

**MINUTES OF A LYMPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN
THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.00PM ON MONDAY 17TH JULY 2023.**

PRESENT:	
Councillors	D Atkins, S Culhane, S Francis, A Lewis, A Minter, M Moffatt, N Linfoot (Chairman) J Payne and L Staddon
Clerk	Miss L Tyrrell
County Councillors	J Trail and R Scott
District Councillors	B Ingham and G Jung
Public	30 members

Public session

The Chairman welcomed all present and read his statement:

Good evening.

This is a full Parish Council meeting called to discuss the planning application submitted by 3West to build 42 houses in the fields off Meeting Lane. The meeting is primarily for the Parish Council to decide if it supports or objects to the application, but an important part of that process is to listen to and consider the views of the Parishioners. However, it is important that all who either support or object to this application, submit their own response to East Devon Planning, by this Sunday, (the 23rd July).

I am chairing the meeting this evening but will abstain from the vote as I live in Gulliford Close. This application is outside the Built-up area Boundary, and although described as green wedge in the 2015 East Devon Plan, is now considered 'countryside' by East Devon District Council. This meeting will be run as per the DALC guidelines, with the Public being provided first opportunity to make a statement or pose questions to the 3 West representative. Each person has a maximum of 3 minutes to make a statement, or list questions. If you are here as part of a group or family, I would ask that you appoint a representative to state your views. I would request that speakers are not interrupted, and people await their opportunity to speak. If a particular subject is raised, I will ask if there are any other questions on the same subject before inviting a reply from 3West.

Once the public session is closed, the Councillors will then have an opportunity to speak or ask questions.

Prior to the public session commencing, I would like to clarify a couple of points re comments contained in the planning application and press.

3 West have stated on the application that consultation has taken place to date but have not detailed the response to the consultations. On several occasions 3West stated that they have been asked by EDDC to develop the field and are in possession of a letter from the planning department.

The letter referred to in the planning application in August 2022, refers to your submission (under the call for land scheme) during the EDDC planning period. It references your submission and states a scheme with: -

No more than 40 houses

Entrance on Meeting Lane

Preservation of hedgerows

Would be considered by EDDC.

Since then, the EDDC plan has been suspended.

I along with Councillors Staddon and Francis met with 3West representatives in March this year. At this meeting you explained your scheme and referenced your letter from EDDC planning.

At that meeting, we made it clear that :-

The field was outside the BUAB

In the Green Wedge (as described in the East Devon Plan)

That we would object to wholesale removal of hedgerows

That we objected/considered it dangerous to have an entrance in Strawberry hill.

Mr. Billings from 3West attended the Parish Council meeting on the 18th May. Again, Councillors reinforced the view that this was outside the current BUAB and repeated their objections to an entrance of Strawberry Hill and destruction of hedgerows and trees.

Finally, I note from your own consultation results that 4 responses were in favour of the development. 840 houses in the village were canvassed, this amounts to less than half a per cent of the Parish who support the application.

3West are keen to say they have consulted. On the Local Government website on housing, there is a paragraph: -

What is consultation?

'Consultation is technically any activity that gives local people a voice and an opportunity to influence important decisions. It involves listening to and learning from local people before decisions are made or priorities are set.'

Your plans ignore the response received after your meeting with EDDC planning. They have not changed in 2 meetings with Lymptstone Parish Council, or your own housing survey.

The Chairman explained that the meeting would be recorded for minute taking purposes. He explained that he had written to the Clerk and requested Council to grant a dispensation for Chairing the meeting. Cllr Francis proposed that the dispensation was granted. Cllr Culhane seconded. Unan.

RESOLVED that a dispensation was granted for the Chairman to Chair the meeting.

Members of the public, including Lymptstone Flood Resilience Group, raised the following concerns:

- Water run-off from the site would only add to an already existing flooding issue along Meeting Lane – proposed plans did not eliminate this. It would be irresponsible to support this without further discussion.
- The current flooded roads were impassable.
- Drainage in situ was already unreliable.
- The planned attenuation pond was close to the banks which leaked.
- The plastic crate system proposed also leaked.
- Many impermeable areas proposed on drawings must be addressed.
- Current sewage systems already overloaded and cannot cope, where was the additional sewage going to go?
- Meeting Lane was a 60mph highway which was dangerous to add the development entrance to.
- Entrance to Strawberry Hill was a dangerous and difficult access to navigate. Extremely narrow road.
- Harefield crossroads was an incredibly dangerous junction on to the A376.
- Exit from village by the Saddlers Arms traffic lights was already congested. Often caused blocking of minor roads and A376.
- Each house would increase traffic flow and congestion.
- It would increase traffic along already dangerous highways.
- Layout of site had not considered neighbouring properties privacy. Would cause noise pollution and disturb a peaceful environment.
- Outside BUAB.
- Contravene LNP and current EDDC local plan.
- In coastal preservation zone.
- Land had been redesigned as 'countryside' and no longer green wedge – when was the public consultation for this? - District Cllr Jung added that this site had never been green wedge.
- Over time, the hedgerows had been slowly destroyed.

- Damaging to wildlife.
- Lack of public consultation.
- Layout of plan ensured houses were segregated and divisive. Did not promote community cohesion.
- Affordable housing proposed were small.
- No footway or paved access from development to surrounding village.
- Overdevelopment of site.

Nick Yeo, director from 3West was present and introduced himself, his flooding and highway experts and architect. James Blyth, flooding risk and drainage engineer explained that 3West was focused on site impact to the environment and had improved the sites drainage. He added that the runoff water went to a Highway gully along Meeting Lane to the Nutwell estate and out to the Exe. It had been designed with a 100year rainfall event. The site, even once developed, would not produce anymore run off than current field. They had calculated additional 45% rainfall and with the non-permeable areas the site would discharge less than the green field site. Nick Yeo had undertaken underground investigation and the water runoff from the site would be improved as the water was collected, stored on site and the discharge controlled.

Mrs Bates, Clerk to Woodbury Parish Council read WPCs response to EDDC regarding the application:

This development is situated on the boundary of the Parishes of Lympstone and Woodbury. Currently this is outside the existing built-up area boundary of Lympstone; it's within the Coastal Preservation Area and is not in the East Devon District Council Local Plan.

The proposal is somewhat failing in being a well-designed development, it is not sympathetic nor of benefit to Lympstone village, its residents or to those in the neighbouring parish of Woodbury.

We have major concerns with the drainage of this site; the potential levels and the proposal to culvert a watercourse behind Plot 19 is against DCC culvert policy (culverts only permitted for essential access).

Discharge is into a watercourse within the site boundary, but there does not appear to be any information about the downstream drainage system in relation to the ownership, capacity and condition. With the history of flooding within Lympstone and issues with the current old infrastructure, this development could exacerbate the current issues or if there is not capacity add to it.

This proposal is actually two developments in one with poor access to the site, additionally, Strawberry Hill is a narrow lane that cannot accommodate an additional access which is also unnecessary and would ruin an existing Devon Bank / ancient hedgerow.

Lowering biodiversity and wildlife corridor between the River Exe SSSI site and the pebble bed heath (AONB)

Incohesive community with an us / them divide

No footway link with existing village along Strawberry Hill.

Strawberry Hill is extremely narrow and this access would be dangerous to other road users and pedestrians.

Meeting Lane is slightly wider, but access and visibility is still of concern.

Harefield Cross a difficult junction to navigate, this proposed development will cause additional traffic to this location.

If this development is favoured by EDDC then there is an easily remedy to not having two developments / accesses. By rotating the 5 executive dwellings by 180 degrees and having an access drive in-between plots 35 and 36 with their garages relocated to the rear of their plot. This would still provide exclusivity but be more cohesive with the whole site; the Devon Bank / ancient hedgerow would remain and safety concerns eliminated from Strawberry Hill.

This proposal is of unimaginative basic design, the layout is lacking thought; with the open space not planned to its fullest potential, neither does it bring additional facilities to enhance

the existing village; there are no speed calming measures (a 20-mph scheme would be a benefit to the village); nor an enhanced gateway to the village incorporating the 17th Century historic Dissenters Gulliford Burial Ground. Woodbury Parish Council will not be supporting this application on the above grounds and will also be supportive of Lympstone Parish Council with their observations.

3West Highways expert explained that he had met with officers from Devon County Council and viewed the constraints. They had agreed the access along Meeting Lane and there would be a footway and some hedge removed for safe visibility. The current guidance meant houses had frontage along the Strawberry Hill side. DCC and their safety team felt it was essential to have an access along Strawberry Hill. The access entrance would enhance the road and vehicular activity. Nick Yeo explained it was a new regulation not to have the rear garden facing a road as a matter of privacy and it was good advice to have the frontage of properties facing the road to create the right frontage to enter the village. A resident highlighted that the proposed new road layout would pass the rear gardens to existing properties. Nick Yeo added that the draft allocation for the site was 46 properties and 3West was proposing 42. The site could potentially host 70 properties. He explained that the developer was duty bound to enhance biodiversity on site. The hedgerows were a failing issue when the site had been originally purchased by 3West. They would be planting new hedgerows. He added that a community engagement was not necessary but 3West had chosen to interact and work with the community.

23/66 Apologies

Cllr K Hill due to work commitments.

Cllr Linfoot proposed to approve the apologies. Cllr Staddon seconded. Unan.

RESOLVED that the Apologies were approved by the PC.

23/67 To receive any Declarations of Interest

Cllr N Linfoot declared a personal interest.

Cllr D Atkins declared a personal and contractual interest.

This was recorded in the book.

23/68 Planning application

23/1269/MFUL - Construction of 42 residential units (14 affordable), new vehicular accesses from Meeting Lane and Strawberry Lane, pedestrian access onto Meeting Lane, associated internal roadways, SUDS features and landscaping at Land South Of Meeting Lane Lympstone.

Policies:

Cllr Francis read her statement and questions:

Housing development policy and guidance is currently undergoing change. East Devon has an Emerging Local Plan but existing plans, the East Devon Local Plan and Lympstone Neighbourhood Plan, are still in effect. All this has to be set against and delivered within the National Planning Framework and targets set to meet the perceived housing need hence the whole area is very complex, often subjective and sometimes even contradictory.

A key point that also needs to be considered urgently and clarified by EDDC is the status of these applications coming forward after the 'call for sites' in advance of the emerging plan being adopted. Will these sites and GH/ED/73 be treated as 'windfall' sites and included in current housing numbers, expectations and therefore not

considered in the emerging new local plan as early arrival sites – which would mean even more housing numbers would be asked of Lympstone?

One of the core principles of the National Planning Framework is a genuinely plan led system empowering local people to shape their surroundings.

Did 3West have this as one of their core principles when making their development plan for GH/ED/73?

Nick Yeo explained that 3West had considered both the housing needs for the area and EDDC housing needs.

Point 66 of the National Planning Policy Framework states “Applicants will be expected to work closely with those directly affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community.”

When you first approached the PC, you had already approached East Devon in ‘the call for sites’ and came to the site meeting with the plan we see before us. Is this really taking account of the views of the community, especially when so many of our Neighbourhood Plan statements do not seem to have been taken into account?

Nick Yeo explained that 3West had first engaged with LPC in February. 3West had a considered approach to the design. He accepted the points raised regarding the access to the site. They had taken all formal consultation with interested parties into account.

GH/ED/73 is outside the BUAB. Strategy 35 of current East Devon Local Plan states exception sites of mixed affordable and open market schemes at villages and outside of BUAB for up to or around 15 dwellings will be allowed where there is a proven local need demonstrated through an up-to-date robust housing needs survey. Affordable housing must account for at least 66% need.

In view of this how do you justify the size of your proposed development, your percentage of affordable housing and overriding Policy 5 of our Neighbourhood Plan preferring smaller scale developments? Is 1/3 affordable housing sufficient to meet this flexibility for development outside the BUAB?

Nick Yeo explained that the number of dwellings proposed bought it inline with EDDC local plan. EDDC had encouraged the developer as it was a responsible plan.

The other Councilors have more questions and concerns. Councillor Jung is always asking us ‘how many houses we want and where we want them’. Whilst we may have to eventually and reluctantly accept some development the plans that are subsequently agreed by EDDC have to demonstrate they have listened to and truly address these concerns and issues and views of the community and show they have listened.

Cllr Minter added that EDDC local plan was an emerging plan. The current LNP and EDDC local plan should be adhered to. The emerging plan was under review and did not carry any weight. You could not rely on something that was not approved. LNP asked for affordable and single storey homes which was not proposed. The current design could not be supported as it was not in any current plan. If it was accepted, then it would not be a democratic process. Nick Yeo explained that there was a majority mix of 1//2/3 bedroom properties proposed. There was two ground floor maisonettes and two bungalows. Other accommodation was easily adaptable.

Cllr Minter added that an appropriate mix of properties from 3West differed from that of what the plans showed, or the PC and residents viewed.

Highways, flooding, infrastructure, and drainage:

Cllr Payne read her statement and questions:

Why are there two entrances? There is no need for this. Both roads are narrow and traffic for this many houses will mean congestion, poor visibility and speeding issues, complacency (60 percent of all fatal motoring accidents occur on country roads).

There is no allowance for road parking only drives. We have to be realistic; most people travel by car and have two cars per household. Visitors have nowhere to park so will use the road. There will be no safe passing area as the roads are too narrow. Properties have been crammed in.

If the development does go ahead have they considered only government/key workers? Teachers, Military, Nurses and Doctors (NHS), Fire service etc... It would be unique and will still achieve the sales desired. Setting a standard for the future. Still leaving out the 5-bedroom developments.

Nick Yeo explained that they could not restrict who a property was sold to.

Cllr Payne asked if they could be available to local people. There was no need for five-bedroom properties. How adaptable was the development plan to allow for more affordable houses?

Cllr Staddon explained that she worked at the local school and would often take pupils, on foot, around the village. She read her statement and questions:

Please note that National Statistics state 'Most people will walk to a destination, that is less than one mile'. Great news, however, this doesn't take into consideration traffic or pavement links. To include families and disabled users and access.

While one exit out of Meeting Lane will have a pathway to link the village, Strawberry Hill is down to have a shared surface, that being of a road. As of yet, no conversation has happened with Gulliford Close Management Committee to change this.

Highway Safety has reported (see appendix 3.32 of planning) they see no pattern of collisions of pedestrians at the crossroads of Meeting Lane, this is part of the route you would take from the new Development to reach St Peters (stated as a 10 min walk).

What has not been taken into consideration is the likelihood of a pedestrian using the 'on foot' method to reach St Peters, most within the village would not want to cross at this point, we ask ourselves why?

Also, to be considered is the cycle access to Tesco, stated as 17 minutes, they're right we have a cycle link to Exmouth, but this does not at present link us to the upper side of Exmouth by 17 minutes on a bike.

My point here being, a car is still needed to make these small journeys, until road safety or cycle links improve, thus added journeys within the village.

The Meeting Lane junction with the A376 has an average of 3,148 cars that pass on a morning peak time. (Road Traffic Count)

The New Development has parking for 118 cars, with a matrix worked to estimate a movement of 202 cars in a 12-hour period. Are these cars exiting Meeting Lane?

Although it will only have a 1.5% uplift of traffic, it could see a lot of cars waiting at peak times to exit right here on the A376, would this then push those who wish not to 'Run the Gauntlet' on this junction to the Saddlers?

The Saddlers junction has already become overused, it is a pocket for pollution as cars wait at the traffic lights.

A group called Vision Zero South West, that consist of emergency service providers and councillors striving for a reduction in speed on roads, have already classed the A376 as one of Devon's most dangerous roads and although the statistics provided by 3West have flagged up a limited number of RTC in past few years, VZSW have monitored 7 RTC over a 5 year period with 4 needing the air ambulance, all on our stretch of A376.

To make vision adequate for the 'private access' of Strawberry Hill, a substantial amount of hedgerow would have to be removed for this to be safe. Again, removing mature hedgerows for cars.

The NHS is pushed to its limits, in our area, we in Exmouth are oversubscribed by 443. It has been suggested that to cater for the new development, that the matrix of

42 house x 2.19 people per dwelling would need extra GP space of 7.36m² and at a cost of £627 per patient. I'm not sure this takes into account extra doctors or the lack of space to increase the already cramped surgeries.

My last point is the local school. Whilst they are not full to capacity, in September, two-year groups will be, this is a current trend locally in particular year groups. They have limited funding with already limited resources. Out of interest they have 182 pupils starting in September and their capacity is 210. This does not take into account transient pupils from military backgrounds that start midway during terms.

County Cllr Trail explained that the County Cllrs had not met with 3West but welcomed the opportunity. County Cllr Scott explained that there would be no traffic lights installed at Harefield cross. He explained that permission would not have been given to use Highways drains. He would like to know which officers were met and the actions that were agreed before commenting further as this would have been an agreement in principle. Questions on drainage needed answering and he was not in favour of the site access points.

Cllr Moffatt asked if solar panels and heat pumps were planned into the development? Nick Yeo explained they were. Cllr Moffatt expressed a concern for the removal of hedges which had taken hundreds of years to establish and how that could possibly be replaced. Exactly what flora and fauna would be lost? Nick Yeo explained that the position of the hedges at access points to the site would be lost but visibility hedges would be pulled back. There would be an ecology report online to view.

Cllr Atkins explained that he could not comment regarding water run off through Nutwell estate due to family connections and had nothing further to add.

Biodiversity, ecology, protected trees and hedges:

Cllr Lewis noted that T4 marked on the map had 'good future potential' therefore, why was it being felled? Nick Yeo explained that it was an unavoidable access location and would save the other trees. Cllr Lewis questioned why the Ash in decline had not been targeted instead of felling a healthy tree? Nick Yeo explained the site access had been considered and this was the optimum design. Cllr Lewis felt that the tree inspection regime produced was light and how would the trees be protected? Nick Yeo explained that the arboriculturist would consider this and he would look at improving it.

Cllr Culhane added that she had requested the full ecology plan from 3West and had not received anything. The data submitted online was out of date. The site required a full biodiversity plan, providing EDDCs expected 20% biodiversity. Nick Yeo explained that 20% was not feasible for this site and 10% biodiversity was a government expectation. Cllr Culhane added that a developer could not cherry pick preferences from different policies according to their needs and what was doable. She explained that there were bats and birds nesting on the site. It was a priority to protect these habitats in such a sensitive area. An independent study was necessary. The hedges had been flailed so much that the species identified was poor but would not have been before the hedges were destroyed.

Nick Yeo explained that the supporting ecology report had been submitted by consultants and the EDDC ecology officer would query if this was not correct. Cllr Culhane asked for the ecology report date be checked. She also asked if a grey water scheme had been considered as this would help soak up surface water. Nick Yeo could not commit to this but would investigate it. Cllr Culhane asked for a development timescale if permission was granted. Nick Yeo explained a construction programme would be 18 months.

Housing stock, renewable energy and water harvesting

Cllr Minter reiterated that the planning design needed a mix of houses not segregated ones. It needed a cohesive mix for both families and elderly residents to create a sense of community. He also asked if renewables had been considered. Nick Yeo explained everything, but grey water, was considered for the new developments.

Cllr Lewis added that the infrastructure for watering new trees proposed must be considered to ensure they survived eg using grey water. Nick Yeo explained that 3West had a duty of care to look after new trees and replace them if they died.

District Cllr Ingham felt all points were rational and reasonable. He encouraged the developers to listen to what had been raised. District Cllr Jung thanked 3West, the PC and the residents for attending. He explained that a proposal must be considered as EDDC could not demonstrate a five-year land supply. EDDC biodiversity plan would set targets and begin in November. EDDC preferred 'pepper pot' housing developments.

Nick Yeo explained that the pedestrian link to Gulliford Close was led by DCC not 3West. 3West primary pedestrian link was on Meeting Lane. He added that it would be great to have ongoing meetings with LPC. He felt it was a missed opportunity not to have shown the design as the architect was present. He stood by the proposed scheme and the application was with EDDC. He wanted everyone to get something out of the scheme.

Cllr Minter proposed to object to the planning application due to the lack of biodiversity and ecology preservation, outside BUAB, flooding concerns, access to highways, contravened LPC and EDDC local plan policies. Cllr Culhane seconded. Unan.

RESOLVED that the Clerk send the recommendation of object from LPC to EDDC.

Meeting closed **9.05pm**

Chairman:

Date: