



Ottery St Mary Town Council

Minutes of the **EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF OTTERY ST MARY TOWN COUNCIL** held on **THURSDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER 2020** at **7.00pm**. The meeting was conducted virtually in accordance with Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020

PRESENT:- Cllrs Johns, Lucas, Copus, Giles, Faithfull, Stewart, Pang, Green, together with Cllr Wright (DCC), Cllr Pratt (EDDC), Christine McIntyre CEO and Liz Graveney DCEO and 17 members of the public

20/09/01

TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllr Grainger

It was announced that Cllr Dobson has resigned from the Town Council. He was thanked for this work on the Council and wished well for the future.

20/09/02

TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA AND RECEIPT OF REQUESTS FOR NEW DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS (DPIS) DISPENSATIONS FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were none

20/09/03

IN CONSIDERATION OF THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 (PUBLICITY WOULD BE PREJUDICIAL TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST BY REASON OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED): TO AGREE ANY ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH AFTER THE PUBLIC AND PRESS HAVE BEEN EXCLUDED

There were none

20/09/04

TO CONSIDER AND DETERMINE OBSERVATIONS ON THE FOLLOWING PLANNING APPLICATION IN RELATION TO A REPLACEMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL AT OTTERY ST MARY FOR TIPTON ST JOHN CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NEW DWELLINGS

Application No:- 20/1504/MOUT

Applicant:- Mr David Black, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 4QD

Details:- Outline planning application with all matters reserved except access for up to 150 new dwellings, a 210 Space primary school, construction of a new roundabout on Exeter Road, a new junction onto Cadhay Lane, and associated infrastructure

20/09/05

**TO ALLOW MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT TO SUBMIT
QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS WILL
BE LIMITED TO 3 MINUTES**

Five members of the public spoke to object to the planning application, outlining a number of the following reasons:

1. It is contrary to the Ottery St Mary & West Hill Neighbourhood Plan and East Devon Local Plan, which do not state an additional 150 houses. The Neighbourhood Plan involved a lot of hard work, was voted unanimously and democratically by the public. It sets out what is and is not acceptable to the people of Ottery and should be taken seriously and complied with. The application is trying to reassign and change land that is protected through the plans, into land that can be built on to increase the value of it, which would set a precedent that anyone can do what they want in the future which is completely wrong.
2. The community cannot support any additional housing and local services and infrastructure cannot grow fast enough to support them
3. The planning application should not be looked at in isolation, but looked at East Devon and Exeter wide
4. There is no demand for 150 additional houses as Ottery does not need them and has built more than its quota
5. Tipton community will be losing its school which is the heart of the village
6. Issues with the funding and not convinced that there needs to be a direct link with the funding of the school with 150 houses
7. The Church of England is a wealthy body who is putting in a small amount of money which has not been explained in how it and the DCC are working
8. Flood Risk Assessment has not been carried out very well, with South West Water and the Environment Agency raising significant concerns with the application
9. Conflict between the need to build a school near the Quarry and the need to safeguard for future generations which has not been demonstrated in the application
10. Increased traffic and speeding issues on the Exeter Road, with no protection to cyclists or pedestrians and no visibility in Cadhay Lane ever being carried out, even though it is the main route to the school, leisure centre and car parks. This is a dangerous junction on a blind bend in a dip on a narrow country lane which floods and where the footway is not wide enough. The proposed roundabout is a good idea but should not be linked to 150 houses
11. The very poor quality of the document produced by WSP relating to the transport assessment and the lack of information provided on access with a proposal for access into Cadhay Lane, with no detail on how that would be carried out or how the new footway and cycle route will be provided. Articulated lorries and increased traffic will cause danger to pedestrians.
12. The proposal of 45 affordable houses is only 30% of the total, whereas the Local Development Plan requires a minimum of 50%
13. Dishonest application to pack 150 houses onto the application and the cost of the school being £7 million, with no calculation of how that is broken out
14. A more sustainable site should be considered for the school on other DCC land
15. The Visibility Study was commissioned by DCC which is the applicant, East Devon District Council who are able to approve it and also Plymouth Council who are not an independent and this should be challenged.
16. A number of comments made in support of the school have been by the Tipton school Governors or teachers who have a vested interest in it. These interests have not been declared which is not a fair or just way.

17. Wildlife and Cadhay Bog is ancient woodland with a large badger set up. The field where the proposed development is to be would be right next door to it and would have an effect on both the wildlife and farming land
18. Tipton residents feel that the case for moving the school has not been done in a genuine way. There have been no signs of flooding recently and Tipton should not be labelled as a flood risk, especially as there have been a number of new houses built in Tipton over the past few years. The village has come together and had a school for over 200 years so more work should be done to keep it as part of its history. A lot of residents are confused by this application and would like to be engaged more in the process. The village hall has stated that there will be significant short and long term impacts on it if the school were to be moved outside of the village, as a lot of groups also use the hall.

One member of the public spoke in loose support of the planning application, mainly due to that if it went ahead it would provide the infrastructure needed for the town which has not previously been given, such as a roundabout and increased pavements. He felt that the Town Council should be working together with DCC on the application to help with this as Tipton needs a school, although the storm of 2008 was unprecedented and would unlikely ever happen again.

Cllr Claire Wright (DCC) provided some background on a bid that went to Central Government under the priority for schools funding programme following an Environment Agency report in 2015 stating a risk to life associated with the Tipton St John primary school being sited in its current location and after assessment, it looked like being successful to relocate to an alternative area and out of the flood zone. An agreement was given by a local land owner to use its land to build a new school, however it was after a lot of work, turned down by the Government. Cllr Wright reiterated that Ottery St Mary cannot take an additional 150 houses more than it is had already, it is the fastest growing town in East Devon over the past ten years. It is contrary to the NP and Local Plan and the Planning system should not be used to fund local services and objects to the application. She wanted to pay tribute to the Head Teacher and staff of Tipton St John School who had dealt with the stresses of trying to cope with this level of flood risk every day and the worry it has caused. Cllr Wright stated that she will not be part of the planning process and the final decision as it will be determined by EDDC and not DCC. She also thanked all the public who had spoken at the meeting for their valid contributions. (Cllr Wright left the meeting at 19.39pm)

The Mayor stated that all Councillors will have read the comments on the East Devon District Council planning website, that she had received a lot of emails, phone calls and texts on the application but could not pre-determine anything before this meeting and can only comment on this particular application at this particular time, rather than what happens in the future.

A member of the public who had expressed an interest in speaking, unfortunately lost connection and was unable to come back into the meeting.

All Councillors spoke, discussed the application in detail and in particular the above comments made by the public. In addition, Cllr Giles stated that in fifteen years of being a member of Devon County Council's Development Committee, he had considered a large number of planning applications for schools and in his opinion this was by far the worst he had ever seen by a long way and agreed with a member of the public that he could not believe that this one was even being considered. Cllr Green commented that it is unfair for DCC to expect the Council to accept 150 houses for a new school to be built and that they have not demonstrated that they have exhausted all possible routes to fund the school without the houses and have relied on a developer to pay for it. Also he had a concern about the long term viability of Tipton St John and that the school is a large part and the centre of village life, being well thought of by the people of Tipton. The new location would involve

children walking from one town to another and add further road traffic and congestion. Cllr Lucas agreed with all of the points made by the public and added that the Council are looking at a number of ways to improve traffic/pavements through its Regeneration project to address the issues. He also felt that the application was disingenuous in how it was being presented, with little regard to the impact of 150 houses and lack of infrastructure investment in the past by local and central Government, such as doctor's surgeries and schools. He also said there would be a large negative impact with this application. Cllr Stewart stated that there is no requirement for the houses to be built near the school as they could be built anywhere where DCC owns land and DCC should not forget that, to which Cllr Pang agreed.

The Mayor summarised all the points and her concerns that although the school was in a state of disrepair, the school should be kept in Tipton, not moved to Ottery and how would the Tipton children travel to school. With regard to flooding, she understood that there had been no flooding since 2008 and had a concern with roads flooding and the amount of increased traffic, the school would provide on a road with large lorries travelling and near farm land. She reiterated the importance of the Neighbourhood Plan and East Devon Local Plan, with the time and energy spent on it and that its policies had been voted on by the public. She said that there was not enough information provided in the reports in how the infrastructure would be increased and why the school is costing £7million with the Diocese only providing £1million and why the Government is not providing funding when it has a large kitty. Also that there are 80 children at Tipton St John, with 31 from Ottery not half the children as stated in the report which is not clear. The Tipton school has less and less children from Tipton attending and is that because of the proposed relocation. It was pointed out by a member of the public that none of the children who go from Ottery to Tipton school are funded, they go by choice. The Mayor went on to say that a number of the reports such as the ones from the Environment Agency and South West Water state that there is insufficient evidence and there is not enough information. It was felt that there were too many issues about why the school is being moved and not enough valid points in the proposal.

Cllr Giles made the following proposal, which was added to by Councillors, seconded by the Mayor and unanimously agreed by all Council members:

The Town Council vigorously opposes this planning application on the grounds that:

- a) It is development outside the built up area of the boundary, which is contrary to the Ottery St Mary & West Hill Neighbourhood Plan and East Devon Local Plan
- b) Is building houses on land designated for education and community use, which is contrary to the Ottery St Mary & West Hill Neighbourhood Plan and East Devon Local Plan
- c) The houses in the East Devon Local Plan for Ottery St Mary have already been exceeded and these additional houses would increase pressure and problems on the infrastructure
- d) The five year housing land supply required by the Government is already being demonstrated by East Devon District Council, therefore there is no justification for this application
- e) The affordable housing offered is 45 so 30%, not 50% which would be 75 and is contrary to the East Devon Local Plan
- f) Concern that the development would increase pollution and flood risk, recognising the concerns already expressed by the Environment Agency and South West Water
- g) Concerned that the development would lead to damage to wildlife
- h) Concerned that it would lead to development of countryside and the landscape
- i) Concern that it would result in adverse visual impact, being on steeply rising ground on the edge of Ottery St Mary

- j) Increased traffic congestion and an expressed concern about the lack of evidence provided by the applicant to demonstrate that the traffic problems would be properly dealt with and the Council is not happy with the proposals they put forward and the prospect of their realistic delivery
- k) Concern about the impact of not only taking the school out of Tipton St John village but the negative impact on the community, social infrastructure, families and particularly the children who would be directly affected by having to travel to a new school they have been happy at in a new location from Tipton to Ottery St Mary. The Council feels that by removing the school would tear the heart out of the village.
- l) The Council has a concern about the lack of public transport links as some pupils currently at the school in Tipton travel from Newton Poppleford and Sidmouth. This proposal would also increase the school run traffic around the Kings School area, whereas it should be encouraged for people to be more active and walk to school in a safe environment.

20/09/06

COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS ON COUNCILLORS BUSINESS

There were no questions, however Cllr Stewart advised the public who had spoken so eloquently at this meeting that if they would like to get more involved in local affairs, there was now a vacancy on the Town Council.

The Mayor thanked all members of the public for attending and all those who had commented and for generally caring about the area they live in.

The meeting ended at 08.20pm

<i>SIGNATURE OF MAYOR</i>	
<i>DATE OF SIGNATURE</i>	
<i>DATE/VENUE OF NEXT MEETING</i>	Monday 7 th September 2020 at 7pm by Zoom