

**NOTES OF OPEN MEETING FOR PRESENTATION OF PLANNING APPLICATION
FOR BARBARA'S FIELD AND BROWN'S GROUND (2021/0071/OTS)
HELD ON 27th JANUARY 2021 (via Zoom)**

Present: P Travis (Chair of PC), A Edney, P Restorick, S Eyles, E Butler, M Salmon, J McAuliffe, Cllr B Lund, Cllr L Oliver and 30 Parishioners

The meeting was held to inform Parishioners of the application and to enable them to ask questions of the Landowner (Andy Fussell) and the site Promoter (Simon Steele-Perkins, Director of Waddeton Park).

Simon Steel-Perkins (SS) said that the application needed to get feedback and now that it was a 'live' application it would be possible to get this, in particular from Mendip and other technical officers. He added that if any of tonight's questions were too technical he may have to seek comment from the consultants that had been employed to develop the application. He added that Mendip, and Somerset would be raising technical issues in their review of the application.

The application covered about 14 acres, half of which would be built on with 45 dwellings (these on Barbara' Field) with 4 others on Church Lane. The remainder of the land would be given to the Parish Council (PC) with a change of use of Brown's Ground from agricultural to public use.

The composition of the housing would be such that 30% (15 properties) would be 'affordable'* housing and these would remain as such for ever. Additionally, 15 properties would be 'age-restricted' (i.e. for over 50's) and these (some of which would be bungalows) would probably be developed by a separate company such as Blue Cedar Homes. It was added that the 15 properties are not mutually exclusive.

Andy Fussell (AF) added that over the years there had been proposals to build on Brown's Ground but under these plans this would not happen and it would be up to the PC to determine how it was used.

A question was raised as to how many of the houses on the Church Farm development had been gone to those in Rode, or to Mendip residents in general and also how many of the 'affordable' homes had been similarly taken up. AF was unable to give definite answers but said all the 'affordable' housing had been taken by the company running it. Nearly all plots had been sold and although not necessarily to Mendip some had gone to residents from Bath and Keynsham. The Chair added that none of the 'affordable' properties went to local or Mendip residents.

A question on garden sizes was raised as these were said to be 'generous' but no information given and with recent developments outside space was more important to all. SS agreed to investigate this but admitted the sizes could change during development.

AF said this was an Outline Planning Application which after comments, would either be granted permission or not. If granted, Reserved Matters would be specified through a Section 106 and then a Developer would take on the project (complying with the Section 106 requirements). Further comments can be made prior to the actual Build.

Comment was made as to why this was only Outline Planning as the number of supporting documents would support full a planning application but, these might not be adhered to by the Developer as this was not a full planning application. SS and AF said that a full planning application (with a house builder working directly with the Landowner) meant a more expensive application and the Reserved Matters would link back to the current documentation and reports. The number and type of dwellings would not change (although appearance could) – this had been the process under which the Church Farm development had progressed.

It was suggested some properties had been excluded from the Heritage report on the application, SS said this was not the case and agreed to forward the relevant documents.

Considerable concern was expressed over the poor sustainability commitment of the development as it had been hoped this might have been a visionary project. There was little information on energy efficiency apart from statements to conform to Mendip and Building Regulation requirements. Should not heat pumps, water harvesting, solar tiles and other criteria be asked for. SS and AF said that these could come at the Reserved Matters stage. There remained some concern over this and this could be a far more ecologically aspirational project. SS and AF agreed to review this aspect of the planning application.

The issue of traffic increase through the village on narrow roads was of concern and some of the data given in the Transport Statement was questioned. Concern over the use of Clay Lane in particular was raised and to designate it 'residents only' could be seen as an option. SS said that he would welcome input and proposals on how best to handle access around Clay Lane.

Rode Neighbourhood Plan published in 2017 had overwhelmingly declared neither Barbara's Field nor Merfield should be built on, AF said that this would remain the case for Brown's Ground with this development. However, development would see Rode survive as a Primary Village. In response to when Brown's Ground would be handed over he said this would be done under Reserved Matters adding that water supply to allotments and path installation would be done by the Developers. It was unlikely that any extra drainage would be installed as grass and trees should alleviate the current water run-off problems.

There was concern raised over who would be responsible for the 'buffer zone' between the development and the properties on Bradford Road. SS said that either the Bradford Road householder or the new householder on the development would be responsible for this (at a cost).

It was thought the decision on the application would not be made by Mendip until after Easter.

**Note: Simplified definition from NPPF 2019 – 'Affordable Housing is generally housing that is sold at 20% below the local market value or is rented at least 20% below the local market rent.'*

This will be far more appealing to anyone coming from a more expensively priced region, e.g. Bath.