

BINEGAR PARISH COUNCIL

Application: **2014/0492/OTA**
Proposal: Application for outline planning permission (with all matters reserved for subsequent approval) relating to proposed housing development
Location: Flowerstone, Tellis Lane, Binegar, Radstock
Applicants: Mr B, Mr RV and the estate of Mr G Thorner
Type: Outline – All matters reserved

The Parish Council considered this application at its 13 May meeting. There were 30 parishioners present. The Council reached the following decision:

Binegar Parish Council strenuously recommends REFUSAL of permission.

The Parish Council believes that the adverse effects of this proposal outweigh any benefits. It notes that the applicants' Planning Statement does not list any benefits. Instead, it relies on Mendip's temporary lack of a five-year housing supply plan as the basis for granting it permission.

For Binegar, the proposed addition of 23 houses is a major development. It increases the number of houses by a quarter. This scale of development demands careful consideration by the planning authority. It must be sure that the proposal is sustainable and that benefits considerably outweigh adverse consequences.

The Parish Council's reasons for its recommendation are:

It is not an economically sustainable development

- To be considered sustainable, a development must relate to the local economy
- There is no local employment to support the proposed housing
- The proposal does nothing to change this or support a prosperous rural economy
- In terms of jobs, it is located in the wrong place
- The proposal is unsustainable economically

It is not a socially sustainable development

- A development must support communities, meet future needs and have accessible local services
- The proposal exceeds future local housing need
- There is no longer a school in Binegar
- The nearest primary school and general medical practice are not accessible by public transport
- The proposal is unsustainable socially

It is not an environmentally sustainable development

- A development must protect and enhance the natural, the built and the historic environment, improve biodiversity, use natural resources wisely, minimise waste and mitigate climate change
- The site is by Holy Trinity Church, "an open space of visual significance" with a Grade 2* listed building.
- It will have an adverse visual impact on this open space and the Church
- The proposal achieves a net loss of biodiversity making a hard landscape from the current meadow
- With no local employment, there will be large amounts of commuter traffic twice daily
- Children will need to be driven to and from primary school
- The location does neither minimise the need to travel nor maximises the use of public transport
- The proposal does not reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- The proposal is not environmentally sustainable

The site is unsuitable

- There is no accessible main sewer
- Flowerstone's foul drainage is to septic tanks and the proposed site is the soakaway
- The tanks by the site boundary, close to houses shown on the indicative plan
- Soakaways will be affected or will affect the foundations of the proposed houses
- Building works may damage or affect existing septic tanks or their operation

The access is unsuitable and dangerous

- Three entries are proposed off Station Road on a short stretch between two, blind 90° bends
- 46 additional cars is assumed which, for a rural development, is too modest
- With no parking for visitors and more than 46 cars for residents, there will be on-road parking
- Parked cars on or around the bend make the road impassable for the 173 bus
- The villages risk losing the bus route because of persistent blocking of the road
- A traffic speed survey from 16-22 January 2014 is used to assess the entrance visibility splays
- The survey was conducted in the wettest of the last 12 months at the darkest time of year
- Local people know it is not indicative of the usual speed of local traffic
- In any case, the visibility splays will attract car parking so rendering them dangerous
- Access to Wells, Shepton Mallet, Bath and Bristol are by Binegar Lane, Station Road and Whitnell Lane
- All these lanes have points where two cars cannot pass
- Binegar Lane's junction with the A37 and Whitnell Lane's with B3139 are both hazardous
- Increased traffic from this development will heighten the dangers
- The local road infrastructure is unable to support this large proposed development

The proposal increases the risk of flooding

- The applicant supplies the Environment Agency's flood risk assessment for Binegar and Gurney Slade
- The villages suffered floods with houses inundated in 1995, 2000, 2002 and 2012
- This places it in the Environment Agency's high risk category
- The floods were caused by surface water run off down Binegar Lane
- Action by public spirited residents mitigated the effect last winter
- The Council accepts that an outline application does not require a surface water management plan
- However, replacing a meadow with 2.5 acres of predominantly hard landscape poses a major threat
- The land slopes towards Binegar Lane and water would run towards the area of flood risk
- Average daily rainfall in January 2014 (5.3mm) could create 30m³ of run off water per day
- This would significantly increase the risk of flooding at the lower end of the villages

The plan does not integrate the development with the village

- The proposed site does not lie within the village development zone
- The applicants claim that, with careful design, the proposal can be integrated into the village
- The indicative plan shows a layout designed to achieve the maximum density of housing
- There is no attempt to give it the character of a street that might match the quality of the area
- It is an urban-style estate of houses, isolated from the rest of Binegar
- So close to current dwellings, it impinges on them while being remote from them
- No amount of "careful design" will be able to integrate this development into the village

There is no valid precedent

- The applicants claim an earlier outline planning consent as a precedent
- It is inconceivable that consent for two houses creates a precedent for an estate of 23 houses

The National Planning Policy Framework sets standards – economic, social and environmental - for a sustainable development. This proposal fails to meet those standards. Both the site and access to it are unsuitable for a housing development. Binegar Parish Council strenuously recommends refusal of permission.

On behalf of Binegar Parish Council
Richard Higgins
Chair