

**Notes of the public meeting held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at 7.30pm  
Regarding planning application 14/21272/OUT  
Horseshoe, Audmore**

The meeting was attended by approximately 92 people including 8 members of the Parish Council as well as Clerk, Jayne Cooper, SBC Cllr Ken Williamson, SBC Cllr Mike Smith and Staffordshire Newsletter

Apologies received from: Cllr S Green, Cllr M Hughes, Mrs S Prichard, Mr J Rhodes

The views of the parishioners who attended and spoke are detailed within these notes.

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The Chairman, Cllr Greatrex welcomed everyone to the meeting. He explained that before the discussion commence on the planning application, a statement would be made about the current position of the Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Neighbourhood Plan**

Early completion is necessary to complete the plan to help deal with planning application and appeals and subsequently protect the village. The draft document is being finalised that will be checked by SBC Officers. Parish Councillors will consider the draft plan at a meeting on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December. If approved, the statutory 6 week consultation will commence later that week and run until around 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015. Any issues arising from the consultation will have to be addressed. The plan will then be submitted to SBC with all the supporting documents. An examiner examines the place and if the examiner is happy with it, the next stage is the public referendum. Everyone on the parish receives information. For the plan to be accepted 51% of the returns have to be positive.

Mr C Emsley, a non-councillor representative on the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group explained the makeup of the group and its objectives. He emphasised how the plan is the village plan and will shape how parishioners want the village to look over the next 209 years. He reiterated the process involved and acknowledged the help being provided by Stafford Borough council.

SBC Cllr Ken Williamson commented – he emphasised the importance of having a NP in place. He congratulated the work of the NP Working Group on the excellent work carried out so far and the progress made. This was acknowledged by people present with a round of applause.

Mrs Gregory, on behalf of GRID, thanked the NP working Group for progressing with the NP so quickly.

### **Application 14/21272/OUT**

The Chairman confirmed that planning documents had been in the parish office and on SBC website to view. Comments made by parishioners would be attached as an appendix to the council's formal response. Parishioners were encouraged to write to SBC by 25<sup>th</sup> November. The Parish Council had been granted an extension of time to respond no later than 8<sup>th</sup> December and would hold a full Council meeting to consider the application on 27<sup>th</sup> November.

The Chairman of the NP Working Group, Jeff Rhodes who was not present as he was working on the NP, had spoken to the Parish Council Chairman about the application and advised GPC to seek further information from SBC on:

- Drainage documents
- Visual Impact Assessment
- Archaeology Assessment
- Traffic Analysis

As information in all these documents is poor.

**Members of the public and councillors were then asked to raise any questions or comments:**

SBC Cllr Mike Smith commented – he said suggesting an additional traffic survey is a good idea and could be carried out by SCC quite easily. He suggested the main reasons for refusal would be:

- Drainage
  - Sustainability
  - Visual Impact
  - SBC ward members will also argue that 200+ houses have been approved and Gnosall village cannot stand any more
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- Mr Corfield said he had been studying archaeology for over 50 years and had found it difficult to find information about the Horseshoe from the documents. However the Horseshoe, he believes started out as a lake, the shape is not logical for a field boundary. If it was a lake, the ground will be water logged. This landscape should be protected and would be a disaster if developed.
  - Mr Webb referred to the travel plan and traffic analysis report – the suggested 49 journeys is nonsense as the survey was taken over a very short period of time. This should be repeated. Also the information on public busses is incorrect. The offer of a travel pass is only valid for 3-6 months.
  - Mrs Gregory talked about flooding and drainage. Only one ground water test was carried out after a particularly dry period in September. At least 12 months of tests should be carried out. The ditch that runs around the site is culvetted and regularly runs over; any development would cause more flooding. The whole area is a natural bowl. The plans do not address catchment of water. The documents refer to the retention of the hedgerows but nothing about their maintenance. The information is not adequate.
  - Mrs Spencer talked about flooding. The documents acknowledge the ground is high and the excess water would be dealt with by a pond in the corner of the site but there is no mention of how any overflow would be dealt with.
  - Mr Prendergast also referred to the pond and that there is nothing in the reports about safety. He also said in the County archives there are reports on archaeological expeditions and with Roman remains found in the corner of the land where the pond is proposed.
  - Mr Winkle, a resident on the Horseshoe confirms the drainage problems saying eh water table is only 6” below the surface.

- Mrs Gardner said the land floods so badly that sometimes it is impossible to drive through.
- Residents of Stone Cottage said they have to use sandbags to prevent water going into their property each time it rains. They have been doing this for 3-4 years.
- Residents of Watercress Cottage asked about the ecological survey. Mr Webb replied it was a desk based study therefore not as useful.
- Mr Lee asked about the Neighbourhood Plan and what credence Borough Councillors would place on the application if the NP is not approved. The Chairman reminded Mr Lee that the NP is following a statutory process and is being worked on as quickly as possible. Cllr Smith said the further the NP progresses, the more weight is attached. Cllr Smith advised parishioners to respond and attend the planning committee. Cllr Williamson said should the application go to appeal it would probably be mid 2015 by which time the NP should be in place.
- Mr Prichard queried the amount of funds being spent by SBC and SCC to argue against each other about the SCC application. RG commented that the accounts can be scrutinised by members of the public. Cllr Williamson said it is acceptable for SBC to spend money on arguing planning applications.
- Resident on Audmore who had photographic evidence of flooded gardens and asked whether this would be useful. Borough Cllrs said any photographs of the area in flood would be very useful.
- Mrs Gregory talked about confusing timescales, particularly about closing dates for comments. She asked all members of the public to send in letters, if they object, and send in different letters from each members of the household including valid planning reasons focussing on drainage, flooding, roadways, and visual impact.
- Mrs Lane asked whether noise is a valid reason as from where she lives the increased noise from such a development would be significant. Cllr Smith said it would as well as light pollution.
- Mr Webb talked about the 1200 houses across the key service villages and that already a quarter of that total are to be built in Gnosall. Cllr Smith confirmed he would argue this point at the meeting. Ward members would also be arguing on sustainability as most of the new homeowners would be commuting in and out of the village therefore the application is not sustainable.
- Mrs Tweed asked about the sustainability of the new primary school as she believed it was to be built for children currently in the village. Cllr Payne, School Governor, said the school was going to be replaced as it is now but the developer was approached and school is now being built to allow future extensions to accommodate additional growth. Mrs Gregory also said that she had spoken with the Head Teacher who had confirmed the new school is being built for children currently and new growth would have to be accommodated for. The details in the application therefore are incorrect.
- Mrs Gregory said the application should be refused as it's not sustainable in as much as there is no employment, people would have to travel out of the village and there are not enough school places. She added that this area is unique, it is not designated

but people should still focus on its unique nature, it is a circular leisure loop, there is no light pollution – there are many features that make it unique. The proposal would adversely and irreversibly damage the unique features.

- Mrs Whittick picked up on the comments about the new school adding by the time it is open it will not be big enough for new children and parishioners would want their children to go to the village school.
- Cllr Smith also said Greenfield sites are a finite resource – the village is losing its identity and has reached the pint of saturation. Why would people want more?
- Mrs Sullivan referred to the Land Agricultural Use document – it is small, it's a summary statement it says there is no other land of poor quality i.e. there is nowhere else to put 90 houses.
- Cllr Smith said the parish council has to ensure SBC Planning members know how much effort is being put into the Neighbourhood Plan and to approve this application would seriously undermine this hard work – this would be outrageous. Cllr Williamson made the final point in that should planning members approved this application they would be removing the right for local people to have their say.

There were no further questions so the meeting was close at 8.45pm.