

Minutes of a Special Meeting of Wem Town Council held in the Roden Suite, Edinburgh House, New Street, Wem on Thursday 14th July 2016 at 7 p.m.

Present:-Councillors, R Dodd (Mayor), E Towers (Deputy Mayor), P Moyse, C Granger, P Dee, C Mellings, K Bailey, J Murray, M Meakin, C Shingler, P Broomhall, and P Glover. Mrs Penny O’Hagan (Town Clerk).

9 members of the public present.

43/16 To receive apologies and reasons for absence.

RESOLVED:- to accept the following apologies for absence

P Johnson, D Boddy.

44/16 Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests.

a) To receive any disclosure of pecuniary interest - Members are reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

The following interests were declared:

Councillor	Item	Dispensation
Shropshire Councillors Cllr Mellings and Cllr Dee	Twin-hatted members declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Town Council’s relationship with Shropshire Council	Dispensation previously granted to allow participation and voting on all matters relating to Shropshire Council
Cllr Mellings	Director of Shropshire Housing Group.	Dispensation previously granted to allow participation and voting on all matters relating to the Westlands Development

b) To consider any applications for Dispensations under s33 of the Localism Act 2011 – none received.

45/16 Public Participation Time A period of 15 minutes will be set aside for residents of Wem Town to speak. Due to the importance of the application the Mayor extended this time period.

Prior to the start of Public Participation session representatives from Shropshire Housing Group outlined the plans for the new development.

Due to higher than average numbers of residents over retirement age living in Wem, Shropshire Housing Group has submitted this planning application which is

designed as an independent living scheme for the elderly. A number of consultation events were held prior to the submission of the planning application and the scheme has been amended following consultation with the public. The amendments have included maintaining an access route through the development between Ranford Way and Station Road. As part of the project an independent living co-ordinator will be employed to provide support packages tailored for the residents, however there will be no warden living on the site itself.

Members of the public raised a number of issues which are outlined below;

Car Parking – Concerns were raised about the lack of car parking on the site. The planning application states 25 car parking spaces but the plans only show 23 and some residents who live adjacent to the site believe that this is inadequate for the number of people who will be living in the flats and bungalows. Residents from Station Road and Ranford Way reported that they were very concerned that the lack of parking would force visitors to the development to park in neighbouring streets further adding to the congestion caused by the school. The issue of a lack of disabled parking spaces in the proposals was raised and it was asked whether this could be increased.

Response – Shropshire Housing Group is confident that the amount of parking spaces is adequate for the size of the development. The parking allocation has been designed following evidence gathered on parking on similar schemes to this. The parking requirement for a development of this nature is always overestimated and due to the nature of the use of this development the parking allocation is not the same as for standard residential units as the needs are not the same. However if in time the parking situation was deemed to be inadequate then there is scope to increase the number of car parking spaces by removing some of the soft landscaping.

Drainage – Historically there has always been a problem with drainage in the Westlands area and this issue must be addressed as part of the development otherwise the problem of flooding in this area will escalate.

Response – The application addresses the issue of drainage. Incorporated into the development will be an attenuation tank to store the rainwater which will then be transferred to the drainage system at steady flow rate.

Pets - Are pets allowed in the apartments as elderly people rely on pets for company?

Response - this is not a planning question but will be dealt with when the properties are allocated.

Footpath - Will the footpath from Ranford Way through the site be retained?

Response - The current footpath is not classified as a right of way, however the planning application does include a footpath through the site from Ranford Way, although the route of the path has been changed to fit in better with the development.

Traffic in Ranford Way – Concerns were raised about the impact of extra traffic in Ranford Way and the impact that this will have on residents.

Response – It is expected that the amount of additional traffic will be minimal and that it will be spread throughout the day and not concentrated at specific time periods like the school parking problems.

Designated car parking - Will there be designated spaces for medical teams to use.

Response – No as this is not a planning requirement.

Lettings – who will be allocated these properties?

Response - There will be a local letting plan so that local people who fulfil the care needs criteria will have priority.

Hoists – will the properties be sufficiently well built enough to allow hoists to be used?

Response – As the scheme is being designed specifically to meet the requirements of elderly people, Shropshire Housing Group are confident that the properties will be of a high standard and able to withstand use of equipment like hoists.

Station Road entrance - This entrance is not wide enough and congestion will be a problem here. How have Shropshire Housing Group addressed this?

Response - Shropshire Housing Group have discussed this with Shropshire Council Highways who are satisfied that the width is adequate however it was recognised that there would be a need for good traffic signage at the access to the development

The Mayor thanked the public for their questions and closed the public participation session.

46/16 Planning Applications.

a) Planning Application for consideration

Application 16/02598/FUL - The Westlands
Proposal: Erection of 32 no. affordable dwellings for frail and elderly people comprising 11x 1 bed flat, 9 x 2 bed flat and 12 x 2 bed bungalows, communal lounge and facilities, creation of 25 no. car park spaces and associated landscaping following demolition of existing care home.

A discussion took place on the parking provision for the development and some councillors reiterated the concerns of local residents and felt that the parking allocation should be a minimum of 1 parking space per dwelling.

Councillors asked representatives of Shropshire Housing Group the following questions:

Why are the housing units only for rent and not to be offered on a shared ownership basis?

The representatives were unable to provide a response to this question.

Why was there only one lift?

Response – The lift has been designed to be of sufficient size to accommodate a number of residents and stretchers if necessary. Having one lift only will also reduce the service charge for residents.

Will the room sizes be similar to the existing properties and will they be wheelchair friendly?

Response - the rooms are built to standards set out for elderly people and can accommodate wheelchairs. Layouts are developed by the Supported Housing Team based on their experience of running similar properties.

Site Management– is there anything in place for a warden to deal with problems?

Response - As this development is not a care the home independent living co-ordinator will not be on site 24 hours but will be easily contactable and each resident will have an independent living plan tailored to their needs.

Is there any provision for accommodation for people who are visiting one bedroom flats and need to stay over?

Response – this has not been built into the application.

Following a vote it was:

RESOLVED:- to support the application however should the application be granted the following condition should form part of the planning permission.

If due to demand or complaints from neighbouring residential properties there is an identified need for additional car parking within 12 months of the development opening, Shropshire Housing Group must make provision to turn some of the landscaped areas into additional parking spaces.

In addition to this the Town Council support the need to maintain a pedestrian access through the development from Ranford Way to Station Road.

Mayor.....