

**Thorpe St Andrew Town Council
Minutes of the Plans Committee meeting held on
18 February 2019 at 7.30pm**

1 Present:

Mr J Fisher (Chairman)
Mr F Bowe Mrs J Fisher Mr R Robson Mr S Snelling

Apologies:

Mr P Berry

In attendance:

Dr T Foreman (Town Clerk) Mrs D Matthews (Committee Officer)
Mrs F Bass (Deputy Town Clerk)

Present at the meeting were 15 members of the public, Town Councillors Lawn, Ward and Emsell and 6 representatives associated with the planning application REF: 20190016

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None were made

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2019 were agreed and signed as a true record.

4 PRESENTATION BY CAM ARCHITECTS

A presentation was made by CAM Architects on the planning application Ref: 20190016 – Land east of Pound Lane. The proposal included the provision of a care village comprising a 68 bed 2½ /3 storey care home, 23 assisted living flats and 18 single storey assisted living bungalows for people over 75 years of age needing a minimum of 4 hours per week care. The proposal had been designed to fit into the site within the Belmore Plantation, east of Pound Lane which currently had planning permission for a leisure centre/spa but which was nearing expiry, making use of the current open paddock area and existing accesses. A range of current and historic photographs/maps/plans were used to demonstrate the proposal, including the proposed layout, courtyards, access, internal roadways, amenity spaces, parking areas (including scooter parking), a mix of pitched and flat roofs which incorporated rooftop garden areas for use by residents. The assisted living flats would be to the front of the site, the care home in the centre and the single storey bungalows to the rear. The care home was of a modern contemporary design, with large windows and the bungalows were of a more traditional rural style using red brick. The carpark had been designed to meet the highway authority's required standard and number of spaces. Consultations had taken place with planning officers and the conservation officer who were largely supportive of the proposals but further negotiations were ongoing, in particular with regard to the massing of the care home building. The buildings had been located on the site in such a way as to minimise the impact on

existing mature trees, particularly along the road frontage and boundaries of the site which provided a natural buffer. A small number of relatively newer trees would need to be removed but a similar number would be replanted around the site, together with wildflower planting, to enhance the ecology and biodiversity of the site and soften the proposed buildings. All building works would be outside of any tree root protection zones. With regard to the ecology of the site the two main areas of significance were the pond which was populated with great crested newts and a bat roost. Measures were being put in place to secure the necessary licences to control mitigation measures to protect both these species on the site.

5 PLANNING ITEMS RAISED BY RESIDENTS

REF: 20190016 - Land East of Pound Lane – members of the public present raised a number of concerns about the proposals and asked a number of questions of the agents for the applicant.

Clarification was sought about the status of the current planning permission for the site if the new application was approved by the District Council and it was confirmed that, as long as the planning permissions were still current, it was possible that either could be chosen for construction but not a mix of both. It was understood the existing permission for a leisure centre/spa would soon expire. The applicants for the current proposal were committed to the current scheme. It was also confirmed that an existing permission was still in place for a residential development adjacent to this site.

Concerns were raised about the volumes of traffic using Pound Lane and about access to/from the site. The roads around the site such as Booty Road, were already heavily congested, particularly at certain times such as school drop off/pick up and when the American Football Club games were being played. The roads were part of busy bus routes and driving school routes and there were concerns about access for emergency vehicles. The agents responded that, having regard to the occupation condition of the proposed accommodation and it only being available to those over 75 years of age, car ownership was not likely to be very high. The applicants had experience in the provision of a similar care village facility at Carlton Colville and there was a relatively low level of car ownership. Many residents utilised scooters. Visitor numbers to care homes was not particularly high. There was still concern that, despite the possibility that visitors to the care village would generate less cars than the previous proposal for a leisure centre/spa, there would still be additional traffic adding to the already high volumes. The agents confirmed that the carparking proposals included the provision of 1 car park space for each unit of accommodation plus extra spaces for visitors and staff. Staff numbers were likely to be approximately 85. The agents commented that a planning application could not be utilised to fix an existing problem but that it should not add to that problem. The question of a one-way in, one way out option was raised with the possibility of access to the west of the site to reduce traffic levels. It was unlikely this was possible as no suitable access to the western end of the site was available. There was some confusion over the proposed access routes and it was confirmed that the two existing access roads to Beech Lodge and Tawny Lodge would be utilised for access to the proposed development.

A concern was raised about the impact of the size and location of the care home on neighbours particularly as properties in the area were mainly bungalows. The trees screening the building were deciduous and would only provide limited screening and it was noted the distance from the building to the properties opposite was only

approximately 19 m. There were also concerns about headlights shining into properties opposite the exits. A question was raised as to why the care home could not be re-sited to the rear of the site and the single storey accommodation located to the front. There was no concern about the single storey element of the proposal. The agents explained the concept of the care village was to provide the care home at the centre of the surrounding accommodation.

A question was raised about the timescales for the development and fears that the applicants were not serious about progressing the development and the site would remain empty or partially demolished for a number of years as had happened in relation to the Pinebanks site. The agents for the applicant commented that considerable sums had been invested in preparing the detailed planning application and the applicants were committed to moving the project forward. They hoped construction could begin on site within 12 months, subject to the satisfactory conclusion of matters with the landowner.

A resident raised the issue of the additional pressure which would be placed on already over-stretched GP services at the Thorpe Wood Practice. The agents commented that the NHS had been consulted as part of the preparation of the planning application and they had raised some issues regarding this which the agents would be responding to. It was noted that the arrangement at the Carleton Colville facility was that a retainer was paid to the local GP Practice. The agents added that the concept of the care village was to provide supported accommodation for residents to encourage and facilitate independent living and included a number of on-site services and facilities which would support people within the development. It was acknowledged that a facility of this nature would bring a high number of older people to the community but the nature of the facility would mitigate the impact of this. It was also confirmed that those with dementia could be catered for but the facility was not a dementia unit.

The Chairman thanked the agents and the residents for attending to enable a full and informed discussion to take place and for questions and concerns to be raised. He reiterated that the Town Council were just consultees in the process and would now be formulating its response to the planning application (see Minute 6 below). He urged residents with views on the proposal to send their representations to the District Council who would be making the decision on the application.

6 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

REF: 20190016 – Land East of Pound Lane – Demolition of existing dwellings and erection of care village (all use class C2) comprising 68 bed care home, 23 assisted living flats, 18 assisted living bungalows and associated outbuilding and 2 new accesses.

Members discussed the application and in general supported the proposal which would provide much needed supported accommodation. There were however concerns about some elements of the proposals: the flow of surface water into the nearby pond, the access arrangements and congestion on adjoining highways, in particular Booty Road, and the size and mass of the 3-storey care home building which was not in keeping with character of the area and contrary to the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

The Town Clerk made reference to the potential cumulative impact of a number of

recent large planning permissions on the highway network in this area of the Town and if there was potential for further discussions regarding traffic management in the area. It was agreed to **SUPPORT the proposal in principal** but to request that further negotiations take place regarding the highway implications and access arrangements, and a reduction in the height and mass of the 3-storey care home building to reduce its impact.

The meeting closed at 09:00pm

Signed:

Dated: