

**GREAT SOMERFORD**  
**(INCORPORATING STARTLEY) PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Parish Council Extraordinary Meeting**  
**14 Dec 2022**  
**Community Room@ 7.30 pm**

**Present** Cllr T Barker Cllr A Lennox Cllr T Sturgis  
Cllr M Griffiths (Chair) Cllr H Lennox (Vice Chair) Cllr I Vout  
Cllr F Miles

**In attendance** H Wallace (Clerk)  
Cllr Threlfall  
**Introduction** a) Apologies  
Cllr J Harper

b) Declarations of interest  
None declared

c) Introduction to Appeals Application no. 21/01950/FUL – 3296058 Proposed development of 21 residential dwellings, vehicular access from Broadfield Farm, ancillary works and associated infrastructure.

Cllr T Sturgis explained that there is pressure from the five year land supply strategy which has delivered substantially less homes than required. It puts pressure on communities with a Neighbourhood Plan and puts decision makers in a position of weighing up conflicting arguments and creating what is known as a 'tilted balance' towards developers. Reasons are needed for opposition to development planning. Evidence submitted at appeal cannot be new but can be updated due to changes to the original points in objection. Cllr Sturgis said that Wiltshire Council are stating a need for further affordable housing in Great Somerford, whilst there is an initial view that some affordable housing has been let to people with no connection to Great Somerford and that not all have been taken up.

Cllr Griffiths opened to the public for questions.

**PQT** There were twenty-two members of the public present. Discussions were held broadly in these topics.

Process

Wiltshire Cllr Thelfall-stated that the Government is declaring a change to approach and, whilst the issue of the five year land supply continues, Wiltshire Council has been delivering well on housing, Cllr Sturgis responded that nothing has yet become a written ministerial statement, so the change in policy would not be given weight.

It was clarified that as this application was initially approved the Planning Officer, approved it but it was 'called in' to committee by Wiltshire Council and is now being reviewed at appeal by an Inspector. The Great Somerford Neighbourhood Plan is valid until 2026 and was reviewed in February 2022.

A member of the public stated that it seemed as though the burden on providing evidence was more on those objecting to the development. Cllr Sturgis responded that all written representations must be in by 27 December and thought that after that it might be possible that the Inspector would ask the developer to clarify some statements. The Public were

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asked to put their comments on or by the 26 December.

### Affordable Housing

Wiltshire Cllr Threlfall said that the 2014 survey of housing needs came back with a total of six affordable houses needed in Great Somerford. Members of the public were encouraged to ascertain local demand for further affordable housing, whilst being mindful of GDPR rules. It was noted that Homes4Wiltshire has been asked how many of the affordable home applications have local connections but has not responded. Cllr Threlfall and Cllr Sturgis are trying to get information from Wiltshire Council instead.

### Employment/Transport

There has been a closure of industrial units at Broadfield Farm ~~and at the stables~~ so employment in the Parish has reduced. A lack of very local employment coupled with transport issues was discussed. It was noted that the bus service, comprising one bus per day to Chippenham, is very limited, so that the new houses would be largely reliance upon private car transport.

### Categorisation

Great Somerford is categorised as a "large" village, due to having a shop, school, pub and charge, but is very different, with much less service provision than other "large" villages such as Lyneham. A member of the public asked if the Great Somerford could be recategorized as "medium". Cllr Sturgis responded only when the Core Plan for Wiltshire Strategy is reviewed, but because Great Somerford has a number of facilities, it ticks the boxes to fall into the large village classification. A member of the public asked if Startley is included, but because Startley doesn't add facilities it wouldn't change the category.

### Access

A member of the public asked, if the Planning Application was approved, would access be made to the site via the existing access road. Cllr Sturgis said that there would be a construction traffic plan most likely with access via the adjacent field, and attention would need to be made to ensure that conditions are met.

### Future Concern

Cllr Sturgis stated that if the developers are not allowed, they are not likely to try to move this Planning Application forward. The first application was for 41 houses, and this has been adjusted down. A member of the public commented that should this application be approved, there could be a push for more housing on the adjacent land. The field has been farmed continuously, and grown vegetables and flowers.

### Next steps for the Public

A member of the public asked how to respond, and it was discussed that it could be done directly on the application or people could let the Clerk, Cllr Griffiths, Cllr Sturgis or Cllr H Lennox know their comments. The Councillors' emails are available on the Parish website. <https://www.greatsomerfordparishcouncil.co.uk/>

WCR Reports from Wiltshire council related to Appeals Application no. 21/01950/FUL - 3296058

Wiltshire Cllr Threlfall participated in the introduction and public question time

2 To discuss and agree appropriate response to the planning application appeal.

Cllr Griffiths proposed that the Parish Council would submit an objection to the planning application by 27 Dec. This was seconded by Cllr A Lennox and unanimously agreed.



The Public were urged to email the Council or upload comments online. Cllr Sturgis offered to talk with anyone who wanted to regarding admissible comments. The link to the Planning Application will be put on the Parish Website following the meeting.

Cllr Griffiths thanked all for attending.

3 **Dates for Future Meetings @ 7.30 pm – 11 January** in the Community Room.

The meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.

Approved ..... *Alan Ch 2* ..... Chair Date *17/1/23* .....