

# Ashill Parish Council

## Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held on Monday 27 November 2017 in Ashill Village Hall at 7.30 pm

**Present** : Cllrs H Hewson (Chairman), R Abel, C Criddle, A Knight, P Lang, K Lyons, R Perryman, Mrs J Davidson (Clerk) and 42 members of the public.

### 1/11/17 Apologies

All members of the Parish Council were present at the meeting.

### 2/11/17 Declarations of Interest/Dispensation Requests

Cllr Knight declared an interest in the planning application - 17/04328/OUT - due to his role as a Church Warden. As Cllr Knight's interest was not a pecuniary one he was able to remain in the room during the meeting but not take part in the discussion and the vote.

### 3/11/17 Public Participation

The following key issues raised by members of the public were summarised as :

- Principal;
- Sustainability;
- Landscape / Wildlife Impact;
- Highway Safety / Parking;
- Drainage;
- Environmental / Historical / Archaeological Impact.

### 4/11/17 Planning

The following planning application which had been submitted to SSDC since the last ordinary meeting of the Parish Council was received and considered :

Application No.	17/04328/OUT
Proposal	Erection of 26 dwellings and associated works, including the formation of 2 No. accesses and car park (outline)
Location	Land West of School Lane, Ashill.

#### Principal

The site is historically an ancient orchard and is situated in a rural location at the edge of the centre of the Ashill settlement. Ashill is predominately made up of individual properties and small scale housing developments located around the Parish. The Parish Council has concerns regarding the size, design and access of the proposed development which is considered to be out of character, unneighbourly and overbearing in the context of the rural settlement, grade II listed church and adjacent properties - some of which are single storey. There is another significant development proposal in the Parish which is currently being considered by South Somerset District Council - 17/03800/OUT - Windmill Hill Lane – but the Parish of Ashill has no demonstrable need for the proposed number and mix of dwellings to be delivered in either or both of these proposed developments. A drop-in session was held by the Planning Agent in order to engage with the community regarding this proposal but the Parish Council is disappointed that the Agent has not engaged with the members of the Council as a corporate body.

#### Sustainability

The site is remote from local key services – the Parish did have a limited bus service but this has now been terminated, there is no shop, no youth facilities, children have to be transported to senior school and there are few employment opportunities – these are needs on a daily basis which means it would be necessary for the development to be constantly served by private and commercial vehicles and therefore Ashill cannot be considered to be a sustainable location in transport terms. It is considered that the temporary employment opportunities which would be generated by the planning and construction of this development would be of little, or no, benefit to the residents of Ashill. There are also concerns as to whether the current broadband and electricity infrastructure actually has the capacity to service the requirements of an additional 26 dwellings (which could be up to 56 – in the event of planning permission also being granted for

17/03800/OUT - Windmill Hill Lane). The Parish Council therefore wish to make the request for the utility companies to be fully consulted regarding this infrastructure provision.

#### **Landscape / Wildlife Impact**

The Parish Council considers the proposed development - which would extend the development line of the settlement of Ashill along this side of the old A358 - would adversely affect the setting of the grade II listed church and identity of the rural village. There are concerns regarding the loss of an ancient orchard and as a consequence the impact this would have on the flora and fauna. The Parish Council is pleased to note an additional wildlife survey is to be requested by SSDC and wish to make the request that this survey is also carried out during night time/darkness hours. The site is considered to be of significant interest with regard to wildlife - including newts, toads and grass snakes - and bats and barn owls during the night time/darkness hours.

#### **Highway Safety / Parking**

The existing road network is considered to be not adequate enough to accommodate the additional residential traffic. There are also uncertainties regarding the future of the local road network due to the proposed upgrading of the A358 which could create a further increase in vehicle movements along the old A358 carriageway. Neither the proposal to create a new footpath at the back of the proposed development, nor the existing footpath adjacent to the old A358 / proposed development, addresses highway safety concerns for all users of the road network in the area of the church/school/playing field where there are no footways and limited visibility. It is considered that insufficient provision has been made for parking within the proposed development and along with the proposed design - i.e. some garages and driveways to be at the rear of the properties – it could encourage parking adjacent to the old A358 carriageway. The Parish Council therefore wish to make the request that Highways are fully consulted regarding these highway safety concerns and this should include a projection of how the road network could be affected by the A358 upgrading proposals.

#### **Drainage**

There are concerns regarding whether the surface water drainage could be managed in a sustainable way whilst not creating an adverse impact on existing properties and elsewhere. It is understood the geology of Ashill is made up of impermeable clay and - along with the sloping topography - there are concerns about introducing another built area which could cause more surface water flooding. There was an incident of flooding – which caused significant damage to properties located at Kenny during 2008 – due to surface water running down to the river and causing it to overflow. There are also concerns regarding the sustainable management of foul drainage and sewage treatment which is already an issue in the Parish. The Parish Council therefore wish to make the request that Wessex Water is fully consulted regarding these drainage concerns.

#### **Environmental / Historical / Archaeological Impact**

It is considered that the proposal would have an adverse impact on the residential amenity and privacy of the surrounding properties. There are concerns regarding the environmental impact due to the increased noise, light and air pollution which would be caused by this development. The site is also considered to be of interest in the context of history and archaeology. The Parish Council therefore wish to make the request that full surveys are carried out with regard to these issues.

#### **Planning Policy**

SSDC is currently reviewing the South Somerset Local Plan – adopted in March 2015 – to cover the period 2014-2034. The current Local Plan Policy SS2 deals with development in rural settlements but this policy appears to be having little, or no, weight which it is understood is due to the lack of a five year housing land supply. The policy requires that development should be commensurate with the scale and character of the settlement, provide employment opportunities, community facilities, meet identified housing need and increase the sustainability of a settlement in general. This policy should be a key part of the spatial distribution strategy for housing in South Somerset but more housing has been delivered during the first 11 years of the Local Plan period in rural settlements than had been envisaged. The question of housing developments was raised during the Prime Minister's question time in the House of Commons on Wednesday 22 November 2017

and one of the answers Mrs May gave was that “we need to have right infrastructure in place before large housing developments can take place”.

**Conclusion**

Ashill Parish Council is of the opinion that Ashill does not meet the criteria for the SSDC Local Plan Policy SS2 and it does not have the infrastructure in place to support a large housing development. Having given consideration to material planning considerations the Parish Council resolved that the level of development is not appropriate for Ashill and unanimously **objects** to this proposal.

**5/11/17 Date of Next Meeting**

It was confirmed the next ordinary meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday 15 January 2018.

*The meeting closed at 9 : 00 pm*

Signed : ..... (Chairman)  
Date : 15 January 2018