



Bothenhampton & Walditch
Parish Council since 1886

26th April 2021

Via email

Mr Matt Prosser
Chief Executive Officer
Dorset Council

Dear Mr Prosser

**RE: Homestead Farm, Main Street, Bothenhampton, Bridport DT6 4BJ
Planning Appeal: A/WD/D/19/003186 and new Application P/VOC/2021/00495**

We are writing to you in regards the above planning issue and in particular to the conduct of Planning team personnel and to the apparent disarray of process and systems within the Planning Department.

As noted in our letter of 18 April to Bob Burden, we received an Appeal Notice on the 13th April, as did the residents of Bothenhampton, for the building of a reception, office, storage and partners/caretakers accommodation at the Homestead Farm development. As you can imagine, this was very confusing for all as the development is already highly contentious in its original form of a 4-bed low carbon house with residents complaining regularly to their parish councillors.

We were informed on 23rd April by a resident that, in fact, the inclusion of reception, office, storage and partners/caretakers' accommodation on the Appeal was an error. However, no notice of this fact has been received by the Parish council.

The Appeal document was sent by Mr Darren Rogers, the new application by Emma Lea-Turner and later James Lytton-Trevers. We have been informed that James Lytton-Trevers is now taking over the Appeal, and that Bob Burden is the case officer for the new application. It is confusing for all to have so many different officers involved in one development and with the best will in the world it must be difficult for officers to keep on top of all the various stages of this development. We are concerned that the handover to James Lytton-Trevers may not have been adequate.

We note also that several Statements of Common Ground have been published that we find hard to understand. For example:

“Both parties now agree that Policy ENV12 of the West Dorset Weymouth Portland Local Plan, which is cited for refusal 2, is not relevant to the consideration to the effect on amenity (outlook).” We were of the opinion that ENV12 was one of the prime reasons for refusal by the Planning Committee. It appears that officers are disregarding the advice of the Planning Committee.

In other Statements of Common Ground officers have agreed to the “approved” levels shown in a table prepared by the applicant’s surveyor. These “approved” levels are substantially higher than Crickmay’s, making the overheights less severe. It appears that officers have agreed levels which make the development more likely to be acceptable to the Inspector.

It is worth noting at this juncture that the Applicant, once seeing that the levels have (supposedly) been approved by the Local Planning Authority, has seized the opportunity to quote this where he can. The consequence of your officers ‘approving’ these levels is that they are now being taken as factual, and that the overheights are not significant.

Could you confirm to the Parish Council that your officers have assessed the ‘as built’ levels and compared them to the ‘approved levels’?

There are also references to a “Statement of Common Ground”, which supports the assertion that all levels, approved and as built, have been agreed by the Local Planning Authority. This has not been confirmed to us. We thought that only the ‘as built’ levels have been agreed.

We are at a loss to understand how these “approved levels” have been approved as the refusal by the Planning Committee for this application was partly based on the overheights which are overbearing.

The above examples are not an exhaustive list, however they give a flavour of how confusing and difficult it is for us and residents to understand. I hope that you can also see and appreciate that the actions which seem to have been taken by Officers do not reflect either our understanding of planning process or the advice of the Planning Committee.

Yours sincerely



Cllr A J Basker
Chairman
Bothenhampton & Walditch Parish Council
clerk@bothenhamptonwalditchparishcouncil.com
Website www.bothenhamptonwalditchparishcouncil.com

Cc: Cllr David Bolwell
Chris Loder MP