

## **Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at 6pm via Teams**

The purpose of meeting was to receive a presentation from Sworders on the proposed development on the Land South of Bitham Hall in Avon Dassett. The meeting did not constitute a formal Parish Council meeting.

In attendance:

Avon Dassett Parish Council      Cllr Trevor Gill (TG) – Chair  
Cllr Darrell Muffitt (DM) – Vice Chair  
Cllr Liz Hirst (LH)  
Cllr Phil Baxter (PB)  
Cllr Mike Blakeman (MB)  
Jo Jarman (JJ) – Parish Clerk

WRCC                                      Sarah Brooke Taylor (SBT)

Sworders                                 Lois Partridge (LP)  
Naomi Puliston (NP)

### **Introductions**

All attendees introduced themselves.

TG confirmed the Clerk will take minutes.

### **ADPC Legal Protocol for dealing with developers in respect of pre-application discussions**

The Legal Protocol had been distributed prior to the meeting. LP confirmed that Sworders will comply with the protocol.

### **Sworders presentation of the proposals**

Key points:

The landowners are local people who are keen to see a development that is acceptable to the village

- Any development should be appropriate to the scale of the village
- Site is within the settlement boundary as identified in the Local Plan
- SDC has identified a need for 750 new homes throughout the district in “other locations”
- Small scale community led scheme
- 12 new homes are proposed as identified in the housing needs survey published in 2020
- The landowners want to put forward a planning application that is appropriate to the site
- The site has also been put forward following a call for sites in the joint SDC and WDC SWLP
- Site is 1.5 hectares; 1 hectare is being proposed for development
- LP shared the site plan
- Site lies within conservation area with adjacent listed properties identified; any scheme will be sympathetic to the existing heritage assets
- Landscape, drainage and ecological considerations will be taken into account
- Site is not in the flood zone

- Tree and topographical surveys have been carried out – ~~certain~~ the pond and certain trees will be retained
- The proposal is for 12 housing units, 4 being affordable housing, the remaining 8 being market units delivering a mix of houses and bungalows with 3,4 and 5 beds, as per the findings of the adopted Local Housing Needs Survey 2020
- Aims to meet the needs of families, younger and older people who want to stay in the village
- Further work needs to be carried out

### **Sarah Brooke-Taylor**

SBT explained the process:

- housing needs survey is considered
- a landowner found
- any proposal is taken to the Parish Council
- comments taken on board
- public consultation
- feedback
- adjustments made to proposals
- planning application made

The scheme would fall into SDC policy on local needs.

SBT described the elements of a Local Needs Scheme:

- response to an identified need (housing needs survey)
- has support of the community (via Parish Council)
- must be small scale i.e. below a certain percentage of existing dwellings, could be fewer than 10 properties
- Housing Association identified to manage the social housing

SBT does not consider the proposal to be small scale as it constitutes more than 10% of the current number of properties in the village and exceeds SDC limit of 10 properties. Rural exception site – site within or adjacent to the built-up area boundary.

### **ADPC – Questions**

DM asked how progress is measured against the housing needs survey?

SBT confirmed that SDC policy is to consider how new builds satisfy all or some of the identified needs; SDC does not take purchase of existing houses in assessing progress.

S106 agreement would restrict sale of the properties to people with a local connection. SBT explained the criteria for assessing whether people have a local connection; these are defined in policy and includes people currently living in the Parish, people previously living in the Parish (3 out of 5 years), currently employed (16 hours or more), born (or parents were ordinarily resident in the parish at time of birth), people with close family living in the village eg parents, siblings. SBT confirmed aspirations are not taken into account; it is about analysed need and relates to the whole of the scheme and not just the social housing element. Properties could only be marketed to people

with local connections. If no interest is shown after 12 weeks the marketing can be extended to neighbouring parishes and ultimately to the wider district.

MB noted that no recent house sales have been to people with a local connection. It was also noted that the village had 3 affordable houses owned by Orbit, which consequently sold 2 of them. It was also noted that residents are reliant on private transport as there is limited public transport through the village. SBT – Orbit housing does not have to be allocated to people with a local connection.

MB – Sworders refer SDC identifying the need for 750 homes in rural locations; how many have been completed? SBT confirmed that this is a target rather than a finite number.

LH, PB and TG raised no further questions.

### **Next Stage**

LP noted SBT concerns around the scale of the scheme and confirmed that Parish Council support is necessary to take any scheme forward. LP would like to know the Parish Council's view on what the number should be.

DM – elections are to be held on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at which point the Parish Council could be made up of different Councillors. It was suggested that no view should be given by the Parish Council until after the election. TG confirmed that the village will need to be consulted as it is the Parish Council's role to represent the village. He also noted that the 2022 Parish Plan identified that over half of the respondents did not want any new housing.

MB – noted that The Rectory and Rectory Cottage (Grade II listed buildings) are not referred to in the plans. He also highlighted drainage concerns.

LP confirmed that a more detailed assessment of the proposals is needed and that Sworders will review the plans in light of the information provided by both the Parish Council and SBT. It was also confirmed that, following the elections on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023, Sworders will discuss with the Parish Council whether a public meeting is appropriate.

The Parish Council thought it would be inappropriate for it to express a view on behalf of the community, given the local elections in May and a new council being formed as a result.

### **Any other business**

PB asked when the minutes of the meeting would be circulated. The Clerk confirmed that the minutes will be circulated for feedback with a response deadline of noon on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2023. The minutes will be made public on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2023.