

Proposed Development at Roughmoor Lane

Pre-planning consultation

We have been residents of Westbury sub Mendip for more than 35 years. Westbury sub Mendip is a SMALL RURAL VILLAGE, in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the edge of both the Mendip Hills and the Somerset Levels. It has main amenities:- Shop, Post Office, Pub, and Village Hall, in the centre of the village, all of which are on the north side of the A371. It's on a main Bus route and the A371 is the only thoroughfare to Wells in the East, Cheddar and Weston super Mare and the nearest M5 junction to the West, and Bristol and Bath to the North through the village. There is no thoroughfare to the south of the village.

The A371 Main Road Access to the site

We live on the Main A371 road and have for the past 10 or so years been repeatedly asking for the A371 road to be downgraded to a B standard road. The road as it is at the moment is woefully inadequate to take any more traffic, let alone a further potential 100/120 cars vans etc from a proposed housing estate on the south side of the village. There is a narrow pavement on the south side of the road from the Mortar Pits Lay-by to the corner by the shop, but there is still no way to cross the road to the main amenities safely. There is a real need to provide a safe pedestrian crossing from the south side of the village to all the main village amenities, which are all on the north side of the A371.

Our primary and overriding concern is the access to the proposed site.

There are "pinch points" at Easton Bridge, Hollybrook, Station Road corner, on the Wells side of the village, White Cottage in Stoke Road going up the hill to The Hollow in the west of the village and several in Rodney Stoke and Draycott, where it is always single file traffic, to enable large lorries, busses and farm traffic to pass. There is a particular worry outside The White Cottage in Stoke Road, where queues of traffic form to giveaway to oncoming vehicles from the west!! These queues also create high levels of traffic noise and pollution from engine fumes in this area.

The proposal to change the entrance is also not fit for purpose, in that it still has to accommodate the regular farm traffic that needs access to Roughmoor Lane. Putting the entrance further into the lay-by and creating an S bend road for access back into Roughmoor lane is not practical or safe. The width of the proposed S bend road in the estate, appears to be a two carriageway road, going back into Roughmoor Lane which is effectively a single track road where it merges!! Where is the sense in creating more of a visual problem than we already have? It will also still not provide a clear view of traffic coming down the hill from the west, when trying to gain access onto the main A371 road from Roughmoor Lane and at least another 100 cars vans etc from a potential housing estate of 60 houses!! It's madness!!

Since the start of construction of Hinkley Point, the A371 has become a rat run for quarry lorries, cement mixers and multi axled lorries, transporting blocks to and from the site. Together with all the additional vehicles that pass through the Village from the additional houses that have been built in Wells and Cheddar, (and are still being built, another 100 to go up in Cheddar and the Elm close proposed development in Wells, about to be passed through planning.) it has made the A371 woefully inadequate to take the volume of traffic it now has to sustain.

The lay-by is also a valuable local area for off road parking, something that is very rare in the village. The loss of at least 4 parking spaces can only be detrimental to the village. Will the remaining part of the layby be able to remain as parking with such close proximity to the proposed new junction and pull-in area for the buses? Where are the parents going to park to pick up children from the School? Where are cars, HGVs, lorries and vans going to park when wanting to use the shop? They already park up on the pavement outside our house to dash into the shop!!! Which immediately renders the pavement inaccessible to pedestrians, prevents us from gaining access to, or exit from our drive and totally blocks the traffic in both directions. Pedestrians continually take their life in their own hands to cross this road already. It has been established that there is a major need for a pedestrian crossing to enable the elderly and children to cross the A371 to the shop and the school. Building on this land will only create more people needing to cross the road on a regular basis.

PLEASE do not add to the problem by building more houses on the south side of the A371.

The Proposed Plan

We are not sure how the church commissioners expect the lay person to interpret the Mickey Mouse plan that we are being asked to comment on. As far as we can see there is no index, for the map, we can only assume the type of buildings that will eventually be built! There are darker striped areas, smaller white blobs and what is the area marked LAP? Also the Village Amenity site is quoted on the Technical Specifications as being sited on the North East of the site, yet it is on the north West of the site on the plan!!

Certainly not a plan we feel we can comment on in detail, until all these things are made clear with a proper planning application to consider.

We do however have a general opinion on the following.

The application for a minimum of 60 properties is a 50% uplift from the 40 that was originally agreed as the minimum required in the Local Plan part 2.

We have to establish a **need** to build these houses as an estate. We feel one large housing estate in this position in a rural village is not the solution to the building constraints that have been forced on us by MDC.

What is the green area represented on the map? We would guess that is an area earmarked for future development in the bottom two thirds of the field to a similar saturation point. There is a service road to the water overflow pond at the bottom of the field, which also sets a precedent for future development

We note that the Attenuation Pond is also sited outside of the red marked area of proposed planning !! Why? We would suggest that this also potentially gives a license to build further houses in the bottom 2/3rds of the field in the future.

Taking the proposed plans as they have been presented to us at this stage, we think this represents a gross over development for the size of the site within the red area on the map, and on a green field site, which is prime agricultural land currently being used to grow crops.

60 houses, on one estate, in a rural village setting, on green field land, which is prime agricultural land, is **GROSS OVER DEVELOPMENT** in a rural area, such as Westbury sub Mendip. We came to Westbury sub Mendip 35 years ago because we wanted to live in a village with all the benefits that went with being in a rural area.

If we have to have any new housing we are strongly in favour of breaking it down into smaller enclaves and spreading the building throughout the village. We would have thought that renovation and restructuring of the existing barns would have been a far better plan for creating more stone cottage style housing and a new Village hall with parking. This would also mean that the footprint of housing in the village is not increased, as it would mean utilising existing buildings. It would also provide a car parking area for both the church and a new village hall/meeting room, both of which would be accessible from the existing footpath.

If building was to go ahead, there would need to be stringent specifications as to the materials used and finishes, so they don't stand out from existing buildings in the immediate area. There should be adequate **off road parking for each property**, especially with the potential increase for at 2+ cars per household, which seems to be the norm in this day and age.

There is an established need for first time buyers accommodation and affordable housing for the young as well as disabled facilities for everyone. These buildings need to be bungalows or one story flats, together with 2 or 3 bedroom houses of no more than 2 stories, (ground floor and first floor) no dormers or velux windows (for dark skies principals).

There should not be any street lighting as this is a dark skies area. Lighting from the industrial units is already violating that, I would have thought.

What, and how big is the water filtration unit going to be? Is the existing wastewater treatment and disposal system able to cope with the addition of 40 or 60 new properties? What is the potential for more phosphate pollutants entering our water systems, with the increased number of people this development would hold?

The 0.1 of a Hectare set aside for community use is only 1000 square meters and we would suggest it is not sufficient area to build a new village hall and provide adequate parking for users of the hall. See suggestions above

Is a New Smaller Village hall acceptable to the community and indeed is it needed? Why replace something that is bigger with something which is smaller but new?

How is the current aquifer that goes across the site going to be affected?

We concur 100% with the comments from Peter Bright and Colin Booth in relation to Biodiversity, Bats, Glow worms and Footpaths, all of which are very important issues that need to be addressed. The establishment of such a large housing estate on the edge of an AONB will drastically change the views from above on the Mendip Hills and from the moors to the south of the area.

We feel very strongly that this development should not go ahead in its current form. Rather smaller enclaves of development should be spread throughout the village if we have to have this number of houses built in the village.

Trevor and Gill Cook

Long term Residents of Westbury sub Mendip living on the A371!

26th January 2022