion into the open countryside.
4. Fields around the proposed development in particular to the rear of Mennecy Close is subject to flooding (a resident explained that the whole of her home has been flooded on several occasions and feared the worst once building began)
5. The amount of wild- life that lives in and around this area.
6. It has been decided that 300 houses must be built in Countesthorpe during the period 2006 – 2026. To date 339 houses have been given the go-ahead to be built in Countesthorpe. It is felt that enough is enough and as Countesthorpe has now met the limit a stop should be put on any further development forthwith.
7. Observations made by the CPRE which will be forwarded to Blaby District Council.

When put to the vote it was resolved to accept the observations.

Mr. D. Jennings and Mrs. J. Weatherstone declared their interest and did not vote on this issue.

Meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Signed Chairman

Dated2010

