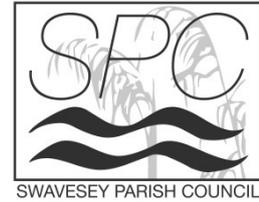


Swavesey Parish Council

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18th July 2016

Mr David Thompson
Planning & New Communities
South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridge CB23 6EA

Dear Mr Thompson

Re: Ref: S/1605/16/OL – Land to rear of 130 Middlewatch, Swavesey Ventures Ltd. Outline application for the development of up to 70 dwellings comprising 42 market and 28 affordable units, public open space, children’s play area, associated landscaping and new access.

Swavesey Parish Council wishes to raise the following serious concerns and objections regarding the Swavesey Ventures Ltd application to build up to 70 houses on land to the rear of 130 Middlewatch, Swavesey.

1. Surface Water (SW) Management

Swavesey is the last community on the Gt Ouse to discharge by gravity. Any outfalls downstream of Swavesey are by pump drainage. So with regard to Swavesey (to counter the flooding risks when the River Gt Ouse is in flood) a system of flood banks and non-return doors is employed. (Webbs Hole, Mare Fen and Church Bridge). These doors may remain shut for up to three weeks. As a result, the water falling on the Swavesey catchment cannot discharge to the Gt Ouse. As a result, lower areas in Swavesey will need to store any rainfall until such time as water levels in the Gt Ouse recede allowing the doors to open.

It is widely acknowledged that green field sites absorb large quantities of rain water as opposed to impermeable developed sites which absorb virtually none and therefore developed sites discharge larger quantities of water. This is acknowledged by the planners at South Cambs District Council and the Environment Agency who would not allow the development of Northstowe to proceed unless a system was in place to retain the waters from this development until such time as the receiving water courses were able to deal with this water without a flood risk lower down the catchment. In Swavesey’s case this could be for up to three weeks to allow the aforementioned doors to open.

The cumulative effect of the development that has taken place in the last relatively recent past and the rapidly increasing number of new developed areas being approved will lead to a greatly increased risk of flooding to property in Swavesey. This situation cannot be resolved by the usual short term attenuation employed on most development sites! This solution is only addressing flow capacity with in a system.

That is not to say that Swavesey doesn't have a flow capacity problem within its systems. This is evidenced by recent flooding to houses in Middle Watch, Boxworth End and Ramper Road with serious problems being recorded in the areas of Moat Way and Gibraltar Lane.

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Also, within the last few years, the Village College car park has been inundated, threatening the building and surrounding properties. Further development flows into this system can only exacerbate the problems that already exist.

All surface water flow from the southern end of the village ends up in the one drain, Turnbridge Drain, which to the west and south of the High St is the District Council Award Drain and to the east and North is Environment Agency Drain. The village has already had an additional 30 new homes permitted on land just to the south of this application site, draining surface water into the SCDC Award Drain. The proposal for up to 99 homes on land off Fen Drayton Rd proposes to drain into the Moat Way system which outflows into the Turnbridge Drain under Moat Way. This proposal for up to 70 new homes also proposes to drain into the SCDC Award drain and then into Turnbridge drain. These three proposals are on top of the already permitted infill developments already being built and looking for permission, which will also all drain into the same system!

The Council has also been made aware of water flowing east off of the proposed site, through gardens in Middlewatch and into the road at the Middlewatch/Ramper Rd junction area. Middlewatch gardens flood in heavy rainfall from water from the proposed development site. We understand residents are writing separately to you with evidence of this.

The Parish Council raises strong concerns over the capacity of the existing surface water drainage system through Swavesey to be able to cope with further large scale development.

This proposed development is considered by the Parish Council to be unsustainable due to the increasing flood risk. The Council therefore objects strongly to the proposed surface water management system.

2. Foul Water Management

The Parish Council understand that the foul water will flow through the existing system to Over STW. Council believed Over STW is at capacity and would require expansion. Council requests that this be a condition of any permission granted that expansion of the Over STW must be completed prior to any properties being moved into.

3. Highways - Traffic and Transport

General impact on village roads

The impact this development would have on traffic levels in Boxworth End, Ramper Road, Middlewatch and High St, Swavesey would be enormous. Middlewatch is currently often restricted with parked cars, particularly during school times. The mini-roundabout at the School Lane/High St/Middlewatch junction struggles to cope with the existing amount of traffic flow. All traffic through the village also has to pass by the front of the Primary School, where the village has numerous issues with parked cars, dangerous crossing points in the road, volume of traffic and people, etc.

Additional traffic around the Ramper Rd junction, which is already a busy junction at commuter times and when the A14 is blocked or restricted. Visibility pulling out of Ramper Rd is often restricted and causes danger to traffic. Another junction, on top of the one already given permission for at the 18 Boxworth End development, is putting more pressure on this section of road. Parked vehicles outside of the Bethel Baptist Church is also a major issue and is also very close to the proposed new junction to the development.

The pressure this proposed development would put on the wider transport network must also be taken into consideration. Traffic through Swavesey is increasing. Development in neighbouring villages puts increased pressure on Swavesey roads, as vehicles travel through to the A14.

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The forthcoming works to the A14 and construction of Northstowe will bring increased traffic through Swavesey. The village struggles to cope with this along its narrow main road (High St-Station Road). Development at Northstowe Phase 2 has already been postponed until after the A14 improvements have been completed, due to the impact the additional traffic would have on the local roads. By building additional developments such as this in Swavesey and its neighbouring villages before the A14 improvements have been completed is putting that same pressure on local roads, which has been prevented by delaying Northstowe Phase 2!

The main road through Swavesey is also Regional Cycle Route 24, an on road cycle route, which is affected by the increasing amounts of traffic along the village roads.

Traffic Survey

The Parish Council questions the traffic movement survey which was carried out and detailed in the Transport Statement within the application documents, Page 10, para 3.33, which stated that “an Automatic Traffic Counter (ATC) survey was undertaken..... a week long period from 30th July to 5th August 2015.”

Council wishes to request that a further more realistic survey count is undertaken as this count took place just after the schools had broken up for the summer holidays, meaning no school traffic (which is a huge impact on the local road network) and being within the first two weeks of the school holidays is one of the most popular times for families to be away on holiday, meaning also much less work/commuter traffic!

It would be far more realistic to hold a traffic survey during school term times.

Proposed new crossing point at Swavesey Primary School, Middlewatch

Within the Travel Plan, page 10, item 3.7, a proposal is put forward to provide a new uncontrolled pedestrian crossing point approx. 10m south of the access to Swavesey Primary School. Comprising of a build out of the footpath and restriction in the width of the carriageway.

The Parish Council raised the following objections and comments with regard to this proposal;

- Council does not believe this would be in position that would be correctly used by pedestrians from all directions, accessing the school
- The crossing is not at the point of the school entrance gate, where the current crossing and school patrol person is situated. This is the historic entry point and most obvious crossing point.
- As the school has a crossing patrol person, two crossing points are not required.
- If the crossing patrol person moves to the proposed new point, pedestrians would still try to cross at the original point opposite the school entrance.
- Why would pedestrians arriving at school from the north, walk past the school entrance to cross 10m further down?
- Or those leaving the school entrance to walk away to the north, walk 10m south in order to cross to then walk towards the north?

Alternative option:

- The Parish Council would like to suggest that if funding is to be provided for a crossing point which is needed for residents across Middlewatch, it would be far better to provide a crossing for the recreation green.
- To assist with residents from the new development visiting the school, there is already a crossing patrol person for a safe crossing point, there is nothing wrong with the existing crossing.

- However, many residents make use of the children's play equipment on the recreation green as well as the open space. A crossing point to this facility would be welcomed and would be used at all times, not just school start and finish.
- A crossing point at the recreation green would also serve pedestrians accessing the primary school from the north of the village.

4. Highways – Footpath provision

Boxworth End footpath is in a poor state of repair, despite numerous requests to CCC Highways over the past few years for repair work, the footpath floods badly in many places between Ramper Rd and the Doctors' Surgery forcing pedestrians into the road in order to pass deep puddles.

Middlewatch footpath through to the Primary School is often congested, with many vehicles at school start and finish times parking half onto the footpath, often causing restrictions.

The additional volume of pedestrian traffic along these sections of footpath will cause more congestion and both footpaths should be maintained to a higher standard in order to cope.

5. Education

The Parish Council objects most strongly to this proposed development on the grounds that the village schools cannot cope with the additional pupil numbers it will generate.

The Council understands that the County Council will request S106 contributions towards local education facilities at all levels. However the primary school site is at capacity, there is no realistic space left to increase the size of the school. An expansion project has just been completed to cope with existing numbers. If pupil numbers increase with new development, there will not be places for all of them. This will impact on family life. Increased pupil numbers does not just mean increasing class sizes and space but Hall space will need to be increased to cope with assemblies, lunches, etc. Play space has been lost due to the recent expansion; additional pupils will only make this worse. If the school is expanded on its current site to include additional classrooms, this will necessitate additional teachers and possibly TA staff. At present the school car park is full with staff parking in neighbouring residential roads, expanding the school on its current site will have increased impact on parking provision.

There is no room on the primary school site to take portacabins to cope with increased numbers, due to the recent building project.

The Principle at the Village College has already written in response to other applications to state that the College is full and would not be able to accommodate additional students from this proposed development.

The recently permitted development for 30 new homes at Boxworth End, on top of the newly built 20 new homes in Fen Drayton Road, is already adding to the pressure on the schools.

6. Health Provision

Swavesey has only one small doctor's surgery. Other neighbouring surgeries are also heavily used. Local dentists are full. Other development in neighbouring villages impacts on all of this. Additional development in Swavesey will only increase this pressure and facilities may need to be expanded in order to cope. The Doctor's surgery in Swavesey is on a very constrained site, within a converted bungalow. Car parking is also an issue at the Surgery, with patients parking for some distance along Boxworth End when visiting the Surgery and dispensary, often blocking residents' driveways.

7. Housing Mix

If any new housing in Swavesey is required it is for low-cost starter homes for young people with family and work related links to the village. Bungalows for older people wishing to down-size. Small to medium size dwellings. Bungalows in Swavesey are being lost at an increasing rate, recently a number of planning applications have been granted to build into the roof space or increase the height to turn bungalows into houses.

The Council queries the density of development on the proposed site. The Planning Statement para 6.25 proposes a density of 27 dwellings per hectare. However the Design and Access Statement, page 35, item 5.2 states a net density of 32dph. Please could you question which it will be? The Parish Council's preference would be for the lower, 27dph, in association with reasonable sized gardens as this is within a rural village environment.

Swavesey remains a very rural village, with low level buildings. Swavesey is a low-lying village and the **Parish Council objects to proposals for buildings up to two-and-a-half storeys in height, particularly in a development on the edge of the village.** Ref Design and Access Statement p43-45, building heights within the central part of the proposed development.

8. Emerging Local Plan

In the emerging SCDC Local Plan Swavesey is to be moved from a Group Village to a Minor Rural Centre, however existing development on infill sites and the 30 new homes already granted permission (at 18 Boxworth End), takes development in the village well over what would be allowed for a Minor Rural Centre. A development of 99 homes is currently under application, this further proposal for another 70 homes would take planned development for the village hugely over the plans put forward in the Local Plan.

The Parish Council strongly objects to this proposal on the grounds that it does not comply with the emerging Local Plan and is completely unsustainable for Swavesey village.

9. Open Space Provision

Swavesey is currently underprovided for, for open space and community sports provision. Village existing football pitches are greatly overused due to the amount of football teams the village supports. There is no community cricket space. Should this application be granted permission, the Parish Council would wish to be involved in discussions around S106 contributions towards community sports and recreation provision and improvements.

In Conclusion and for many, many reasons the Parish Council considers this proposal to be unsustainable for Swavesey. In particular it is completely against the proposals for development as put forward in the emerging local plan for the village.

With the number of new homes already granted permission over the past year and with the pressures all of these homes plus any further development will have on the village and the surrounding area, the Council urges South Cambs District Council to refuse this application.

The Council also requests that the decision be taken to the Planning Committee and the Parish Council would like the opportunity to address the Planning Committee with regard to this application.

Yours sincerely

Linda Miller
Clerk