**A Special Meeting of the Hawthorn Parish Council was held at 6.30pm on Thursday 9th January 2025 in the Community Centre to discuss the current planning application by Bellway.**

**MINUTES**

**Present**

 Cllr. Diane Hughes (Chair)

Cllr Sheila Irving (Vice – Chair)

 Clllrs. Gary Thompson,  Sheila Wilson,  Carolyn Winter

Developers  :  S Cuggy (Bellway)  M Hepburn (Litchfields)

 Public  :  51

# Notice of Meeting

The Chairman - Diane Hughes welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Sean Cuggy from Bellway and Michael Hepburn from Litchfields and confirmed that Public Notice of the Meeting has been given in accordance with Sch 12 paragraph 10(2) of the LGA 1972

# Declarations of Interest

None

1. **Current information / details**

Mr Cuggy opened the meeting by stating that the proposed development consisted of 81 houses, 1 shop and a Community open space.  He stated that access to the site was as shown on the plans.

He also stated that the accepted date for the receipt of comments had been extended beyond the 31st December.  Bellway had submitted their proposed development plan to DCC but that did not mean that it was a foregone conclusion that it would be accepted.

He also explained that Bellway knew there were concerns about the speed of the traffic on the B1432 and that they were keen to reduce the speed  by installing some traffic calming measures.

1. **Information / Questions and comments**

These are as listed as an appendix to these minutes.

1. **The Way Forward**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and confirmed the Parish Council will be discussing the planning application and formulating their response to DCC at the Monthly Meeting on Monday January 20th.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 20.03.

**Appendix**

Legend   :   **B**-  Bellway    :    **PC**- Parish Council   :    **P**-  Public

**\* P**-  What kind of traffic calming measures should be placed on Stockton Road ?

**\* B**-  Reducing the speed to 30-40 mph, which would require the need to include speed humps,  chicanes, central refuges,  and these cannot be implemented unless the speed is reduced from 60mph to 30-40mph.

**\*  PC**-  The Chairman suggested that these traffic calming measures and adjustments should be made as there have been several serious accidents over the years.

**\*  P**-  Why does the access to the site have to be where it is planned?

**\*  B**-  There are certain regulations which restrict the distance from various points before the access (sight lines).  An alternative access could be considered by placing it on the North Entrance to the village.  DCC was not against the current proposed entrance, but the Police will be consulted on the speed and the calming measures.

**\*  PC**-  Who would bear the cost of the change in speed, or the other traffic calming measures?

**\*  B**-  Bellway would bear the cost of any speed / traffic calming measures which may need to take place.

**\*  P**-  Nobody takes any notice of the speed limit of the traffic. Building houses on this site is not a good idea. Extra traffic on this road (B1432) will make the current situation even more dangerous.

**\*  P**-  Has any detailed analysis been done to see if a shop is necessary.  Has a retail assessment been justified.  There are other shops only half a mile away, so why is it necessary to build a shop on this proposed development?

**\*  B**-  It is felt that a shop is required, not only for the new development but for the residents of Hawthorn.  It was not Bellway's decision to include a shop, it was Durham County Council's proposal to do so. It was thought that having retail premises close at hand would reduce the amount of traffic leaving and returning to Hawthorn to shop.

**\*  P**-  If there are any changes to the proposed plan as far as the positioning of the entrance or any other changes, would the residents of Hawthorn be notified?

**\*  B**-  If any changes are made in connection with this development, DCC will inform the residents.

**\*  P**-  Concerns were expressed about the design and build of the proposed houses.  Bellway were also responsible for the houses currently being built at The Garden Village, and which were not thought to be of a medium or high standard.  The same design and build at Hawthorn would not be acceptable.   It was felt there were sufficient 4-5 bedroomed houses in Hawthorn as can be seen at Western Park, St. Michael's Rise and The Paddocks.  Social housing was not the answer either.

**\*  P**-  It was pointed out that the village of Hawthorn is a lovely small village, so why does Bellway think there is a need to build here?

**\*  B**-  There has been a big change in housing policy, and Bellway are expected to build 2000 houses per year, and Government Policy allows this to take place.

**\*  P**-  The boundary of the Conservation Area is adjacent to the new build. There will be no privacy for those residents living in the Conservation Area next to this new build. How does Bellway intend to provide such privacy?

**\*  B**-  There will be ponds and an orchard(s) which will  separate the housing plot from the Conservation Area.

**\*  P**-  How long is there an "option" on the land which is to be built on, and why build on Greenbelt land?

**\*  B  -**Bellway were not prepared to answer this question due to "privacy", and the land in question was not Greenbelt land.

**\*  PC**-  It was stated that the sewerage system was currently inadequate and could not incorporate a further 81 houses into the system.  An increase in flooding could take place due to the run -off from the proposed new houses.  The flooding would mainly happen at the north-eastern end of the village (Coach Road / Coach Cottage / Rectory drive).  Had Bellway taken this into account?

**\*  B**-  There has been a full flood risk assessment carried out, and Northumbria Water will consider the sewerage system and upgrade it.  Bellway will be responsible for the cost of any upgrade.

**\*  PC**-  If this development is agreed when would the "build" commence?

**\*  B**-  It would begin within 6 months of approval and Bellway would build 40 houses per year, with the possibility of being finished within 2 years of the start date.

**\*  PC**-  The chairman stated that the way forward was to draw up an appropriate response taking into account the comments made by the public, and this response would be sent to DCC Planning Department  before the 31 January 2025.