

Church Commissioners 2023 proposals for Roughmoor Lane land

The Parish Council has been contacted by Lichfields, the Church Commissioners agents, who advise that there is a new proposal for the development of the land south of Roughmoor Lane (which we expect will include the derelict Court Farm buildings). Lichfields wish to present this proposal at the end of February or early March and the Parish Council is in communication to ensure effective consultation.

The Neighbourhood Planning Working Group (NPWG), which has been tasked by the Parish Council with developing a neighbourhood plan for Westbury sub Mendip, has also been asked to be responsible for coordinating the community's responses to any development proposals for Roughmoor Lane. At a meeting on 2nd February 2023 this NPWG group decided to prioritise Roughmoor Lane consultations with collation of responses as required. The imminent launch of the neighbourhood planning process, with surveys and meetings scheduled for March, will now be delayed to allow time for responses to Roughmoor Lane proposals to be coordinated. The NPWG will work to ensure that we all have sufficient time to review and respond to these proposals both as individuals and as a community.

The land south of Roughmoor Lane was allocated for "a minimum of 40 houses" in the *Mendip District Local Plan Part II: Sites and Policies*, adopted 20 December 2021. This development is subject to meeting requirements set out in the local plan including layout and design with least visual, traffic and environmental impact to the village, and providing a safe pedestrian crossing of the A371, affordable housing, green landscaping and land for community facilities.

There is recognition that whilst some in the community wish to find a way to stop the development happening at all, others understand and accept that the December 2021 decision for this site to be allocated for housing has already been made. This latter group believe the focus should be on ensuring the best possible layout and design is developed which respects village character, brings least impact and critically provides a safe pedestrian crossing of the A371.

The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group recognises the existing decision in the local plan but will work hard to ensure that the community views about density, layout, road safety and design are upheld in any planning permission issued. The NPWG will also seek to make information and advice available to those who wish to argue that the development should be stopped completely.

Once the details of when and how the new proposal is to be presented are clarified (The Parish Council has already informed the agents that a suggested brief virtual presentation is not adequate) the NPWG will seek to ensure we all have timely access to these proposals and will arrange the necessary meetings to allow discussion. A meeting scheduled for Sunday March 19th (4pm), originally scheduled to launch the Neighbourhood Plan consultations, will now be reserved for a discussion on the Roughmoor Lane proposals – subject to sufficient detail being made available by then. Please reserve this date in your diary.

A great deal of work was done in early 2022 to collect data and collate and coordinate the views from the community. This will be refreshed and readied once again with relevant task groups set up as before – but it would be wise to wait for the details of the 2023 proposals for development of the site(s) to be communicated. We will update as soon as the Parish Council hear more from the Church Commissioners or their agents Lichfields.

Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

Sunday 5th Feb 2023