

Informal Meeting Notes: 22nd May 2021 – 2.30pm

Netherfield Lane Field

In Attendance:

Julia Davies (SAPC & NP Steering)	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Mike Dorman (SAPC & NP Steering)	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Sarah Chapman (SAPC & NP Steering)	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Paul Breach (SAPC)	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Clare Maynard (SMPC & Steering)	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Purpose of the Meeting: To listen to the views of the Netherfield Lane Residents regarding the Websters Proposals

- A. Mrs R [REDACTED] asked for the meeting to be recorded. It was advised that notes would be taken for the informal discussion, but we would not be filming/recording, as we do for our more formal neighbourhood planning formal meetings. Mr & Mrs R [REDACTED] asked whether they were able to record this via their mobile. The group were asked if there were any objections and there were none.
- B. A resident commented that they did not want building on the field but had been told that if there was no neighbourhood plan that they would still have a say, is this correct? The resident declined to comment who had told them this. We advised that no neighbourhood plan meant that there was less protection from developers and EHDC could potentially look for more dwelling numbers. A plan enables protection not just from the number of dwellings but design of new builds, protected views and community assets etc. Julia Davies gave a brief overview of how the neighbourhood plan came about following a meeting with the then District Councillor & EHDC who strongly advised that one was created. The problem was that we are covered by a lot of green belt and flood zone 3 so we were very restricted on potential sites within the neighbourhood plan boundary.
- C. It was made clear that the Brownfield Site (Websters units) is actually in the Greenbelt; it does not need to be released from the Green Belt to be developed (*because it is previously developed land*) so could potentially have homes built there which could make the greenfield very vulnerable in the future to planning applications if it's not brought into the plan, as it will be surrounded by homes on most sides. Three years ago, the Websters planning application was turned down due to no employment opportunities and therefore their revised plans had to include units. This is why no more housing could fit onto the brownfield site.

- D. We are keen to create a defensible boundary around any land we ask to be released from the Green Belt.
- E. Would putting trees on the field stop building? This would not stop development unfortunately.
- F. It was noted that Mr Webster Senior loved the field and would not have wanted anything to be built on it. **Not quite correct. David Webster (the founder of the lighting business) was a keen ecologist and conservationist. His descendants have stated: "Knowing that David Webster himself had visions of sensitively developing the site, we made the decision to create a sympathetic housing development not only to add to and enhance the village of Stanstead Abbots, but also as a legacy to him"** Also, that Mr Fuselli told the residents that he would not build on the field. **Not quite correct, What I said when originally asked if we would build on the field was that I could not envisage a situation whereby the field would be released from the greenbelt, and as undeveloped green belt land, we would not likely get planning permission to do so. Circumstances have moved on, and the village now has a quota of new homes to deliver** This would be raised with Mr Fuselli for further comment. **(Action)**
- G. The plan was reviewed and there is concern over the entrance opposite the garages. This would make the area very dangerous and if turning this into a cul de sac, it would omit two homes and there would be a loss of four courtesy parking spaces. The entrance should be placed further down the Lane to prevent this and make it safer. It was agreed we would talk to Websters. **(Action) We are happy to review this and consult with our neighbours. The original reason for choosing this point to join the new access road into Netherfield Lane is that it isn't directly opposite anyone's house, just the garages and would cause the least inconvenience. We will have to agree our proposal with Highways at EHDC who will require us to ensure that there is sufficient space for all size vehicles. Turning to parking issues, we always acted in a neighbourly manner when the brownfield site was in use and were happy for our neighbours to use the parking in front of the offices out of normal business hours. We anticipate a similar informal arrangement with the new commercial units in that we would be happy for our existing neighbours to use the commercial parking overnight.**
- H. Would there be reduction in house prices if there is a loss of parking? House prices are usually affected by demand, but we cannot categorically confirm whether a home's value would reduce due to the loss of 'courtesy' parking. However, as with the action point above, we will talk with Websters regarding their plans.
- I. It was suggested that LVRP release some of their land to accommodate parking for visitors such as dog walkers & fishermen to their land, as they have in Marsh Lane. A lot of cars that park along Netherfield Lane, are those using the LVRP. This was a valid suggestion and one that we would speak to LVRP about **(Action)**
- J. Traffic calming is required on Roydon Road where it's very dangerous, especially the turning into the Lane. All agreed and this is an action point for the Transport Group to take up with EHDC & County Councillor. The group were advised that there had been various meetings with EHDC about parking and speeding etc. Surveys continue to be carried out and where EHDC advise that there are no issues in the village, that this is something we disagree with and continue to raise with them. **(Action) We**

agree that the Roydon Road would benefit from traffic calming arrangements, and currently favour some form of chicane arrangement forcing vehicles to slow down. It's likely that would fall outside of the scope of our scheme, but it is something we will be looking to engage on with the various parties that we liaise with as we progress on our own journey.

- K. There was a discussion around the Electric Charging points and that there is no provision elsewhere within the village and this could result in increased traffic in NL. This topic has been something that has been discussed with EHDC. They acknowledge the lack of these facilities and have been reviewing possible options within the centre of the village ie: village car park. Options are quite limited within the village but it something that is on our 'wish list' for possible use of S106 monies.
- L. How many affordable homes were there planned for Websters site? It was advised that this would be approx. 40% which equates to 24 dwellings. **This is correct, 24 new affordable homes, including the gifting of land with planning permission to enable the Baesh Trust to build 6 of the 24 units.** It was also advised that if the field was brought into the plan, that the Baesh Trust would work with the developer for 6 community homes to be built. These would be for local people, selected by the Baesh Trust. The Chapelfields site (garages) would produce 7 affordable homes. A resident pointed out that the Catesby site offer is very attractive and would offer more affordable homes. It was made clear that this meeting was being given to local residents to discuss the Netherfield Lane issues and was not about other sites. The discussion became heated and a temporary halt to the meeting was introduced to allow calm and respect to be restored.
- M. It was noted that there is no provision to have affordable on one site. Our priority currently is to find sites.
- N. A question as to whether a meeting at the Catesby Site or other sites could be offered? There were no plans to hold further informal discussions at other sites but that this will be taken under due consideration.
- O. It was pointed out that the Catesby site is also on Green Belt land.
- P. The residents were told that Websters have offered to sign a covenant that confirms they will not build more dwellings than their plans state if this provides some reassurance to those who feel once the application is approved, that more dwellings would then be built now or in the future. **Correct. We are looking to create a Landscape led development, rather than packing in as many homes as we can. We don't condone increasing the density of the homes as that goes contra to our ecological values. We wish to see a lot of green spaces, trees and habitats for wildlife incorporated into the design of the site.**
- Q. The number of homes currently in the plan were reviewed. Currently within the settlement area of the village we assess we can produce around 46 homes if all sites produce what we expect; plus on the Websters Brownfield Site there are 20 homes planned, so this leaves us approx. 33 short. The call for sites was mentioned and we advised what sites had come through that process – all in Green Belt,

all outside the village boundary: Kitten Lane, Marsh Lane, the Nursery on Netherfield Lane, the Catesby site, the site behind St Andrews Church.

- R. Residents asked about some sites in the village; the BT site is not an option because BT have no plans to move, and the landowner will not develop the site whilst BT remain there.
- S. Residents felt that the Marsh Lane site was a good option if LVRP agreed to provide the required numbers.
- T. We were asked whether LVRP had responded to us about the sites in their area, which to date they have not. Whilst the Websters site also sits in the LVRP, access to Netherfield Lane is not a main point of entrance to their facilities, as is Marsh Lane. We will be chasing them however for their response. They will have the opportunity to respond at the statutory consultation stage.
- U. Drainage issues – We are aware there is a main sewage pipe through the centre of the field and that drainage/flooding was on Websters radar. As part of our consultation process, we have to ask various authorities to look at our proposals. LVRP being one. If they oppose our plans, we will need to go back to the drawing board. **Our site falls on Flood Risk Zone 1 (the lowest rating – defined as an area of low probability of flooding, once in every 1,000 years). Netherfield Lane itself falls within Flood Risk Zone 2. We are addressing the problems with flooding on Netherfield Lane as part of our overall plans drainage, probably by way of a pumped solution.**
- V. What about the current District Plan review and the numbers? We advised that all District Plans were being reviewed and that it was most likely that the number of dwellings would increase in the plan overall, which is why adopting a NP was so important.
- W. Views and vistas are important and that the view of the field would be lost due to a housing estate from a main road. We said that this could also be argued for the sites known as The Granary, The Spinney and the 'Hobbit' Houses, which sit on a busy Hoddesdon Road. The Almshouse field is not a protected vista.
- X. The owner of the house on the main road (Cat Hill) advised that his garden is 6ft lower than the field and every 6 weeks they have to clear the sewage drainage. There is concern whether this would be seriously affected by potential future building? There is no building planned on the incline where the garden overlooks the field but would be something we can raise with Websters **(Action) We are aware of the high clay content of the soil and the likely requirements needed when building. We are not entirely clear about the sewage problem referred to, and would be happy to engage with our neighbour on this to better understand the problem. Perhaps the owner would like to make contact with us (nick@websterestates.co.uk) so that we can take this further?**

- Y. Residents thanked the group for giving their personal time to listen to the concerns and views of the Netherfield Lane residents. The group thanked the residents and asked that we continue to talk to each other whilst we go through this process.

Nothing further was discussed, and the meeting was concluded.

Julia Davies also received some helpful points in messages prior to the meeting and afterwards, which will be reviewed and addressed with Websters:

1. A resident of the Baesh Almshouses is unhappy about being overlooked and, also losing the wildlife which she enjoys seeing in the current field. **We are looking to create as many green spaces and habitats as possible**
2. From a resident of Roydon Road – concerns that the land on the sloping area of the field is unstable and not good for construction – heavy clay which moves as they have personally experienced. **We have engaged over this, and fully understand the issues. Modern construction methods present a number of solutions to this, and we are likely to undertake quite a number of surveys over the coming months so as to fully understand the nature of the groundworks required.**
3. Only as small amount of green belt as possible should be released. **This would create a densely packed development (shoeboxes) without large amounts of green spaces. We wish to avoid this as it works against our ecological and conservation values.**
4. Hedges should be retained where possible especially between the sites to maintain bird habitats – especially by the right-of-way track behind the Roydon Road houses. **We understand and agree with the concept. We will at some point be engaging the services of a Landscape Architect to guide and support us as we are keen ecologists.**
5. Safety of walkers along Netherfield Lane is a concern if more traffic is generated by the housing and also employment. There are fears about the visitors parking where the road is narrow. Since Covid and the closure of the employment site many walkers have enjoyed that route. **I think important to consider the volume of traffic that used the site when it was active. I would point out that we have acted in good faith for the benefit of our neighbours, and avoided bringing the yard space (not the offices or warehouses which are no longer fit for purpose) back into use. Such requests as we have received for the use of the yard involve heavy lorries and in some cases rather anti-social activities which we would not be happy with.**
6. Could the LVRP provide extra parking spaces?
7. There is a strong feeling that there should be no charging points as this would encourage extra traffic rather than being of help to immediate residents. **We remain open minded, and this is subject to further review. We are looking to help the village as a whole, rather than just the local residents. Broadly speaking, a 50kWh charger would take less than an hour to fully charge many of those vehicles that are capable of high speed charging. Not having chargers in the village rather limits the options for some people and forces those without home charging to use fossil fuel powered vehicles.**
8. Previously there was very little traffic outside office hours. **Not quite correct. The yard spaces have been used extensively outside of normal office hours over the years.**
9. A suggestion about off-grid power for EV charging – see Electric Vehicle Charging – AFC Energy. **We will look into this, and also other green non fossil fuel powered initiatives.**

10. Moving the junction between the new road beyond the garages – the current proposal is hazardous partly because of parked cars **Please see my response to “G” above.**
11. Not having Junction A would improve the visual aspect for the current houses
12. Water run-off is a concern – might not just sit on the lane but flow into houses if there is no barrier. **Please see my answer to “U” above.**
13. The lane was historically only 'busy' during office hours and very quiet in the evenings/nights (the addition of residential use will make it more 24/7. What’s the potential for the new commercial units to be used 'out of hours'? **We anticipate the commercial units to be Use Class “E” (formerly B1), in particular defined as “Uses which can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity”. We do not anticipate much usage (if any) outside of normal working hours.**