MICHELMERSH & TIMSBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Planning Meeting held on Friday 1st May 2015 at 6.30 p.m. at the Jubilee Hall, Timsbury.

Present:
Parish Councillors: Cllr. B. Davis, Cllr. J. Rhodes, Cllr. P. Clarke, Cllr. D. Cowling ,
Cllr. H. Palmer & Parish Clerk, Katie Hardy
1 member of the public

1. Apologies
None received

2. Declarations of interest.
No interests declared

3. Open Period

No comments made.

Open Period Closed

4. Planning
15/00655/FULLS
Erection of 3 four bedroom earth shelter dwellings including bunds, solar panels, access and landscaping
Site: Land North of Stockbridge Road, Timsbury, Romsey, Hampshire

Following some discussion, it was unanimously agreed that Michelmersh & Timsbury Parish Council object to the above planning application on the following grounds outlined in the response to TVBC:

Michelmersh & Timsbury Parish Council object to the above planning application on the following grounds:

The site is in the countryside: the development would be contrary to the current Local Plan and the emerging Local Plan.

This open field, gently sloping upwards from the Stockbridge Road, is a particular feature of the northern approach to the village. The mounding and landscaping, proposed to limit visibility of the houses from Stockbridge Road, would present an unnatural landscape feature.

Even with the mounding, it appears that the glazing on the south elevation of the houses would be visible from the first floor windows of houses on Stockbridge Road, and would present an alien feature in the landscape from these viewpoints. Also, any illusion that this remained an undeveloped site would be lost because of vehicle movements (domestic and deliveries) using the access from the A3057.

When the land was sold by Southern Water to private purchasers, we recall that the Council removed permitted development rights, which would otherwise have been attached to this agricultural land. This suggests that at that time the Borough Council identified the site as being of significant landscape value as' open land' and as such, sought to protect it from development. The Parish Council was pleased that the Borough Council took this action at that time.

The applicant's agent suggests that the site has an 'eclectic' planning history, perhaps to infer that this is previously-developed land. The developments that have been permitted (fencing, horse shelters, erection of a small tent for 2 nights are consistent with a continuing agricultural use and hardly constitute 'development'.

Our understanding is that the is no shortfall in the five-year supply of housing land in Northern Test Valley and the development could not be justified on that ground.

We recognise that the case is being made that the development deserves to be treated as an 'exception' on the grounds that the houses are innovative and of exceptional architectural merit. We agree that the proposals are interesting and this development would be quite different from the existing housing stock in the village, but the basic elements are well-established and the design is therefore not, in our view, particularly original or innovative. The development as proposed is not a 'blueprint' for low-carbon housing for the wider market, because of the low density, complexity, and high construction costs.

We note that one of the 'tests' in paragraph 55 of the NPPF is that a development claiming to be exceptional, such that it might be permitted in the countryside, should 'enhance the local landscape'. In our view this development would degrade the landscape, not enhance it.

We are concerned with precedent, although this may be dismissed as a non-material consideration. There are many countryside sites on rising ground in the Test Valley where this type of development might be proposed. We suggest that the Council considers whether permitting one development would attract other potential applications which would be increasingly difficult to resist.

The Parish Council recognises that the application has attracted a number of letters of support. Whilst not questioning the sincerity of these letters, we observe that of the 23 on the Borough Council website, 16 were from people living outside the village and others were from the landowners and family members. Only five appear to be from village residents, none of whom live close to the site.

Meeting Closed 7.00pm

Katie Hardy

Parish Clerk,

14th May 2015