

# Ashley Parish Council



## **NOTES OF A SPECIAL CONSULTATIVE MEETING HELD AT ASHLEY PAVILION ON 20<sup>th</sup> JUNE TO ENABLE RESIDENTS TO COMMENT ON PROPOSALS TO RELEASE LAND FOR A NEW STUD DEVELOPMENT AND SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONAL HOUSING ON TWO SITES.**

### **Introduction**

The meeting was chaired by Olive Oakervee, Chairman of the Parish Council and attended by 4 councillors and 23 parishioners.

The proposals for new housing development in the village had been initiated following a call to developers by East Cambridgeshire District Council who had requested details of new sites which were thought suitable for housing development. This call was made as part of the process to revise the existing Local Plan for East Cambridgeshire which had been rejected by Central Government on the grounds of insufficient housing provision. East Cambs DC had been asked to produce a new plan with provision for an additional 4,300 houses across the District.

Cllr Oakervee confirmed that Fairhaven Estates were proposing to develop a stud farm behind Potters Cottage (Church Street). In addition, two new sites for housing had been proposed: these comprised a development of 30 houses behind Potters Cottage and one of 37 houses on land at the rear of Elms Farm. The purpose of this meeting was to canvass local opinion on these proposals.

### **Current position**

An application for planning permission for the proposed stud was likely to come forward quickly and should not be controversial. However, the proposed housing developments would firstly need to be reviewed by East Cambs DC against planning criteria. If considered suitable, these sites would be included in the emerging Local Plan, against which future planning applications would be determined. At this stage there was no indication of housing type or layout on either development.

As part of this process to revise the Local Plan, the Parish Council had already challenged criteria which categorised Ashley as a “medium” village. Whilst there was the population to warrant this, the village has few of the facilities normally associated with medium size communities such as a doctor’s surgery and School etc. If categorised as a small village, Ashley would not be expected to take development beyond infill. However, there had been no formal response from the Planning Authority but Cllr Howell, who had recently attended a Planning Conference, said that officials would visit all settlements where developments were proposed, and make their own assessments.

## **Discussion**

A discussion followed during which the parishioners present were invited to give their comments on the proposals affecting Ashley. The main points emerging from this discussion were as follows: -

- The character of the village would irrevocably change. The population could increase by around a third and there would be years of disruption during the various phases construction.
- Development on the scale proposed was likely to impact adversely on the Conservation Area. The increased population would not necessarily use existing limited services and this could lead to unmanageable traffic levels on village roads. Village roads that were already at capacity
- It was pointed out that there was a danger of “mission creep” as the landowner had other land holdings in the vicinity of the proposed sites and suggested that once the principle of development had been established it would be relatively easy for the landowner to seek permission for new phases of development on adjoining plots.
- The land behind Church Street was “deep ploughed” to minimise the risk of flooding. Building on this land would inevitably increase the flood risk for established yet vulnerable properties in Church Street and Mill Road.
- Differing views were expressed as to whether a drainage expert should be invited to give an opinion on the proposed site behind Potters Cottage at this time. This would avoid paying abortive costs should the site be rejected following initial appraisal by East Cambs DC.
- The proposed access arrangements to both housing sites were unsatisfactory due to the speed of through traffic and problems with visibility for drivers turning into Church Street, especially at times when there are events such as weddings or funerals at St Mary’s Church. It was hoped photographs might be found to illustrate the problem.

- Assuming two cars per household, this would put 134 extra vehicles on village roads if both developments went ahead. The impact of all these vehicles on a small village would be considerable.
- Current parking standards meant that developers only needed to provide one space per household. This would inevitably result in roadside parking that could overspill onto existing streets
- The poor state of the roads infrastructure, particularly the approach to the junction with B1063 near the Crown pub was seen as an important factor against development. However, it was felt that the situation in some urban areas was equally if not more serious than in Ashley. There was concern that too much reliance on road and traffic issues could weaken the case against additional development.
- The proposed development sites, although intended to give the village a more “rounded” appearance, were not centrally situated, and therefore residents were likely to need to drive to use existing facilities and to take children to school etc.
- Cheveley School is currently at capacity, therefore some additional provision for primary school children is likely to be needed. Moulton School was at least 3.5 miles from Ashley; therefore children attending from Ashley would need to be driven.

### **Action proposed**

1. The Parish Council would send a response to East Cambs District Council in respect each development site by 11 July 2016. These responses would include the information garnered from this consultative meeting.
2. The Parish Council would publish the above responses on the village website [www.ashleyvillage.org.uk](http://www.ashleyvillage.org.uk)
3. Parishioners can at their discretion, send their own comments to the Planning Dept. East Cambs District Council, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, Cambs CB7 4EE. (Elms Farm Site Ref. Ashley 01/01. Potters Cottage Site.Ref. Ashley 01/02)
4. Parishioners could also provide photographs, where possible, of recent flooding (to help illustrate the problems in Mill Road and on the land behind Potters Cottage) and of the parking issues along Church Street. (these could be passed to the Parish Council or alternatively, sent with comments to East Cambs DC.
5. The Parish Council would consider whether to instruct a drainage expert in the light of concerns expressed about the land behind Potters Cottage.

## **Conclusion**

Cllr Oakervee thanked the public for their attendance and input, and closed the meeting at 19.53hrs.