

DENNINGTON PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of Dennington Parish Meeting

4th February 2019 at 7pm in the Village Hall

The purpose of the meeting was for Dennington Parish Council to consult with local residents regarding a response to the final draft of Suffolk Coastal District Council's Local Plan, and in particular the detail concerning the proposals for the Laxfield Road site.

Attendees: approx 60 Dennington residents, District Councillor Christopher Hudson and Parish Clerk Ruth Hart

Attendees represented of about 10% of the residents, and were approximately 50% male, 50% female. Approximately 13% of attendees were aged 18-45 years, and 87% were 50 years plus.

1. and 2. Welcome and introduction by Chairman of the Council: Chair of the Parish Council, R. Wardley welcomed people to the meeting and explained the purpose of the evening. He informed them that the Parish Council would be considering the views of the meeting at their next planning meeting on February 18th at 7pm. People were welcome to attend that meeting as observers.

3. Ch. Cllr R. Wardley stressed that importance of individuals making representation to Suffolk Coastal District Council, (SCDC), and that the closing date for this was 5pm on Monday February 25th 2019. He then introduced Mrs Ruth Hart, Parish Clerk (taking minutes) and Cllr M. Lunn to make the presentation.

4. Councillor Lunn made a presentation saying that all the information used was in the public domain. He summarised SCDC's previous consultations and stressed that no planning applications had been made to date. The presentation covered the following points:-

Site specific policy SCLP 12.50

Criteria the developer will need to comply with

The infrastructure improvements that could be expected

What a development might look like

How to make representation to SCDC – the tests for “soundness” has the strategy been positively prepared, is it justified, is it effective and is it consistent with national policy?

(The full presentation can be found in Appendix 1).

5. To invite discussion on the final draft of the Suffolk Coastal Local Development Plan in particular for Parish of Dennington: As a number of questions were raised concerning how the number of houses (50) had been arrived at, and how the site had become available, Cllr R. Rous, (landowner for Laxfield Rd site), offered some clarification part way through the discussion (summarised here).

He stressed that his family had owned land in the village for centuries and that he had lived in the village for 40+ years and that his family intended to remain in Dennington. He stated that when he offered the Laxfield Rd site he had never proposed 50 dwellings, that number had come from

SCDC. He considered 30 dwellings may be more appropriate for the site, but this was obviously dependent on the type of housing to be built. He and his family were very keen that any development be sensitively built, and they had been to look at several schemes across the country that met these criteria. They had also been looking for developers that would be sensitive to the needs of the community/village, and were keen to work closely with the developer and remain involved once the land was sold. He stated that he had discussed affordable housing with Suffolk Heritage. He reiterated the benefits that the development would bring to the village in terms of providing a drop off point for school traffic, a footpath to link with the permissive path across the site, and financial benefits through the CIL.

Comments/Questions raised:

Clarification was sought as to how many houses Dennington was being asked to identify sites for – 10/30/50? :

- It was explained that in 2014 a number of sites had been identified but that SCDC had screened out all but the Laxfield Rd site. The Site Allocations & Area Specific Policies had proposed 10, now the extended site proposal was for an additional 40 dwellings (hence the total of 50).
- A number of people expressed the view that 50 was far too many for Dennington, that a single development of that number would swamp the village, and why was a village with a population of approx 600 being asked to provide what was in fact the third highest increase for a small village in the district? It would put further pressure on already overstretched services. The comment was made that SCDC had taken into account the scale of previous developments in villages, and that as Dennington has had no significant recent development (unlike, for example, Badingham or Peasenhall) the numbers for Dennington were correspondingly higher. Also SCDC have over-planned the housing allocations and that there was no compunction for Dennington to provide that many.
- A number of people recognised that housing development would definitely happen, that it would bring benefits to Dennington (see below), but that 50 was too many, suggesting maybe 25/30. Some expressed the fear that if 50 were built now, then more would follow.
- The point was clarified that the number of houses would be decided when a planning application was received
- A member of the public stressed the point that it was the principle of identifying a site for housing that should be considered and not the number of houses. That would follow when a planning application was received.

A second point of clarification/discussion was in regard to the physical limits of the village:

- The Site Allocations & Area Specific Policies Document , had extended the physical limits of Dennington to include the original site (for 10 dwellings). The final draft local plan document would extend the physical limits further to include the new site

A third point of clarification/discussion centred on alternative sites:

- If the Laxfield Rd site delivered 30 houses, would other sites be required to deliver a further 20? The point was made that SCDC had over-planned the allocation (see above).
- An alternative site opposite Wynney's Hall had been offered, on the main A1120, why had this been turned down? The Parish Council had not been involved in this decision, it had

been made by SCDC. There was little detail in the Alternative Sites Document as to why SCDC had not carried this site through into the Final Draft Local Plan.

- Other sites that the Parish Council had expressed support for development in 2014, had been turned down by SCDC and had not been submitted for further consideration by their landowners in the Local Plan Issues & Options consultation in 2017.

A further point focused on the benefits additional housing could bring to Dennington:

- The point was made that further housing would happen in Dennington, and that this presented the opportunity to work with a landowner to shape housing for the future
- It was agreed that the continuation of the primary school was important to Dennington, that it was a “good” school in Ofsted terms, and people agreed that new affordable housing would benefit the school. The school currently takes children from out of catchment in order to maintain viability.
- It was noted that at either end of the school day, parking was an issue, and if the housing development created a drop off point away from the road, that would be of benefit. Reducing congestion on Laxfield Road and negating the need for children to cross the A1120 from The Square.
- A housing development would bring additional monies in the form of the CIL which would benefit the whole community
- The point was made that the plan showed additional playing field space for the school and the creation of further green space, together with a footpath which would be of benefit to all and lead to a fitter generation.
- A member of the public voiced their desire for affordable housing to establish a family in the village.

Other questions/concerns:

- What was the justification in July 2018 for the Parish Council not to make a response to that draft consultation document? The July 2018 meeting had agreed not to make a response and to wait until a planning application was received.
- The fear was expressed that once the land was sold to a developer, then the landowner would have no say in what was built and how it was built.
- What improvements would be made to Laxfield Rd? It was already congested and dangerous, particularly at certain times of the day. Construction traffic would only exacerbate this.
- What about wildlife habitats on the site? The site specific policies for SCLP12.50 states that the site would need wildlife and bat surveys etc undertaken & appropriate mitigations before building commenced.
- What consideration had been given to the increase in traffic, (100+ cars), should 50 houses be built on that site? Chair was unaware of any traffic modeling performed by SCDC.

Towards the end of the meeting District Councillor C. Hudson spoke, raising a number of points:

He stated that across the district 195,000 new homes were needed, saying that in his view 50 was probably too many for Dennington.

- He had voted against SCDC's Local Plan, but he recognised that some housing development was needed.
- He stressed the importance of the village having a strong parish council, an honourable landowner and good communication.
- He urged residents to write to elected members.

Cllr M. Lunn thanked everyone for their input, and reminded everyone of the consultation deadline of February 25th, and that SCDC welcomed comments etc either online or by post. He said that people could email/send copies of their responses to the Clerk for consideration at the Parish Council meeting on February 18th at 7pm when councillors would be meeting to consider their response and that people were welcome to attend as observers.

The meeting concluded at 8.20pm

Signed *R Wardley*

Date 18/02/2019