

Dunston Grange Extension

Minutes of Meeting with Councillor Gordon Simmons Tuesday 25th May

The meeting was attended by 30 people including Councillor Simmons.

As the meeting did not have a structured agenda apart from the below questions and concerns the minutes are noted against each point in the document below.

Concerns and questions v2 Infrastructure • The initial proposals mention a primary school and shops. What about doctors surgeries, dentists and other crucial infrastructure?

- The discussion centred on whether these services would be provided, and the general consensus was that other than shops no other public services would be provided as there are no funds earmarked for these. It was confirmed that there are no plans for provision of these additional services. The general feeling from the attendees was that another development of shops is not needed in the area as there is already plenty of provision.
- The surrounding roads (Dunston Road, Newbold Road, Dunston Lane) do not have capacity for large volumes of traffic. William Davis have said in their proposal that this will be “mitigated”. How will it be mitigated? There are concerns the area will end up with congestion similar to Derby Road after all the property development there.
 - This was discussed at length with the outcome being that it is clear that there are no plans to change the existing road structure, i.e., road widening on Dunston Road. There was discussion regarding the possibility of a roundabout on Dunston Road at the eastern junction with the development. It was agreed that the roads surrounding this proposed development are not suitable for the number of cars which would be generated by the development and other current developments in the area i.e., new homes, Unstone Holiday Park, Dunston Hall wedding venue, refurbished Dunston Garden Centre.
 - It was raised that there is a planned entrance to the cricket field on a fast section of Dunston road which presents a potential danger to emerging traffic. Also, the entrance road crosses a pedestrian/cycle link on the proposed development presenting a further potential danger.
 - Julie mentioned that the last traffic survey of Dunston Road was undertaken in 2002.
 - Residents in Cutthorpe and Barlow have been campaigning for more traffic management to combat speeding. Will this issue likely be made worse by more traffic from Dunston and an increase in commuters?
 - There were concerns expressed regarding additional traffic on its safety impact on schools in the local area.
 - Councillor Simmons did say that some time in the past traffic management on Dunston Road had been investigated but no further action was approved.
 - There was also concern from residents in Cutthorpe regarding the potential increase in traffic accessing the Peak District via Dunston Road and Main Road from the proposed Grange Extension development and being added to by current developments and the major proposed holiday park development in Unstone.

Political and legislative

- Suburbia seems to be expanding whilst rural areas are in decline. Why is brown space not being utilised for these developments?
- Questions were asked by many attending members regarding why brown land in the Chesterfield area was not being built on before green land. It was raised that there is a lot of land in the immediate area to this proposed development that is currently derelict brown land, such as large areas of Sheepbridge. Building on brown land would also improve the environment. The councillor acknowledged our points on this matter.

- The land is an allocated development site, does this make building on the site inevitable? The Councillor stated that this is not inevitable as planning approval is still required and that residents in the area would have the opportunity to express the concerns regarding the development.
- Change in planning laws mean that local councils can receive a fine if they refuse planning. Is this true of this development? In which case, if concerns raised by residents are not adequately addressed, how hard would opposing the development be?
 - Yes this is correct that the Council would receive a heavy fine if they have denied planning approval which is subsequently overturned at appeal. It was agreed that this should not prevent the development being opposed by interested parties.
- Is the area going to continue to be scouted by developers? Between Skylarks, Strata and Dunston extension there will be an influx of new homes (946), will there be more? There are concerns this area will go the same way as Clay Cross and Old Tupton.
 - This was discussed and one of the attendees believed that eventually development would continue to Newbold Road, however this was not confirmed so requires further investigation.
- Developers have built on a former tip with the Strata estate but large parts of Sheepbridge are derelict, why not build there?
- See point above Environmental and Ecological - there are concerns over the local ecosystem and wildlife.
- It was suggested that if we are unhappy with the wildlife survey which has recently been published then we should have our own survey undertaken.
- William Davis have controversially practiced “netting” of hedges and trees during construction whilst building on the Skylarks development. Would this happen again? This concern was raised but could not be confirmed.
- Despite preliminary reports dismissing flooding in the area, there has been flooding in this area and concerns have been raised about potential flood issues and water irrigation.
 - It was pointed out that flooding already occurs in nearby fields and that the concreting and tarmacking of the current fields would only exacerbate this situation.
- There is undoubtedly going to be more pollution in the area, more litter, more energy usage, more co2 emissions. Is this really sustainable for the area?
 - It was agreed that this should be a key focus in any opposition to this development. For example all, houses on the current Skylarks development have been supplied with gas boilers which are being phased out by the UK Government in the near future. Action groups should therefore propose to the council that a green energy strategy should be employed if this development were to be approved, this making it more difficult and expensive for the developers.
 - It was confirmed that that the council planning committee can stipulate that new developments must have green energy systems etc.
 - It was also confirmed that the planning committee can stipulate many conditions prior to giving planning approval.
- Current residents are reporting that all the extra houses are already impacting the area with more people on the footpath through farms and an increase in litter, most noticeably discarded pop bags that end up in horses fields . This would presumably only get worse.
 - This concern was raised.

Social aspects, farming and community

- Residents whose property overlook the proposed development site have paid a premium for the location of their property. The recent Skylarks development was even marketed as being “surrounded by fresh, open countryside and natural beauty”. Is it fair those current residents should now lose that benefit?
 - It was agreed that a leaflet drop should be made to all affected areas by this development and should mention the above specifically for Skylarks residents.
- The tenant farmer has lost 100 acres of land, there isn't 100 acres available locally, that's a massive dent in his finances. All the straw for bedding the horses at Dunston Equestrian Centre came off of that land . They don't make farming land anymore, farmland is not disposable. The impacts on the local community are already being felt.
 - This point was raised.
- Throughout the pandemic, green spaces have provided a much needed reprieve. The value of green space to people's mental wellbeing should not be underestimated.
 - It was agreed that this should be a key focus in any opposition to this development.
- There is currently a footpath and bridle path on this land. Even if access is partly retained, the space will be irreversibly altered.
 - The bridlepath could be lost as it is not registered.
- The proposal mentions a new pub on the development, in a time when local pubs are struggling, this seems badly thought out. Especially as the pub would most like be a large part of a large chain, putting it into direct competition with existing local businesses that need the support of the community.
 - There was general agreement from the attendees that this is not needed and that it would damage existing businesses in the area.

Affordability

- How affordable will these homes actually be? There were less than 10 houses listed as “affordable” on the Skylarks development. William Davis have stated in their leaflet that their affordable houses will help combat the current housing by crisis. The majority of reports produced on how to solve the housing crisis outline that new builds are not the answer and that more social housing is of key importance. So how true are the claims from William Davis regarding this?
 - There was a general discussion regarding affordable homes, but the above question was not specifically addressed.
 - Sonia Baines looked on Rightmove for houses in the Chesterfield area under £200k and found 297 currently for sale. It was also mentioned by one of the attendees that there are several hundred empty homes in the Chesterfield area.

Public Services - local

- How are local public services going to be increased to match the additional population?
 - Additional pressure on secondary schools, Queens Park Leisure Centre, primary care, social services, dentists and particularly the Royal Hospital. (3,624 people based on 4 per house just in Strata, Skylarks and Dunston Grange Extension alone!) It was confirmed that there are no plans to increase funding for these additional public services in Chesterfield.

Policy

- Why use (any) greenfield sites ahead of available brownfield sites? The council state that 60% will be built on brownfield land and 40% on green land. If the minimum requirement was adhered to all houses could be built on brown land without the need to destroy green land. (as quoted by the Derbyshire times. Using brownfield sites would also improve the environment of the people who live near to those sites. A win / win situation.
- The above point was made to the Councillor. The outcome of this discussion was that builders prefer to build on greenfield as it is cheaper, and this is a fact fully understood by the council Development Plan Guarantee • How can we trust that this builder would actually deliver the proposed cricket pitch when we know they ground/ have undertaken substrate assessment drilling on the pitch itself?
- Is it possible to get cast iron guarantees for the cricket pitch and pavilion and its location? As currently these are only cited as 'proposed' on their consultation brochure.
- It was stated that this cannot be guaranteed and ultimately the developer can change their site plan at any period during the development pending further planning permission.

OTHER POINTS OF NOTE

- It was raised that it is becoming increasingly dangerous for horses and riders on Dunston Road, the same applies for cyclists.
- It was noted that due to the narrow roads in the Skylarks development cars are parked on footpaths to allow traffic to flow. Additional traffic from the new development would make this situation worse especially if the proposed law is passed to ban footpath parking.
- Additional light pollution affecting existing area residents and wildlife.
- There was concern regarding dust from building work, this has occurred, and affected residents close to the Skylarks development
- It was suggested by an attendee that the group should focus their objections around health and safety issues.
- It was raised by one of the attendees that he felt the permission had already been granted due to the details on page 115 of the Chesterfield Borough Council Local Plan 2018-2035. Although this is not the case that planning approval has been approved (plans have yet to be submitted) it does appear to indicate that planning permission is a foregone conclusion pending the acceptance by the developer of the items on part SS6 of page 115. See Appendix 1.
- Several attendees suggested that the name of the group should not include the word "Residents" as the group can also be joined by other interested parties who are not local residents.

TIMESCALES

Councillor Simmons stated that there is no point approaching the council until the application for planning permission has been requested. The time to act on this is two weeks prior to the planning committee meeting to discuss the application. We will be notified when the planning meeting is to be held.

Appendix 1.

LAND NORTH OF DUNSTON 11.32. Land to the north of Dunston and south of the Green Belt forms a strategic opportunity for housing delivery across the plan period. However due to the potential scale of development and landscape sensitivity it is essential that any development be carefully planned through a masterplan to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is delivered in a timely manner to ensure a sustainable community where residents have access on foot to day to day shops, services and leisure space, and where development is integrated into the landscape and surrounding areas in a sensitive manner. 11.33. At the time of writing reserved matters planning permission is in place for 299 dwellings on land to the west of Dunston Lane (following the submission of outline application: CHE/16/00016/OUT). This forms the first phase of development with access to existing services in Dunston and at Littlemoor Local Centre. Later phases will need to make provision for a new local centre and to reserve a site for a new one form entry primary school, in the event that existing provision is not sufficient for later phases. 11.34. The area is sensitive in terms of landscape. The ridge line at the north west boundary is particularly sensitive and will require early implementation of a carefully designed landscaping treatment to minimise the impact of residential development on the landscape and ridgeline. The part of the site to the far west will also be retained and improved for open space and habitat, and includes the opportunity to re-instate a former Cricket Ground to active use.

SS6

Land at Dunston Planning permission will be granted for residential development for approximately 500 dwellings on land north of Dunston and south east of Dunston Road as allocated on the Policies Map and as set out in Table 4 (site reference SS6). Development should be carried out in accordance with a masterplan to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority prior to development that demonstrates: i. acceptable access arrangements from Dunston Road and Dunston Lane; ii. appropriate provision for walking and cycling within the site. iii. appropriate transport mitigation to ensure an acceptable impact on the highway network for all users; iv. appropriate mitigation to minimise any adverse impacts to the significance of affected heritage assets, including their settings. v. provision of a new local centre to serve development; vi. provision of a site reserved for a new one form entry primary school (to be retained until such time as required or evidence can be provided of a lack of need); vii. a scheme of green infrastructure including landscaping, open space, play and sports provision including re-instatement of the former cricket pitch, and early implementation of a landscaping and planting scheme.