**N O T E S**

**Of a public consultation meeting re: Lavender Close Development**

**Held 7th June 7.30pm at Faulkland Village Hall**

In Attendance: James Durant (JD) Cotswold Homes

Simon Schofield (SS) Cotswold Homes

Alison Barkshire (AB) District Councillor

Mark Corney (MC) Hemington Parish Council

Vince Curtis Hemington Parish Council

Matthew Francis Hemington Parish Council

Jen Gregory Hemington Parish Council (Clerk)

26 members of the public

These are NOTES from the meeting, they are NOT minutes, nor are they taken verbatim but reflect the issues, topics and questions raised.

The meeting was opened and chaired by Cllr M Corney, who thanked those in attendance. There was no agenda but the meeting would start with a short presentation by James and Simon of Cotswold Homes and then there would be a Q&A session at the end.

Cotswold Homes Business Overview

* Private House builder
* Builds 70-100 homes per year
* Building within 1 hour’s travel of their offices in Yate
* Mid-range market building homes generally 3-4 bed
* Have general house “types” but adapt this for each individual site
* Family run business
* Strive to engage with communities throughout the process

Current Position

The site landowner had marketed the site for sale and had previously made a pre-planning application to MDC for 12no. 5-bed homes. CH saw this within their scope and matching their criteria for development and are currently looking at what can be delivered based on the current planning requirements for MDC. Much of what can be delivered will be based on technical reports alongside the public consultation. There is no guarantee planning will be granted at this stage.

A sketch has been developed based on a desktop analysis of the site, this is open to changes and the ecology, topographical etc reports will have some weight to exactly what can be produced and is in no way a final plan, a second plan will be available once the design has been formulised. Residents of Faulkland welcomed to make comment on the design criteria.

Site

The site is located at Lavender Close and access will be formed via the existing access.

Surveys are currently ongoing and CH are aware of the badger sett and distances between houses have been considered.

The landowners pre-application was also considered when building the desktop analysis, 12 relatively large 5 bed homes would not meet MDC’s policy on mixed/varied options. There is a threshold on “affordable” homes so with sites of 10 houses or more 30% would need to be affordable. This would contain houses for those on the local housing register and a smaller proportion in shared ownership. Therefore, it was decided there would be a mix of 16 houses of 2/3/4 beds, 2 storey in height and 2 bungalows.

The properties would front out of existing boundaries so the front of the houses would look to the hedgerow boundary, this is a mindful way of trying to keep existing wildlife/hedgerow - as if this were the back then the hedgerow may be removed.

Properties will be 2 storey (bungalows excluded) with air source heat pumps and electric car charging. Materials will be used to fit with the existing in Lavender Close so naturally stone faced.

Future

Once surveys are complete there would be some technical feedback/comments, then a re-consultation period before a final design plan is agreed. It is hoped to submit a planning application in late summer and the determination process is advised as 13 weeks but for a project of this size the reality is a year plus, possibly 2 years before planning is granted. If rejected it will be notified sooner and possible adjustments can be made.

Residents were urged to engage with the planning process, and also to provide feedback on design. Contact information was given as follows:

[info@cotswoldhomes.co.uk](mailto:info@cotswoldhomes.co.uk)

07792730765

[www.cotswoldhomes-faulkland.co.uk](http://www.cotswoldhomes-faulkland.co.uk)

The Chair thanked JD and SS for the presentation and had indicated that 2 members of the Parish Council had met JD and SS the previous week to raise some concerns these were:

* Number of houses on the site (too many)
* Impact on traffic and road infrastructure
* Provision in local GP surgeries and schools etc
* The badger sett

The Chair noted that the MDC local plan Part II indicated that Faulkland was already 16 homes over quota since the plan. AB gave some context as to what has happened with the local plan. It had been reviewed by the Planning Inspector who indicated that target numbers quoted should be a minimum and there would be no maximum. MDC has a target in terms of new housing set by Government however half of MDC area has high phosphate levels which will not allow major development and therefore half of MDC cannot be built on making the other half of the district having to cope with all the major building. MDC are disinterested in reviewing. AB stated that in terms of planning yes occasionally appeals are won but in principle are difficult to fight.

Questions from the public

**Suggestion is that the planning will take 1-2 years but what happens with the change of Council?**

AB stated that the same people will be in post however what we don’t know is whether there will be local planning offices or a centralisation of the process in say Taunton for example.

**How long will construction of the houses take?**

CH were aware of the previous development being fraught with problems but the expectation was for this to be around 1 year. JD would be happy to check historically the timings of previous sites and report back.

**What will happen with the badgers?**

This is dependent on the ecological surveys and what mitigation would be required. It would be common practice to move the sett under licence.

**What does this exactly mean?**

The developer would make application to Natural England for a licence to move the sett. This would mean that a new sett is created so they would inhibit that one after closing off the existing. There are strict criteria to be followed and the ecological reports would be submitted to Natural England.

**Is this something we can object to?**

Yes you can object to a licence being granted.

**Is there any other feasible option in terms of access than through Lavender close and will building site access also come from the same access?**

Other options have been considered but are not feasible due to size.

**Why did they originally only develop 40% of the Site?**

There has been some complex planning history but comes down to housing allocations at that time

**What are the financial benefits for the village ? Section 106?**

There would be Section 106 monies available as there is an element of affordable housing, figure unknown until planning application is made.

**What is Section 106?**

It is a contribution by the developer to mitigate that development which might mean improvements to the village, transport system and play areas for example. It was noted that the previous lavender close monies went straight to MDC with the community losing out.

**How will you minimise the impact of disruption? There was previously parking on the village green, a flurry of rubbish from the site and noise at all hours, will there be subcontractors or your own workers?**

This will be achieved with the in-house commercial and construction team working together. There would be a Site Manager and a Community Liaison Group set up. Contact details of the Site Manager and Construction Director provided if there was a problem and urged to try the Site Manager in the first instance. They would look to find somewhere local they could rent space to park and the construction team on-site would-be subcontractors. There are examples where machinery has to be warmed up and Cotswold Homes have had situation where workers are on site and start the equipment at 7am and walk off which is not acceptable. CH are sympathetic to the residents and this is where the Liaison group and identifiable Site Manager comes into play.

**What will the site working hours be?**

Weekdays 8-5, Saturdays 8-1, no Sundays, no bank holidays

**Why not build 10 houses at the threshold for affordable?**

The threshold is 9 and square meterage also comes into play so its not just a case of building 9 homes. MDC has a mix planning policy with affordable homes part of that. The previous pre-application for a 12 unit scheme was too dense and the square meterage almost identical for a 16 house scheme.

**Why build bungalows?**

CH don’t have to build them and the footprint is that much bigger. They are built to support the greater mix of options. Developers are often criticised for not providing bungalows so thought it was a nice option to have.

As a closing speech JD along with MC stated that they both understand the proposals has dramatic implications for the village. CH would welcome engagement regarding the design and any valid amendments using contact information previously given. The Parish Council would like to hear from individuals regarding their views which can be collated ahead of any re-design, planning application and should email the clerk who would collate.

Attendees were also advised that they can attend the Parish Meetings meeting on the 2nd Wednesday of the month.

Everyone was thanked for their attendance and contribution. Special thanks to JD and SS for coming and presenting current proposals.

Meeting Closed 8.16pm

**Contact information**

[info@cotswoldhomes.co.uk](mailto:info@cotswoldhomes.co.uk)

07792730765

[www.cotswoldhomes-faulkland.co.uk](http://www.cotswoldhomes-faulkland.co.uk)

Hemington Parish Council Clerk Jen Gregory [clerk.hemingtonpc@gmail.com](mailto:clerk.hemingtonpc@gmail.com)

Key:

MDC Mendip District Council

CH Cotswold Homes