

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF WEST DOWN PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD AT WEST DOWN PARISH HALL ON 11<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2019.

Present: Cllr C King (Chairman), DCllr Wilkinson, Cllrs M Reeves, S Squire, S Ayre, R Drew and R Watts.

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:30pm with apologies from Cllr K Oades.

4028. Public Speaking.

The owner of Willingcott Valley Holiday Village told the meeting that when he purchased the site in 2018 it was in a very unloved state after many years of decline. The vision was a holiday park. After consultation with owners of the properties already on site he proposed 150 further units and various facilities. After a public meeting that local councils attended it was decided to scale down to 107 units (10 already approved) and to only build in the valley. The new development will need significant investment and will benefit the current site property owners. A traffic survey was undertaken and the report came back as it being a traffic neutral situation. This is worked out by national statistics on a data base. The national average for a Golf Course and Public House over a weekend concluded in a neutral traffic impact result. The Highways Agency is not opposing the plans. A wildlife survey concluded that there was very little activity and it needs improving. The building work will be completed in 10 phases (not 10 years as rumoured) and will be market driven. A construction traffic plan will be devised and written into the building contract with the contractors. The designs of the units were decided upon after consultation with the current site property owners who had requested something different. There will be no overhead lighting as it will all be on low level posts and pointing downwards. This will keep the site dark helping with ecology and helping with the 'holiday in nature' experience they want to create. The Gold Coast site has 500 units on 30 acres and Willingcott will be 180 units on 100 acres. This being much more spacious. 50% of the area will be cultivated and given to nature in the hope of enticing wildlife back to the area helping with ecology and biodiversity. The drainage will be a mains system with a pump up to Ossaborough.

1<sup>st</sup> speaker who lives closest to the site was disappointed not to have been informed of the previous public meeting or of being informed of the plans. The biggest concern was about traffic and that the lanes are already dangerous with speeding drivers and they are not suitable for the construction traffic or the increased traffic this site will create. The area is used by a great many horse riders.

2<sup>nd</sup> speaker confirmed that the traffic survey was done by data based on the national average and that no one had actually been to count traffic or even see the amount of problems the summer visitors already make in the area. It was claimed that 'no common sense had been used' and that the national data was insufficient on this occasion.

3<sup>rd</sup> speaker expressed concerns about the junction where they live, it is tight at the best of times and has had a few instances where he has had to repair his property after collisions. Turnpike Cross is the most likely route towards the site and if a tractor (of which there are many) and a lorry meet it has been known to result in a road rage incident. A planning application was refused opposite the junction because it is too small and the council wanted the applicant to pay for the junction to be modified, rumoured to be at a cost of £30k.

4<sup>th</sup> speaker has had family living at his property since 1928 and has constant concern about leaving his property in his car as the road is already used as a shortcut and vehicles travel at 50-60mph. Sat Nav's tend to direct traffic up the narrow lanes There is an ineffective sign

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at the road junction, 'not suitable for caravans' due to the steep hill but still they come and often get stuck.

5<sup>th</sup> speaker has concerns of the noise that will be created by the holiday makers/owners. The Club House is by their property and a play area is planned at the bottom of their garden. How can this be fair to the local residents? The club house will be open all day with entertainment in the evenings until late. Why do you think we would be happy with that 365 day a year? The facilities are not open to the general public. You spoke of the lighting being low level but not of the light produced by the 107 units, this will light up the valley and cause light pollution. The surface water currently runs into the natural ponds and soaks away, where will it go after you have developed?

Response from the owner. The Club House will not be open 365 days a year. As with the swimming pool, it will only be open during holiday times. Surface water will be taken into the drainage system.

Further questions asked of the owner were: -

If phase one doesn't sell what is Plan B?

No Plan B, but all the facilities will be there so at least the site will be improved.

How can the wildlife report show a low sign of activity on an open golf course with natural ponds?

Answer is unknown but it is not in their best interest to have no activity and want to encourage it.

How will you be able to extend the Tarka Trail allowing dog walkers through the property when you don't allow dogs on the property?

Current leases on the properties do not allow dogs but they would like to change it to allow them.

How is the construction traffic going to get to site?

The plan is for the traffic to come in from the Woolacombe road and down Bradwell Lane to a newly made entrance onto site. After completion, traffic will come from the Woolacombe road into the main entrance of the site where it is now.

#### 4029. Planning Applications.

a. 70366 – Willingcott Valley Holiday Village. Proposed improvements to leisure facilities together with woodland planting, landscaping and the erection of 107 holiday cottages and associated infrastructure works.

Cllr R Drew raised concerns for road sustainability, access issues, lost privacy.

Cllr S Ayre thanked the community for its appropriate behaviour and to Woodward & Smith for bringing the larger plans to be looked at. She concluded that Sat Nav technology was out of our hands.

Also, with reservations of the roadways and the impact on them. The site is not to her personal liking and not the kind of thing she would visit but likes the concept. We know how busy the lanes get in the summer and the data is not going to give a correct picture. The biggest issue is the traffic access. The locals will suffer. She came with an open mind and the design is nice but maybe just a bit too big. There are many pros and cons.

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Cllr R Watts thanked Cllr C King (chair) for the extraordinary meeting and Woodward & Smith for bringing the larger plans. He has read every letter on the district council web page. He admires the owner of the site and Woodward & Smiths vision of the area with club house, pool Tarka Café and staff accommodation. However, his views are: - Clubhouse Bar, glad to see plastic conservatory removed and the new plan is good and in keeping with the existing farmhouse. The Pool cover could have a different colour roof other than grey. The staff quarters, stone shed for storage, laundry and play barn are in keeping. The Tarka Café needs to stand out more with different materials on the roof and elevations, don't try to blend it in. The new units look like a computer-generated image, very bland and uninteresting. The flat roofs would be better with a natural finish, maybe seeded with wild flowers. The steep roofs are also bland and as there are so many, need breaking up so that it doesn't look like any other mobile home park. They also seem too high for the area. The Nordic style would be various colours to blend with nature not all uniform as on the plan. The Willingcott owners have had a bad deal from day one, as the previous owner let the complex slip badly and they deserve something to be done. It needs investment but maybe this is too big. The units seem to close together for the clientele they are seeking. During the six-week summer holidays up to 400 cars will visit the site, when coming from the Mullacott direction there is a pinch point at Turnpike Cross, if they come from Spreacombe the road is too narrow and (as the sat nav sent me) through Dean Cross up Bradwell Lane is also unsuitable.

Cllr S Squire likes the design but has concerns on the roads and it is too big.

Cllr M Reeves agrees that the highways are not suitable and too narrow. The traffic survey is not adequate or appropriate for this area. Of all the responses on line 2 out of 3 are objecting, light pollution, noise pollution. It will not be of any advantage to our village. Likes the idea but the effect on surrounding residents is too big.

Cllr C King feels this is a very difficult one. The local parks get crammed and so do the roads. The pros are brown field site, employment opportunities, good for the area, development is nice. The cons are lost landscape and skyline. There is lots to like but the traffic and size of development are worrying.

The decision is refusal on the grounds of, overriding concerns of the highway and traffic.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 9.50pm.