

Communication from Litchfields about Roughmoor lane

Litchfields, the agents for the Church Commissioners, gave a short presentation to the Parish Council on Thursday 23rd February about their revised proposals for development at Roughmoor Lane. Councillors asked questions for clarification but gave no response to the plans. Despite our asking, they gave no material we could take away and share, but we took notes which are set out below.

1. It was clear that neither the agents nor the commissioners had taken up the idea of planning development jointly with the village. They did not appear to take 'Coming Home' seriously saying it was a C of E document, not a commissioners' one.
2. The plans for developing the greenfield site differed only slightly from previous proposals. Differences we could see were
 - A separate entrance to the site though close to Roughmoor Lane
 - The reallocation of the attenuation pond nearer to the housing, but still outside the allocated land
 - Moving the site allocated for community use to or beyond the eastern boundary (see 8 below)
 - Some rearrangement of green space within the site
3. The scale of the map shown on screen was too small to ascertain whether they had changed matters affecting the green corridor etc.
4. There was no significant attempt to address the concerns we had raised about
 - Increased traffic in and through the village
 - The lack of a safe crossing of the A 371
 - The scale (60 houses) density and height (2.5 storey) of development
 - The impact on views within the village and from the outside
 - The lack of attention to existing and proposed rights of way
5. There was little indication of a master plan for the whole site – it would appear that this is not yet complete and is still subject to pre-application discussions with Mendip DC.
6. Consideration of the brownfield buildings amounted to not much more than confirming with Mendip planners that the site was sensitive and identifying a suitable approach could be tricky (they had been told that a suggestion for 'mews' type housing was unlikely to be acceptable).
7. They may consider selling off the stone buildings near the road for housing or other uses since planners had indicated development there would be possible.
8. They proposed two options for the siting of a community facility, one inside the greenfield site and one on the brownfield area. They appeared content to let the village take the risk that planning for development on the brownfield land might not be achieved. Their initial position was that they would not contribute to the cost of removal of the derelict buildings even though siting the village facility there would increase the capacity of the greenfield land.
9. They agreed that in due course they would offer a presentation to the village as last time. We advised them that it would be helpful if they made clear information available for a village meeting already planned for the 19th March.

Sue Isherwood. Chair, Westbury PC