

NORTH TAWTON TOWN COUNCIL

Temporary Town Clerk:
Mrs S Say

14a The Square North Tawton
EX20 2EP
Tel 01837 880121

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of North Tawton Town Council held at the North Tawton Town Hall on **Thursday 19 January 2017 at 7.30 pm**

Present: Cllr S Whiteley Cllr Mrs K Tizard
Cllr Mr K Hodge Cllr Mrs C Burrow
Cllr Mr M Fisher Cllr Ms J Trehitt
Cllr Mrs A Ponsford Cllr Mr M Kennedy
Temporary Town Clerk Mrs S Say

The meeting opened at 7.30 pm

Members of the public were present.

1. Open Forum – An opportunity for the Electors and others to address the Town Council.

The Council encourages the use of an Open forum. This will allow Members of the Public to address the Town Council. Time will be limited to two minutes per person unless the Chairman rules otherwise. If research is needed members of the public are asked to indicate what is needed in advance to the clerk otherwise – if appropriate - an item will be placed on a future agenda. A brief note will be made of any discussion at this point. Please note that Councillors are not obliged to give their opinion or answer questions.

1.1 Cllr Mrs C Burrow, as Chairman of this meeting, advised that the meeting is being held to discuss planning application reference 3836/16/FUL, as well as the other agenda items. The open forum section of the meeting is to allow questions and comments from members of the public, on agenda items only. The Chairman introduced Mr Ian Roach, of Wain Homes, who will answer questions relating to this specific planning application.

1.2 Member of the public: Post-Brexit should we not be retaining good agricultural land for food production? Also, Government guidance suggests brownfield sites should take precedence over greenfield sites for planning applications. Why are Wain Homes 'sitting on' planning permission for 64 dwellings at the Old Woollen Mill site?

Mr Ian Roach: The Woollen Mill is a challenging site, Wain Homes prefer to build on greenfield sites as it is more straightforward. Mr Roach stated that there is a lot of greenfield land in Devon, as may be evidenced by looking at Google Earth. Additionally towns and villages have to grow, and be given an opportunity to thrive.

1.3 Ms P Mills, Council for the Protection of Rural England: There are enough brownfield sites across the country for 1m homes. Once greenfield land is developed it won't come back again. Additionally there is a need for affordable homes.

Mr Ian Roach: The site in question will include 25 affordable rented dwellings and 15 shared ownership dwellings, which complies with WDBC planning requirements.

1.4 Member of the public: If 40% of the dwellings are 'affordable' does it mean the remaining 60% are unaffordable?

1.5 Member of the public: Having recently moved into a house on the existing part of the site, they understand the need for housing. However, they are horrified at the application for 100 more homes. North Tawton is being described as a local centre

sustainable for growth, but NT is more like a village than a town and cannot support so many new houses. Some of the new residents are local people, others commute to Exeter and further afield. The traffic is projected to increase by one more car per minute at peak times. What about the GP surgery? – can the existing GPs take an additional 200 extra patients or more? What about the primary school? With reference to affordable homes, these are usually bought up by Housing Associations, but as the Government has cut their funding will they be able to do this? What about the allotments originally proposed? – has this facility been lost completely now? Is this development sustainable and is it what people want? Wain Homes own much more land in this location, will there be further planning applications in the future?

Mr Ian Roach: With regard to transportation sustainability, the site fits the criteria due to the facilities of the town. The site is well connected to public footpaths, and there will be improvements to pedestrian access to encourage walking and/or cycling into the town. With reference to the pressures on medical and educational facilities, Section 106 agreements often require financial contributions from developers.

- 1.6 Member of the public:** The planning statement accompanying the application states that WDBC does not have a 5 year land supply. However, there is a WDBC document re land supply which says that a 5 year supply of deliverable land does exist, and additionally planning permissions have been granted for even more housing.

Mr Ian Roach: It is news to Mr Roach that there is apparently a 5 year supply. However, in some ways this is irrelevant in that this application is credible and with merit.

- 1.7 Member of the public:** Statistics show that the growth in North Tawton is greater than that in the rest of West Devon. It appears that the minimum planning requirement for NT has already been met or exceeded. Therefore why has this application been submitted and not being rejected by WDBC?

Mr Ian Roach: There is good demand for the properties on the existing Batheway site, and a demand for affordable housing, and that is what is being provided.

- 1.8 Member of the public:** Is it correct that no Housing Association has yet taken up any allocation of affordable housing?

Mr Ian Roach: This is still the subject of negotiation.

- 1.9 Member of the public:** With regard to infrastructure, the number of shops within the town is very much less than it used to be. There is also a severe lack of public parking. Would Wain Homes be prepared to build a school or build a car park? Or not just allocate the land.

Mr Ian Roach: The viability of shops is a question of supply and demand. More people means more demand. Wain Homes do not build schools, but will fulfil any requirement for a financial contribution. In December Wain Homes held a presentation to demonstrate their aspirations for the town. It is possible that there could be a small car park provision in the top corner of the site closest to the town.

- 1.10 Member of the public:** Speaking as a new resident, this person declared that they have knowledge that the whole Batheway site will eventually extend right round to Gregory's/the river. When he bought his house there was mention that more houses might be built, now it appears to be a 'done deal'. There was then mention of the state of the build of his property and the various problems that had allegedly occurred. The Chairman reminded the meeting that this issue is not relevant as it is outside the scope of the agenda and therefore cannot be discussed.

Mr Ian Roach: Mr Roach thanked the Chairman for intervening on this point, but said he would choose to address the alleged problems by stating that the site manager has been replaced and that many improvements have already been made and continue to be made.

- 1.11 Member of the public:** It was stated that the build condition of the houses IS relevant in that what is the lifespan of houses if not properly built?
Mr Ian Roach – Mr Roach does not have the answer to this specific question.
- 1.12 Member of the public:** Speaking as a new resident of the site who has moved in from 3 miles away, and was told and always knew from the beginning that 100 more houses were due to be built. The problem is that the houses are the wrong size, ie too large, and therefore are not affordable locally – hence she has to commute to Taunton to a job well paid enough to afford her new home.
- 1.13 Two members of the public:** The numbers of extra people moving in are killing the town not improving it.
Mr Ian Roach – disagrees with this statement.
- 1.14 Member of the public:** New homes should be built to a good standard and not approved if they are no good.
- 1.15 Member of the public:** Query re proposed new application for 12 more homes which is apparently due to be submitted – will this be on the original surgery site? And with reference to the applications for 28 homes, are these on the original industrial allocated area on the site?
Mr Ian Roach: Yes, in short. The original application for 28 more homes is subject of an appeal, there is a new application in for the same 28, amended slightly. Mr Roach further confirmed that there is an idea that 12 more homes could be built on the area originally allocated for a medical centre.
- 1.16 Members of the public:** So therefore there are due to be an extra 140 home in total, not just 100.
- 1.17 Members of the public:** Comment re the effect of more homes on public transport, with busses travelling through the town etc.
- 1.18 Member of the public:** Comment re environmental issues – it seems there will be a pond on the site, but this is merely related to the drainage. There is no mention of use of renewables or energy saving measures.

**THE OPEN FORUM CLOSED AT 8.10 PM AT WHICH TIME THE MEETING
 MOVED ON TO THE MAIN AGENDA**

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for Absence** – Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs G Hoggins (unwell); Cllr Mr I MacLeod (on holiday) and Cllr Miss B Rice (prior family commitments). (Cllr Mr I Palmer was not present, and did not send an apology for non-attendance). It was unanimously agreed to accept the apologies.
- 2. Declarations of Interest** – There were no declarations of interest.
- 3. PLANNING MATTERS**
 To consider the planning applications received from West Devon Borough Council and to make recommendations.
 - 3.1 Reference: 3836/16/FUL**
 Proposal: Full planning application for 100 residential dwellings with associated roads, footways, parking, landscaping and drainage.
 Location: Land west of High Street known as Batheway Fields, North Tawton, Devon, EX20 2FN
 - 3.1.1** There were 7 formal objections to this application on the WDBC website, these objections were read out in summary form to the meeting.
 - 3.1.2** The Chairman advised that at the Council's January meeting it had been agreed to convene this extraordinary meeting. The Council has requested an extension of the

time allowed in which to make its formal response to this application, this extension has been granted by WDBC (8 February 2017). The Council will make their final decision as to their response at their next scheduled Ordinary Meeting on Tuesday 7 February 2017. Comments were then invited from those Councillors present.

3.1.3 Settlement Boundary – Cllr M Fisher mentioned the settlement boundary. The whole of the Bathway Fields site is outside of the current boundary. The Planning Statement makes much of the fact that the Webbs Orchard development is outside of the boundary also – however, the original part of the development was within the boundary and it is only the second part, consisting of 3 extra dwellings, which is outside of the boundary.

Mr Ian Roach commented ‘You cannot blame us for trying.’

3.1.4 Cllr Ms J Trehitt, as Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Group, encouraged parishioners to make formal comments on the Neighbourhood Plan, there is still time for this. The NP Group will make their comment on this application to the rest of the Council in due course. As far as the NP is concerned, the Old Woollen Mill is the priority site for development and brownfield sites are preferred. The NP group is aware of concerns about infrastructure and aspirations for high energy efficiency etc.

3.1.5 WDBC Ward Cllr Mrs Louise Watts – The Chairman asked Cllr Watts if she had any comments to make – Cllr Watts feels that many relevant comments have been made this evening, which she will certainly be taking back to the planners at WDBC, and she would encourage parishioners to make formal comments on the WDBC website.

3.2 4017/16/HHO

Proposal: Householder application for the extension to the side and rear of dwelling involving replacement existing man made slate for natural slate, re-rendering and new wall/railing to front garden.

Location: 9 Barton Street, North Tawton, Devon, EX20 2HN

3.2.1 It was confirmed that this application is a re-submission of a former similar application.

3.2.2 After some discussion, Cllr Mr M Fisher proposed that the Council make a site visit, which was seconded by Cllr Mr K Hodge, and unanimously agreed. The Clerk will arrange a site visit in the very near future and will be in touch with Councillors accordingly.

4. Nominations – Royal Garden Party 1 June 2017

All Councils are invited to put forward a nomination for the above event, the closing date is 1 February 2017. To consider a nomination from North Tawton Town Council.

4.1.1 It was agreed that the usual protocol is that the Chair of the Council is nominated. On this basis, Cllr Mr M Fisher proposed nominating Cllr Mrs G Hoggins, this was seconded by Cllr Mrs A Ponsford, and there was a majority agreement, with one abstention. The Clerk will progress the nomination accordingly.

5. Date of next meeting

The date of the next Ordinary Meeting of North Tawton Town Council is Tuesday 7 February 2017 at 7.30 pm in the Council Offices, The Square, North Tawton.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.