

## **EDLESBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL**

Dear Parishioners

### **McCann Planning Application 15/02411/APP**

There is a lot of information being shared on social media some of which is incorrect and ill-informed concerning the proposed housing development opposite the school. Nevertheless EPC recognises there is a large number who have campaigned to have this development rejected outright.

At our recent meeting on the subject your parish council followed the usual process that we follow each month when considering formal applications for developments large and small.

Before each parish council meeting we have a proposed response prepared and shared with all councillors. Each councillor has the opportunity to consider the response, ask questions, raise concerns etc., before we get to the meeting. If there are no major issues raised prior to the meeting we publically review the recommendation at our meetings and formally approve the response.

We used the exact same procedure at the extra-ordinary meeting we arranged to review this application. We had to call this meeting because we are required to ratify our submission, as with all matters, in public. We don't, normally, have a meeting in August due to holidays but the response from EPC had to be in by 25<sup>th</sup> August so we arranged the meeting.

Usually at our regular monthly meetings very few parishioners (2-5) attend but we expected a large number (60-80) to turn up given the interest and opposition previously expressed. Some parishioners at the meeting were of the view that we should reject the application outright and accept no further developments.

We tried blatant non-compromising objections to the application to turn The Bell into a house and for the new development planned in Cow Lane. Despite the fact that we put forward objections that were material planning considerations, those arguments were ignored and both developments were approved by AVDC planning. Our experience with those two applications convinced the Council that we needed to adopt a different strategy with this latest application.

The recommendation we agreed at this latest meeting was to **OPPOSE** the application. As with all applications we are required to specify valid objections. 'No development under any circumstances' is not acceptable to the planners in AVDC. We are obliged to give material planning objections to the plans and on this occasion we elected to focus our objections on those issues that we considered might influence the eventual outcome for the benefit of the local community. The alternative would have been to simply list a plethora of objections, many of which would have been discarded as spurious, non-material, or simply trumped by the specialist officers (e.g. highways, housing, landscape etc.), whose job it is to advise the planning officers.

We have been accused of changing the wording of our submission. Yes, we did change the wording of document, we had previously circulated amongst councillors, to reflect the issues raised in the meeting. We did make our opposition language stronger and we added additional points raised by parishioners to share the strength of feeling in the room.

We are impressed by the number of objections sent in and though many of them individually are unlikely to sway the planning officers, the sheer number of them will, we hope, have an impact on the planners. The planners are required to determine applications strictly in accordance with approved planning policies, both local and national, but unfortunately their interpretation of those policies sometimes appear quite perverse from our local perspective. Nevertheless if, despite all the written objections, the planners approve the application there is a further step for scrutiny. As EPC has **OPPOSED** it, there will be formal public review by AVDC's Strategic Development Management Committee comprised of District Councillors. EPC will have 5 minutes to present its case. Parishioners will have a total of 5 mins (not

5mins each) to present their case. Our District Councillor Chris Poll will have 5 minutes and the Developer's representative will also have 5 mins. If the application is rejected by AVDC the Developer has the opportunity to appeal. If the application is approved there is no appeal process.

I hope this helps to clarify the situation regarding the parish council's **OPPOSITION** to the application and the planning process for this application in the near future.

As a reminder, EPC meetings minutes cover all issues not just planning. The next scheduled EPC meeting is 7.30-10.30pm Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September in the Memorial Hall, Edlesborough. The agenda is issued one week before the meeting. Parishioners are always welcome to attend.

With best regards

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