

**MINUTES of the Planning Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held
on Monday 9 May 2022 at Melksham Rugby Club, Oakfields, Eastern Way,
Melksham at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors Richard Wood (Committee Chair); John Glover (Chair of Council); David Pafford (Vice Chair of Council); Alan Baines (Vice Chair of Planning); Terry Chivers; Mark Harris & Mary Pile

In attendance: Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder (Bowerhill Ward) (part of meeting) and 14 members of public.

Oliver Ansell and Cecelia Hughes, David Wilson Homes.

Via Zoom: 1 member of public

Officers: Teresa Strange, Clerk and Lorraine McRandle (Parish Officer)

520/21 Welcome, Announcements & Housekeeping

Councillor Wood welcomed everyone to the meeting.

521/21 To receive Apologies and approval of reasons given

It was noted all members of the Planning Committee were present.

522/21 Declarations of Interest

a) To receive Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

b) To consider for approval any Dispensation Requests received by the Clerk and not previously considered

None received.

c) To note standing Dispensations relating to planning applications

To note the Parish Council have a dispensation lodged with Wiltshire Council dealing with Section 106 agreements relating to planning applications within the parish.

523/21 To consider holding items in Closed Session due to confidential nature Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during consideration of business, where publicity would

be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

The Clerk advised there were no items for consideration in closed session.

524/21 Invited guests Oliver Ansell and Cecelia Hughes, David Wilson Homes Re 144 dwellings on Semington Road (PL/2022/02749)

Councillor Wood welcomed both Oliver Ansell and Cecelia Hughes from David Wilson Homes to the meeting and pointed out the various aspects of the proposals within the development, including the site entrance in relation to its location on Semington Road, layout, the inclusion of a 'green' lane through the centre of the site, provision of attenuation ponds and a teen shelter near the pumping station.

Councillor Wood invited Oliver and Cecelia to speak to the Reserved Matters Application.

Oliver explained a Reserved Matters planning application for the site had been submitted to Wiltshire Council, following approval of outline plans and explained the various aspects of the plans, such as:

- Limited development North East of the site and more open space, including a play area, following consultation with Wiltshire Archaeology, due to the high sensitivity of the area.
- Various layout changes.
- Lower density housing near the peripheries of the site.
- Provision of a 'green' edge around the development.
- LEAP (Local Equipped Area for Play) moved South East from its original location in the North of the site and replaced with a large attenuation pond and a pumping station due to drainage issues.

525/21 Public Participation

Several members of public were in attendance from Semington Road and Shails Lane, Berryfield who raised the following:

- Where will the affordable housing be located within the plans?

Councillor Wood explained in line with Wiltshire Council's policy on affordable housing, the housing would be 30% of the overall number of dwellings (43 dwellings) and scattered within the site and in the same materials to blend in and highlighted the various locations on the plan.

Cecelia explained the affordable housing was centrally located in the plans.

- Concern was raised at who would use the proposed teen shelter

and potential for anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Wood explained a teen shelter already existed in Berryfield Park, opposite the site and felt that unfortunately it was not that well used and was not aware of any issues with it being used inappropriately.

- Concern was expressed that the site flooded on occasion.

Councillor Wood noted there were various large attenuation ponds proposed in the plans.

- Proposed access onto Shails Lane. It was stated this was a private lane with no public right of way and owned by residents who contributed towards, and were responsible for, its upkeep. There should be no access from the development (either vehicular, pedestrian or cycle) onto Shails Lane.

A solid boundary needs to be provided along the whole length of the southern boundary from 514d Shails Lane in order to stop people accessing the lane, rather than hedging or fencing, which can easily be removed by prospective residents, particularly to access the A350.

Dog walkers regularly drive down Shails Lane to walk their dogs and therefore the provision of a barrier near the old canal bridge would make it difficult for vehicles to turn around and hopefully deter them from using the lane.

Councillor Wood noted those who were currently parking in Shails Lane to walk their dogs were probably accessing the proposed development site and therefore once developed this would discourage people from using the lane to walk their dogs.

Whilst currently there is bunding and shrubbery on the Eastern boundary and at the end of Shails Lane, people have managed to create an informal walkthrough to cross over the A350. It was noted that following a fatality of someone accessing the A350 from Shails Lane, not long after it was opened, it was understood that the Coroner's report had stated a permanent boundary should be installed at this location, in order to stop people getting through, but unfortunately to date this had not happened.

Councillor Wood agreed with this statement and felt the current bund and shrubbery were inadequate and a more impermeable boundary was required for safety reasons.

Cecelia explained as part of outline planning permission there was a requirement to install some form of boundary treatment, in order to stop people accessing the A350 at this location.

- Impact on wildlife, particularly great crested newts, foxes, slow worms and deer.

Councillor Wood explained an ecology report had been done at outline stage and the plans approved, despite the Parish Council objecting to the plans. Therefore, as permission for the development had already been granted, at this stage all that could be done would be to look at the detail of the plans.

Cecelia explained in response to ecology questions that the site was extensively surveyed and recent checks had been undertaken by their ecologist to make sure the status of the site had not changed. David Wilson were securing a Great Crested Newt Licence and would be paying for mitigation for the great crested newts and providing areas on the site for translocating any animals found. Cecelia stated that David Wilson Homes took their responsibility seriously and would adhere to any planning conditions imposed relating to this issue.

- Concern at the potential for people to unlawfully access the sewerage works North of the site and what boundary treatment would be put in place to discourage this.

Cecelia explained an agreement with regards to boundary treatments for that area had not yet been agreed with Wiltshire Council. It is an owners/occupiers responsibility for securing their boundary, however, would keep under review but anticipate there will be no problems.

- How are sewerage treatment works vehicles going to access the site, which it was understood currently use Shails Lane.

Councillor Wood confirmed works vehicles currently used Shails Lane to access the sewerage treatment works and noted it was proposed work vehicles would come off Semington Road and use the new access road proposed for the development to access their site to the North of the site.

- Highway Safety concerns; particularly with regard to the impact of extra traffic on Semington Road and what measures will be put in place to slow vehicles down prior to the junction.

Poor visibility exiting the site, due to a tree adjacent to the junction with Semington Road, which would obscure drivers sight lines.

Oliver explained the access was approved at outline stage with the junction being constructed to Highway guidelines, including the provision of adequate visibility splays either side of the junction. With regard to the tree on the junction, this was currently

being reviewed.

Concern that sewerage lorries will be moving slower out of the site and drivers on Semington Road may not see them coming out until too late.

Councillor Wood felt the sewerage work vehicles currently exited via a T junction onto Semington Road, which would be the same for this site. However, he acknowledged there was an issue with people driving faster in between traffic calming measures in place on Semington Road.

Cecelia explained David Wilson Homes try wherever possible to have their estate roads adopted by the local authority and in order to do this have to meet the Highway standards in order for them to be maintained in perpetuity and therefore have to meet the Council's standards and requirements, otherwise it leaves the residents of the development having to pay for maintenance.

- Lack of consultation. A resident close to the development site raised a concern they had not be consulted on the outline plans and were only recently made aware of the current plans and the meeting this evening.

Cecelia explained residents were usually informed by the Local Authority of any planning applications near their property, by various methods, such as site notice, local press or a letter, it was not the responsibility of the developer to make people aware and explained this was something to take up with Wiltshire Council.

The Clerk invited residents to leave their contact details, if they wished to be kept up to date on plans for the site.

Councillor Holder explained that whilst the application was not in his current ward, it was, when the outline application was submitted and stated that he would be interested to understand what the planning conditions raised in terms of adopting the roads within the development were. Particularly, as there were many examples around Melksham where they have been informed by developers that roads within an estate will conform to highway standards however, it has taken many months and sometimes years for these roads to be delivered to a standard to be adopted.

Councillor Holder explained George Ward Gardens for example took two years to be adopted whilst predominantly occupied and raised a concern that unless there was a specific requirement within the planning permission, residents who moved into the development could be faced with a similar situation as other estates locally and therefore sought assurances from the developers they would deliver and take their responsibilities seriously if there are no planning

conditions to do so.

Cecelia explained if the road were to be private, it would go to a management company or conveyed to the residents. Usually, main roads are adopted. There usually is no requirement on a planning condition that the roads are adopted, however what usually happens is the planning permission requires the structure details of the highway to be submitted to Highways for approval.

Developers do not want to hold on to roads, as they have to maintain them to an adoptable standard, the aim is to have them adopted as soon as possible, however, Local Authorities insist on a 12-month fault free period with not just the highway, but any infrastructure such as street lighting etc. before adopting any roads.

Councillor Holder asked both Oliver and Cecelia if they felt David Wilson Homes were a 'friendly developer'. The Parish thought they had a 'friendly' and inclusive developer in Bowerhill who said all the things said this evening at a public meeting several years ago and have since been negligent in providing efficient and effective street lighting, effectively walking away from their responsibilities.

Councillor Holder explained both himself and the Clerk have tried to get meaningful conversation with the developers in order to get the issues resolved and therefore sought assurances how David Wilson Homes would fulfil their obligations not just for the residents surrounding the development but also those of the new development.

Cecelia explained all developers buy an insurer policy (bond) in place with the local authority. The purpose being if the developer unfortunately goes bust the insurance money can be used to pay for outstanding works. At stages of construction the value of the bond is returned when certain elements of a build are complete and this is a council's way of sanctioning, if a developer is not doing the work.

Councillor Holder stated he wished to understand what commitment could be given to ensure all comments made by the developers with regard to lighting, access to Shails Lane and access to the site would be delivered and how they would ensure they will be friendly and helpful developer.

Cecelia explained David Wilson Homes were part of the Barratt Group and one of the biggest house builders in the country and a 5-star house builder. This is a difficult record to maintain and the only way to maintain this is by surveying all their residents to ascertain if they would recommend them, whether they like a build, both internally and externally and the facilities in a development. It is really important to maintain the 5-star status and to keep residents happy.

A resident of Semington Road raised a concern as noted on TV that a

lot of developers once they have built their development disappear and leave home owners with concerns which take years to resolve.

Councillor Wood explained everyone would have to accept the words of both Cecelia and Oliver and whilst there had been some bad experiences with developers, this was not always the case.

Councillor Wood invited Members to move to discussing the planning application itself.

(Note: Following Members discussing planning application PL/2022/02749 for 144 dwellings on Semington Road members of the public left the meeting, at which point Councillor Wood invited Councillor Holder to talk to the Committee on various planning matters)

Councillor Holder explained he had made a site visit and spoke to the applicant at 404 The Spa (PL/2022/02719) and felt proposals were an improvement to the existing garage.

With regard to the Pathfinder Place development, Councillor Holder explained there had been a significant amount of correspondence between himself and the Head of Legal Services and Highways at Wiltshire Council regarding this matter. There had been a recent site meeting between the Highways Officer and Taylor Wimpey, which he was unfortunately not invited to, the outcome of which was that Taylor Wimpey were making excuses and delegated authority to complete the outstanding work with regard to the street works for the lighting and pedestrian crossing to a contractor, Flynn.

Councillor Holder explained he had contacted the Highways Officer stating this was not acceptable, as it appeared Taylor Wimpey had been let off the hook. Detailed conversations had taken place with both the Highways Department and Melksham Independent News on the issue.

Further meetings have been arranged with Flynn with Councillor Holder stating he had been included on the invite list and would update the Council in due course.

Councillor Wood noted during earlier discussion there had been mention of a developer bond and asked why this had not been upheld.

Councillor Holder explained this required enforcement action, with Wiltshire Council's Legal Department considering whether to take legal action and was a decision by officers, but hoped enforcement action would be taken.

Both the Clerk and Councillor Wood asked if additional weight could

be added if the Parish Council also wrote to Wiltshire Council supporting Councillor Holder endeavours.

Councillor Holder welcomed the Parish Council's support and advised they contact Perry Holmes, Head of Legal Services.

Councillor Holder expressed frustration the situation had been ongoing for some time, since the Autumn last year, however, whilst it was lighter nights, there was still a concern at people crossing the road without a proper pedestrian crossing and with more and more people moving into the development this situation would get worse.

With regard to the installation of public art at Pathfinder Way, noted the Clerk had chased this up on several occasions.

With regard to proposals for 650 houses on Blackmore Farm, Councillor Holder felt whilst he appreciated there was a need to build more houses in Wiltshire in general felt this was this an unwelcome development, in an inappropriate location.

Councillor Holder explained a much more sensible approach would be to have a master plan to build a properly thought out and integrated new development, without infill developments which provided no infrastructure improvements.

Councillor Holder noted there had been several comments on social media regarding school provision and the lack of GP surgeries and explained having checked earlier that day, that Melksham Oak was not oversubscribed and unlikely to be on until 4,500 houses were built, based on current projections and birth rates. With regard to primary schools in the Melksham catchment area they were still not oversubscribed, however some were full. There is capacity in the Melksham catchment area, looking at birth rates and projections schools would not be oversubscribed before the new school at Bowerhill is built and understood the planning application would be brought forward within the next 3-4 months. The school will be built in stages, being built as a one form entry initially with the capability to grow to a two-form entry school later on.

Councillor Holder advised single form primary schools were of no intrinsic value to Wiltshire Council and did not satisfy the criteria of Wiltshire Council and should be borne in mind when developers say a primary school will be provided on their site.

Councillor Glover whilst appreciating there was capacity in primary schools in the Melksham catchment area, explained it did not help if it meant people having to travel from various areas of Melksham in order to access a primary school place and felt Wiltshire Council should be looking ahead, forecasting and building schools, if this means one school having less students for a while it could be done.

Councillor Holder explained it was incongruous the majority of children who would be attending the new primary school at Bowerhill would not live in Bowerhill and had already had discussions on how this could be resolved.

Councillor Holder explained that unfortunately there was a lag between planning being granted and people moving in and an analysis on the birth rates. There were also other issues and it was not an easy fix, but understood there was a willingness to understand the complexity of the matter at Wiltshire Council.

526/22 To consider the following Planning Applications:

PL/2022/02749: Land at Semington Road, Melksham, Wiltshire. Reserved Matters (Following Outline Permission 20/01938/OUT) for development comprising the erection of 144 dwellings with informal and formal open space, associated landscaping and vehicular and pedestrian accesses off Semington Road. Applicant David Wilson Homes.

Members noted comments received from a resident objecting to the application and from Salisbury & Wilton Swifts.

Councillor Glover suggested, following the comments by Councillor Holder with regard to 'friendly' developers, whether it was worth considering meeting with the developers on a regular basis during the construction period for updates and discuss any issues.

Councillor Wood felt this was a good idea, but was a change in the Parish Council's policy and therefore would need to be reviewed.

A member of the public raised concern at the lack of parking, as most houses have 2/3 cars and the difficulties large vehicles, in particular refuse lorries, would have in negotiating parked vehicles

The member of public also noted there did not appear to be any pavements shown on the plans and expressed concern at a potential clash between pedestrians and vehicles.

Councillor Wood noted the adjacent development at Bowood View showed how estates could be well designed, with the provision of footpaths and wide roads, with plenty of parking and parking bays.

Cecelia explained in terms of the provision of footways that these had been designed in the plans as submitted as part of the outline application. However, if there are comments back that the provision of footways is not right or appropriate, they would bear these comments in mind.

Councillor Pile asked what form of visitor parking would be provided.

Cecelia explained parking standards were now a maximum and therefore there was a target range of parking provision which looked at the size of the property and number of bedrooms and provided a ratio for parking, including visitor parking on the highway.

The Clerk noted there was reference within documents to the provision of a wild flower seeded meadow and sought confirmation that this was not a one-off activity but in the management company's remit to manage and maintain regularly.

With regard to street naming, the Clerk explained the Council wanted to reflect the connection with the Wilts & Berks Canal and had put forward a suggestion that the canal theme, as with Bowood View, be continued and streets named after canal engineers. The parish council were disappointed that Whitworth, who designed the Wilts & Berks Canal was not chosen for Bowood View and asked that the main spinal road of the development be named after him.

Councillor Wood reminded members of public whilst they could not object to the development itself, as it had been approved at outline stage, they could make comments on the reinforcing of the boundary between Shails Lane and the development and to send their individual comments to Wiltshire Council.

Comments: Whilst not objecting to this application, the Parish Council make the following observations.

Highway Safety/Layout

A concern was raised the straight spine road North to South of the site had potential to be a 'race track' and was an inferior layout than that proposed at outline stage, which encouraged lower speeds within the development.

It was noted the proposed layout had at least four dead ends with residents being expected to pull their bins to

the main spine road. Refuse lorries would be expected to reverse out which was not satisfactory.

Whilst not supporting dead ends within the development, if all or some are to remain, the Parish Council ask that the bin store sites are large enough to take more than just one bin for each house, as several bins are usually collected in any one day. Members also raised a concern people could be tempted to leave their bins out permanently.

It was noted that there is a crossing on the A350 from Hampton Park industrial estate to the Bowerhill industrial estate, but from the point of view of residents of this development, there will only be a single access on the north west corner.

It was noted the affordable housing element seemed to be in distinct groups which could lead to discrimination between residents, therefore, the Council ask the affordable housing element be mixed in more amongst the development.

Shails Lane

Concern was raised that it was possible that residents of the site will attempt to reach the proposed new school at Pathfinder Place, Bowerhill by trying to access the A350, which is extremely dangerous. Members noted following a fatality of someone exiting Shails Lane to access the A350, not long after it opened, the Coroner in their report had stated a form of barrier be erected, which does not appear to have happened as yet.

Members supported the comments by residents with regard to the lane not being suitable for access from this development. Therefore, the Council ask a secure solid boundary be installed, running the whole length of the Southern boundary. A hedge would not be sufficient, as future residents could grub out any hedging and put a gate in, in order to access Shails Lane.

Members asked that a permanent barrier at the end of the current line of dwellings on Shails Lane (adjacent to 514d), just past the old canal bridge be installed, as this would give a clear indication the lane is not an access to the new development and will also discourage people from using the lane as a dog walking area and fly tipping spot.

Other

Where children from the development will go to school. At outline stage the Council had stated the site is a significant distance from any primary schools with the nearest school full with the proposed new primary school at Pathfinder Place not yet built.

It was noted timber play equipment was proposed with one entry gate. It is a policy of the Parish Council not to have this type of equipment and to have two lots of double entrance gates rather than single in order to stop children easily getting out and dogs getting in.

The Council also like to see safety surfacing protrude outside the fencing surrounding any play area, as this allows the mowing of spaces outside the play area to be undertaken without leaving weeds growing up by around the fence. The Parish Council would welcome meeting the developers to discuss the play area in greater detail.

Whilst at outline stage allotments were proposed with the Parish Council stating there was enough provision of allotments in Berryfield. It was noted whilst there appeared to be no proposals in the current plans for allotments, there was reference to allotments in one of the documents, however, there was no mention of who would run these, provision of a car park, security, access, or provision of water mentioned.

Members endorsed the comments by Salisbury and Wilton Swifts in asking for ecological measures to be included on the site, such as bird, bat and bee bricks, reptile refugia and hibernacula.

Whilst mention had been made earlier in the meeting of Great Crested Newts, there did not appear to be information regarding the protection of bat habitats, which were understood to be located on the site.

It was noted Wessex Water had raised a holding objection as there appeared to be conflict with existing pipes.

The Parish Council ask for the following:

- Adherence to policies with the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan.
- Circular pedestrian routes around the site.

Good examples of 'hoggin' circular walks can be found at Bowood View and Pathfinder Place, which are popular with residents and were put in at the request of the Parish Council.

- The provision of benches and bins where there are circular pedestrian routes and public open space and the regular emptying of bins to be reflected in any future maintenance contribution.
- Connectivity to existing housing developments. This is particularly important, as the Parish Council are currently building a new village hall on the adjacent site at Bowood View. The current plans would require residents of the proposed new development to go out onto Semington Road and into Telford Drive to access the hall, which was less than ideal.

It was noted Wiltshire Council's policy was for connectivity with existing development insisting that Sandridge Place had connectivity with the adjacent Churchill Avenue estate.

- Contribution towards improvements to public transport in the area.
- A Speed limit of 20mph within the development which is self-enforcing.
- Affordable housing is tenant blind and constructed in similar materials to other properties on the site.
- The road layout is such that there are no cul de sacs or dead ends, so that the refuse lorries do not have to reverse out.
- A contribution towards medical and educational facilities in the area.
- The Parish Council wish to enter into discussions being the nominated party for the proposed LEAP (Local Equipped Area of Play)/Play Area.

- Whilst the provision of a teen shelter was welcome, at outline stage the Parish Council asked for a MUGA installed in a location away from the LEAP.
- Practical art contributions, and would like to be involved in public art discussions.
- Whilst the Parish Council are keen on trees, ask that these are not planted adjacent to property boundaries, or adjacent to roads in order they do not cause issues later on with overhanging people's boundaries or the highway respectively. They also asked that trees are set back from any ditches adjacent to properties, in order there is enough space for maintain of any ditches to take place.
- When abutting existing houses, the design layout is garden to garden to maintain a distance between existing properties.
- Any proposed 2.5 dwellings or above be located within the centre of the development.
- There are no shared surfaces within the design, if they are included the Parish Council ask there is clear delineation between footpath and road surfaces.
- Whilst it is noted the Wiltshire Council Affordable Housing Officer appears to be happy there are no bungalows proposed for the site, the Parish Council would like to see some provision of bungalows within the development.
- Provision of two bus shelters tall enough and with a power supply to enable real-time information, proper seating (not a perch), side panels and kerbs etc to match that at Bowood View. To be located in the vicinity of the New Inn bus stops.

It was noted in the Decision Notice that one should be erected, however, the Council feel there should be two to replicate what is happening at Bowood View.

- Traffic calming this end of Semington Road.
- Rights of Way Improvements to MELW7, taking the route down to the river. It was noted the Rights of Way Officer is in support of this request and is in discussion with the landowner, with a suggestion the Parish Council ask for funding to cover the diversion order and the bridge construction.

- The provision of a footpath from the new development across the brook with a footbridge, to provide pedestrian access to the village hall, without the need to go out onto Semington Road.
- Provision/contribution towards interpretation signs for the historic line of the Wilts & Berks Canal through the development.
- A contribution towards the new Berryfield village hall for fitting out with furniture, equipment, fittings and towards future running costs.
- A contribution to the land transfer and building costs associated with the provision of a patio/terrace outside the village hall currently under construction.
- A contribution to purchase a Battery to store power from the grid and/or the solar panels for the new village hall/lighting the footpath access in the immediate vicinity.

To send these comments direct to the developers for their information, along with the minutes of the Highways & Streetscene meeting on 21 March 2022, at which improvements to rights of way and highway safety on Semington Road were discussed.

Recommendation: The Parish Council meet with developers regularly until the project is complete and signed off.

Councillor Wood sought approval to move item 9 forward to enable Councillor Holder to listen to the debate, prior to leaving the meeting (the notes of these discussion being recorded at Min 528/21.)

PL/2022/02614: Westlands Farm, Westlands Lane, Whitley. Variation of conditions 2 and 10 to 17/04110/FUL to allow for amended plans related to the permitted Battery Storage Facility. Applicant Melksham East Storage Limited

Comments: No Objection.

PL/2022/02650: Daisy Chain Nursery, 160 West Hill, Whitley. Change the use of the field behind Daisy Chain Day Nursery for use solely as a garden play area for the children.

Comments: The Parish Council have no objection to this application. However, note the application site is outside the settlement boundary and therefore, would not support any development which changes the use of the land to domestic use.

PL/2022/02719: 404 The Spa, Bowerhill. Total rebuild of the existing single floor, double garage structure to the same area but with a slate roof and timber cladding to be more in keeping with the main listed building. Existing building (made of wood, painted concrete blocks and steel corrugated roof).

Comments: No Objection and welcome.

PL/2022/02955: Willowbank Cottage, New Road, Melksham. Regularisation of existing building as a domestic annex with a minor extension.

Comments: No Objection. However, the Parish Council ask that a condition be placed on the application that the annex cannot be sold as a separate dwelling.

PL/2022/03008: 486A Semington Road, Melksham. Variation of condition 2 of 18/06413/FUL - To allow for wider garage and carport.

Comments: No Objection.

PL/2022/03132: 34 Shaw Hill, Shaw. Single storey rear and side extension, internal alterations, loft conversion, garage conversion.

Comments: No Objection.

527/21 Revised Plans To comment on any revised plans received within the required timeframe **(14 days)**

No revised plans were received for consideration.

528/21 Public Consultation Re 650 Houses at Blackmore Farm. To consider a response as part of the public consultation and to note various items of correspondence from residents.

It was noted various correspondence from residents had been received objecting to proposals for 650 dwellings at Blackmore Farm.

Resolved: To send the following comments to the public consultation.

Melksham Without Parish Council **STRONGLY OBJECT** to proposals for 650 dwellings on this site for the following reasons:

- The proposals do not answer the strategic needs of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan area and in fact distinctly hinder any future strategic plans for Melksham in terms of master planning.
- The development is in the open countryside, outside the Settlement Boundary of Melksham & Bowerhill, isolated and therefore unsustainable.
- The Melksham Neighbourhood Plan was made on 8 July 2022 and therefore meets the NPPF “Paragraph 14” criteria in the light of the current lack of 5-year land supply, demonstrated by Wiltshire Council.
- The Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group are currently undertaking a Call for Sites (during April and May 2022) for the purposes of allocation in the emerging review of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan and this site has not been submitted as part of that process.
- The proposals are not part of any housing allocation in the current Melksham Neighbourhood Plan. The proposals do not adhere to policies within the Plan, particularly policies 1, 6, 8, 11 and 18 with regard to sustainable design and construction, housing in defined settlements, infrastructure phasing and priorities, sustainable transport & active travel and local distinctive, high-quality design, respectively.
- There is a lack of connectivity with the surrounding area and lack of connection to Eastern Way.
- Highway safety concerns with two entrances/exits close together proposed on Sandridge Road, at the bottom of a steep hill and on a bend, with several accidents having taken place along this stretch of road over the years.
- The proposal for a single form entry primary school does not meet the Wiltshire Council criteria of two form entry school provision.

Whilst the parish council strongly object to the proposals, the parish council ask that the following be included in any future planning application:

- Adherence to policies of the current Melksham Neighbourhood Plan and those of the emerging review of the Plan.
- The route in the 2nd non-statutory consultation for the proposed A350 Melksham detailed a roundabout junction on Sandridge Road. Therefore, with ‘T’ junctions proposed on to Sandridge Road, they would impede traffic flow and cause traffic chaos. A suggestion

is made that roundabouts should be installed instead, in order to ease traffic flow; if the planning application were to progress further.

- The Parish Council enter into discussions to be the nominated party for any proposed LEAPs (Local Equipped Area of Play)/Play area.
- Equipment installed for teenagers.
- Provision of fenced in allotments with water, car park, security measures.
- Circular pedestrian routes around the site.
- The provision of benches and bins where there are circular pedestrian routes and public open space and the regular emptying of bins to be reflected in any future maintenance contribution.
- Connectivity with existing housing development.
- There are practical art contributions, with the Parish Council being involved in public art discussions
- Speed limit within the site is 20mph and self-enforcing.
- The development is tenant blind.
- If adjacent to existing dwellings the design is such that the layout is garden to existing garden.
- The road layout is such that there are no dead ends in order that residents and refuse lorries do not need to reverse out of roads.
- Contribution to educational and medical facilities within the Melksham area.
- There is visible delineation between pavement and roads. Shared spaces which are easily identifiable.
- Tree planting is not adjacent to property boundaries, in order they do not cause issues later on with growing over the boundary to resident's properties or causing shade on gardens.
- Large contribution towards the enhancement of public transport for at least the first 5 years.
- Contribution towards bus shelters which are tall enough and with a power supply to enable real time information to be installed. To give

good shelter from the weather to users including sides to the shelters, with a bench seat rather than a perch seat.

- More land be set aside to enable a functional community hub.
- Provision of Local Centre, similar to nearby Verbena Court, with the provision of electric car charging points (in line with Policy 4 of the Neighbourhood Plan).
- Large contribution towards community facilities, noting a precedent has been set with £500,000 coming forward for village hall/community centres by both developers for the 450 dwellings East of Melksham and the 150 dwellings on Semington Road (Bowood View) for village halls/community centres; to be increased from this precedent in line with the rate of inflation.
- Contribution towards green initiatives i.e., provision of charging points, local green energy production and battery storage for the community hub.
- Improvements to existing Rights of Way in the area, which are understood to have been submitted by Wiltshire Council's Rights of Way Team as part of their response to the proposals.
- The parish council ask in addition to those improvements for the provision of pedestrian access to Praters Lane from Sandridge Road around Lopes Close, by providing a route under the overhead power lines on the proposed development site.
- Right of Way MELW30 becomes a bridleway to connect up bridleways at MELW40 & 41, particularly as there are many stables in this area.
- Ecological measures such as bird and bat boxes, bee bricks, reptile refugia and hibernacula with all these enhancements (types, numbers, position etc) marked on plans and drawings.

529/21 Planning Enforcement: To note any new planning enforcement queries raised and updates on previous enforcement queries.

The Clerk explained the Council were still awaiting the outcome a several enforcement queries which had been submitted to Planning Enforcement in recent weeks for investigation.

a) **Westlands Lane Battery Storage (17/04110).** To note comments from Planning Enforcement following complaints of HGVs using Westlands Lane.

The Clerk explained it appeared the problem of HGVs using Westland

Lanes to access the battery storage on Westlands Lane appeared to have been resolved following requests by Planning Enforcement to the development Site Manager.

530/21 Planning Appeal: APP/Y3940/W/21/3285428: Semington Road. To note outcome of appeal hearing (if received)

The Clerk explained there was still no update on the outcome of the appeal hearing for the 50 dwellings to the rear of Townsend Farm (20/07334/OUT).

531/21 Planning Policy

a) WALPA (Wiltshire Area Local Planning Alliance) Update

Information on the outcome of the meeting held on 5 May between representatives of WALPA and Nick Botterill, Cabinet Member; Georgina Clampit-Dix, Head of Spatial Planning; Mike Kilminster, Neighbourhood Planning Manager and Parvis Khansari, Corporate Director for Place, Wiltshire Council had been circulated to Members for information.

The Clerk explained there seemed to be little appetite from Wiltshire Council to engage in a joined-up approach, with members of WALPA expressing frustration.

Recommendation: To circulate the information from WALPA to all 6 Melksham/Melksham Without Wiltshire Councillors and to make WALPA aware of the action taken.

b) Neighbourhood Planning

i) To reflect on responses to planning applications for review of the Neighbourhood Plan

No new responses to note.

ii) To note minutes of Steering Group meeting held on 27 April 2022

Members noted the minutes of the Steering Group meeting held on 27 April 2022.

iii) To make recommendation to Full Council on spending on Review work by Place Studio, and further non grant funded Work

The Clerk explained whilst the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had been successful in receiving grant funding of a further £10,000 from Locality for the review of the current Neighbourhood Plan, there was no further grant funding available, however, the group had been successful in applying for technical support on various

aspects of the plan in order to save costs. However, the current tranche of work being undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan consultants to review the plan was £21,743. Therefore, both the Town Council and the Parish Council needed to approve funding their share of the remaining costs of £11,743 as follows:

Melksham Without Parish Council:	£3,522.90 (30% share)
Melksham Town Council:	£8,220.10 (70% share)

The Clerk explained as the group were not meeting regularly, whether delegated powers could be given to enable any invoices associated with the review of the plan to be paid immediately without having to wait for a meeting for approval, particularly as the funding would be via the £10,000 grant funding received.

Recommendation: To approve the Council's share of the costs associated with the Neighbourhood Plan consultants undertaking their current tranche of work in review the Neighbourhood Plan of £3,522.90 (30%) and that all future costs for the Neighbourhood Plan would be borne by the two councils as there is no further grant funding available.

That delegated powers be given to enable invoices to be paid associated with the Neighbourhood Plan Review.

c) To note Permitted Development Laws revised for rural roll-out of 4G and 5G

Members noted a series of changes had been announced to planning laws to provide people with better 4G and 5G mobile coverage as part of the Government's plans to 'level up' the Country, which included conditions being in place to ensure telecoms equipment did not block pavements and access to properties.

d) To note correspondence from Semington Parish Council

Members noted Semington Parish Council had adopted a new planning policy in relation to applications for medium to large scale new developments in the Parish.

Councillor Glover noted some of the policy would also be useful in including in Melksham's Neighbourhood Plan.

532/21 S106 Agreements and Developer meetings: (Standing Item)

a) To note update on ongoing and new S106 Agreements

i) Hunters Wood/The Acorns: Update on Footpath to rear of Melksham Oak School, Community Centre.

The Clerk explained there was no update on the footpath to the rear of Melksham Oak School. However, noted proposals for the extension of Forest & Sandridge School were being considered at a Western Area Planning Committee at Wiltshire Council on 11 May. Whilst East of Melksham used to be in the Parish, this was no longer the case following a Governance Review, but noted with interest the Town Council had objected to proposals to extend the school and asked if any Members wished to attend the meeting particularly as it was understood that the s106 funding was ringfenced only for use extending this school.

Unfortunately, no Members were available to attend the meeting.

ii) Bowood View: To receive update on play area, bins, and management company

The Clerk explained the play area was now finished and a site visit had been arranged with Stephen Hawkins, Wiltshire Council to inspect it this Thursday at 11.00am and sought volunteers to attend the meeting along with herself. It was suggested Councillor Holt be contacted to see if she was available to attend.

With regard to the village hall, the Clerk explained a request for directional signage as previously discussed had been submitted to LHFIG (former CATG) for consideration at its next meeting on 19th May.

Recommendation: To approve the request for directional signage being submitted to LHFIG for consideration.

iii) Pathfinder Way: To receive update on Play Area, Street works, Public Art, School

An update on Pathfinder Way had been provided earlier in the meeting by Councillor Holder.

b) To note any S106 decisions made under delegated powers

None to note.

c) Contact with developers

The Clerk explained she had been contacted by Catesby who had an interest in the land to the South of the site currently being promoted by Gleesons to the rear of Blackmore Farm.

Guidance had been sought at a recent Neighbourhood Plan meeting and therefore had sought clarification from Catesby whether they were wishing to promote their site through the neighbourhood plan process or whether they were requesting a pre-app meeting with the Parish Council.

Catesby stated they would like to meet with both the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and the Parish Council regarding a general discussion about their site.

Councillors expressed caution on meeting Catesby at the current time, given the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group were currently undertaking a call for sites which would end of 5 June.

Recommendation: The Neighbourhood Plan Group write back to say a review of the Neighbourhood Plan is currently taking place and are undertaking a 'call for sites' exercise to which they have responded and as with the other SHELAA sites will be contacted after the 5 June deadline.

Meeting finished at 9.40pm

Signed
Annual Council Meeting, 16 May 2022