

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SHEPTON MONTAGUE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY AT 7.00pm in the VILLAGE HALL

**Present:** Paul Williams (Chair), John Sykes (JS), Julia Hunter (JH), Ali Willasey-Wilsey (AW), Tom Power (TP) Somerset Councillor, Margaret Bowden (MB) clerk. Also in attendance were 13 members of local parishes and two representatives from The Newt/Emily Estates in respect of Item 5.

- 1 **Apologies for absence: Richard Ellis (RE),**
- 2 **Declarations of interest.** None.
- 3 **Minutes of the last meeting** were signed as a correct record.
- 4 **Matters arising:**
  - Planning application 23/02756/FUL Barn at Trendle Lane, Stoney Stoke –** Awaiting Decision by Planning.
  - Availability of GPs in area:** TP reported that there is an attempt to get an independent pharmacy to take over the store when Boots closes but the need for doctors remains.
- 5 **Planning Applications Numbers: 23/02317/FUL and 23/02318/LBC Demolition of redundant farm buildings, renovation and alterations to retained buildings, erection of new buildings and associated site access, landscape and drainage works, all in association with use of the site to provide 9 units of short stay holiday accommodation (sui generis) and associated facilities. Location: Lily Farm Cattle Hill BA7 7NF**

PW explained the fundamental differences between this amended application and the earlier one to which Council had objected largely on the grounds of flooding and traffic generation

Paul Rawson (PR) from The Newt/Emily Estates then presented information on the amended proposal. He noted that local objections had been raised to the previous application in respect of flooding issues and that Somerset Planners had raised heritage issues.

**Flooding:** PR said that although the previous proposal had met all planning requirements in respect of flooding, nevertheless The Newt/Emily Estates wanted to show their commitment to ameliorating local flooding and therefore had been working alongside various Government agencies to see what additional measures can be taken. Within the Lily Farm site there will be two new swale areas with large storage capacity, rainwater harvesting measures, a permeable carpark surface with a drainage blanket below, cross-sloped ditches, buffer planting and other water attenuation measures which altogether will make a meaningful improvement. This will mean that the outflow will be considerably better than greenfield run off rates even though it is a brownfield site. These small scale type measures will be also be implemented over the wider estate over the next year.

**Heritage concerns:** The current proposal is for 8 units of accommodation (reduced from 9) and these have been moved away from the farmhouse in response to concerns expressed by the Georgian Society.

**Traffic:** PR emphasized the use of the internal road network and pointed out that no concerns regarding access had been raised by Highways.

JS then gave an update on flooding issues relevant to the application. He acknowledged that the water attenuation measures outlined by PR for the Lily Farm site were well in excess of those required by Planning but pointed out that the outflow from the site is only approximately 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the total outflow from the Cattle Hill basin. The proposals will make a difference but the issue is much bigger that Lily farm and it is important that The Newt address the whole issue on their landholding. The Section 19 investigation (generated following the flooding on May 9<sup>th</sup>) is crucial to understanding what happened and may happen again, and to advise on the best measures to take to prevent any reoccurrence. The Section 19 report will be available in the next few months hopefully.

JH commented that the amended application does not address the traffic issue. She noted that 'The Shed' onsite restaurant seats 36 yet it is intended only for the use of Lily Farm vacationers. Similar restaurants on the estate are now available to the general public and also for hire for events and The Shed could also be opened up in this way, generating additional traffic in the village. Lily Farm is directly accessible from Cattle Lane without going in through the main estate entrance. Similarly, external service vehicles can/will use the direct entrance to Lily Farm from Cattle Hill. There is no parking provision for service vehicles.

AW noted the incremental nature of applications from The Newt: 'Planning creep' and that this application will have a detrimental effect on the village. Highways may not have objected but the evidence indicates an increase in traffic volume will be the result. With regard to flooding, she agreed that it is important to wait for the Section 19 report.

PW then invited comments from the floor:

The need to wait for the Section 19 report was re-iterated otherwise the process would be a waste of money.

It was noted that there are 170 attachments related to this application on the SSDC Planning website and therefore it is very difficult to access all the information. TP felt the same and would feed this information back at County.

The comment was made that to keep putting in a long series of smaller, piecemeal applications is a subversion of the planning process. PR responded that this was the natural result of a developing business.

It was stated that there were 47 comments on the planning website for these 2 applications, all of which are objections and none of which had been addressed except those made by the Georgian Society.

PR was asked if the flood mitigation measures he had outlined would still go ahead if these applications are refused, to which he replied that they would.

It was observed that planting trees today will have little impact on flooding in the short term and that there had been large scale removal of hedges etc. on the estate over the last 11 years which has made a much bigger impact. Also the non-porous roads on the estate will have an impact on the movement of water.

Council resolved to object to the applications and submit the following response to Planning:

**PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS**

	SHEPTON MONTAGUE
Application Ref No:	23/02317/FUL and 23/02318/LBC
Address:	Lily Farm, Cattle Hill, Shepton Montague
Date of response:	17/02/24

<b>1. Support the granting of permission</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please explain below the main grounds on which you support the proposal:		
<b>1. Object to the granting of permission</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please explain below the main grounds on which you object to the proposal:		

Material Considerations	Explanation of Grounds
1. Overlooking, loss of privacy or overbearing/overshadowing nature of proposal	
2. Design & appearance, impact on public visual amenity	
3. Layout & density of building	

4. Effect on listed buildings and/or conservation areas	<p>Council and local residents are disappointed at the loss to the village of this small farm with its listed farmhouse. We consider that this change of use to what is effectively an up-market holiday camp involving new built short stay accommodation will ruin the farmhouse and its setting and bring nothing to the village but new buildings, disturbance and traffic. The council supports the comments made previously by the SSDC Conservation Specialist.</p> <p>To date the Applicant has rendered Searts Farm and Lily Farm derelict and removed their respective tenants and halted the demolition of unsightly farm buildings to the east of Cattle Hill.</p>
5. Loss of trees or ecological habitats	
6. Inadequate parking and/or servicing areas	<p>The Applicant states that service vehicles will access the site from the estate but this cannot be enforced where external service providers are involved and access is more easily available from Cattle Hill or via the village.</p>
7. Access, highways safety or traffic generation	<p>All previous comments stand as Council does not feel that this issue has been adequately addressed.</p> <p>This amended proposal is for 13 beds/26 guests rather than the previous 14 so will generate a similar amount of traffic from a starting point of almost none at present. . We would continue to suggest the access be swept to the right with a sign for All Routes as per the Newt car park, to discourage traffic from going through the village, although this cannot be prevented. In addition – see below:</p>
8. Noise, smells or disturbance from the scheme	<p>Council notes that the restaurant element of the development has seating for 36 – nearly 3 times the proposed available beds, despite the application stating that the facility is only for use of holiday makers staying on the estate. The restaurant is accessible from Cattle Lane, (i.e. not necessarily via the estate) thus creating the likelihood of further traffic from users. It is of particular concern that this facility may follow the path of other eating places on the estate in being opened to the wider public for private functions as is <b>already the case</b> with three of the other ‘restaurants’ at The Newt.</p>

<p>9. Flood Risk</p>	<p>Council previously objected to the development due to the lack of any tangible infrastructure or measures on the Applicant's estate which would help ameliorate the flood risk to the village. Previous significant developments on the estate** and the increasing 'service road' network within it, add to flooding risks.</p> <p>The Applicant has now proposed several flood and water control mitigations measures at and around the site, working with the Environment Agency etc. which aim to make a meaningful improvement and which are very welcome.</p> <p>However some of the measures e.g. tree and hedge planting, will have little impact in the short term (whereas the large scale removal of hedges on the estate and the establishment of non-porous roadways within it over the last 11 years is likely to have made a larger and more immediate negative impact.)</p> <p>The Newt/Emily Estates own the majority of the land in the water catchment area of which the entire Lily Farm site represents around 10%.</p> <p>Council still considers that the importance of having an independent review of the entire catchment area is paramount to preventing flooding in the future. We need a well-designed flood scheme for the parish which will involve all the local landowners and community working together to prevent flooding in the future. Clearly this means we must stop anything that might make matters worse, such as this development.</p> <p>As previously stated, the first step must be to halt any further development that could increase flood risk until we have both the crucial section 19 report completed, (which we understand is currently in-hand), and a clear understanding of how and why these floods occur and an informed plan in place for future prevention. In view of this Council object to the proposed development.</p> <p>** Seart's Farm, Welham Farm, Roman Villa, Roman Villa museum, private road schemes, vineyard planted on imported soil over geo-textile etc. .</p>
<p>10. Other reason – please explain</p>	
<p><b>2. Comments only</b></p>	
<p>General Observations:  The Parish Council welcomes any works which will mitigate flooding in the area and recognise that measures proposed for the site are well in excess of those required by planning regulations. The measures proposed should make an impact in reducing flooding events but the issue for the local area and local residents is much bigger than Lily Farm. The Newt/Emily Estates say they take their responsibility as large local landowner seriously and wish to work with local communities to enhance and provide flood amelioration measures, yet still wish to press ahead with this development without the benefit of a comprehensive local flooding plan, informed by the Section 19 review and independent advice.  Council feels that it is important that the Newt address the wider issue of flooding on their landholding as</p>	

a priority over further commercial development.

Should permission for this development be granted despite all the objections, the Parish Council asks that a condition be made to prevent any further development on or adjacent to the former Lily Farm site and fields. This to include not allowing opening of the restaurant ('The Shed') to the public, which would generate more traffic and necessitate increased parking spaces.

- 6 **Shepton Montague Emergency Planning:** JS said he would not run this, it needs a group of volunteers. The Emergency Plan needed to deal with all manner of potential emergency situations: flooding, storm blocked roads, pandemics, major power cuts (UK grid collapse)..... he suggested we should include Bratton Seymour. Once the plan is in place it is possible to apply for an 80% grant to help implement it. The first step is to convene a working party. James and Elizabeth Gaston Hargreaves offered to do this. JS will circulate the information he has. PR said The Newt were happy to contribute.
- 7 **Noticeboards:** These still need fixing. PR said that The Newt have appointed a Village Steward who could help with jobs such as this. PR will send details to PW.
- 8 **Footpaths:** Are in a poor state and present an ongoing problem.
- 9 **Flooding issues (not covered above):** JS advised that in a joint project with the Environment Agency and Somerset Rivers Authority, 2 meters to monitor river levels had been installed: one at the headwater of the river Pitt at Knowle Bridge and one in a ditch by Welham Farm. These give advance warning of rising river levels.
- 10 **LCN's:** Next meeting is 22<sup>nd</sup> February. AWW and JH will attend.
- 11 **Website: Payment of invoice for web hosting:** A cheque for £150 was signed for VCS websites. **Email addresses:** Issue deferred to next meeting.
- 12 **a.o.b.** During the meeting PR introduced Zoe, The Newt's new Community Liaison Officer, who has a role dedicated to improving engagement with local stakeholders; Parish Councils, neighbours, schools etc.  
  
PR said that there would be a Wassail at The Newt on March 8<sup>th</sup> (not open to the general public) at which there would be fireworks.
- 13 **Open discussion**

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.45 pm.