

Update from Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe Parish Council (PC) on Upthorpe Farm developments

Background

During the last 2 years, there have been 3 planning applications for Upthorpe Farm:

- 21/12/2016: Application for 5 smaller properties to replace the barns visible from the Moreton Road. The PC supported the application as the Community Led Plan (CLP) showed support for smaller properties in the villages. Application was approved by SODC.
- 23/10/17: Demolition of modern barns. Erection of three detached houses, one of which overlooks the houses and gardens on The Croft. The PC recommended SODC refuse the application due to loss of privacy and amenity to the houses on The Croft from the inclusion of Dwelling 1. The PC also stated that Dwelling 1 adds too much depth to the development impacting the character of the village and that any further development on the site would have a significant impact on the villages as a whole, changing the character of the settlements. Due to the PC recommending refusal on this 'Major' application (as opposed to a 'Householder' application) and the Planning Officer supporting the application, it was referred to SODC Planning Committee. However, it was unanimously approved.
- 8/11/17: Conversion of two listed barns to form two new dwellings. The PC had 'No Strong Views' adding that it supports conversion of barns in principle so that they are protected for the future. However it was concerned about the scale of development at the site and the increased road safety concerns on the Moreton Road. SODC approved the planning application.

Latest Information

Many people in the villages, including Councillors, suspected that a further application would be forthcoming for the barns behind the houses on The Croft at the Upthorpe Farm site. The Clerk and the Chair of the PC were first alerted to the fact that this was imminent in June 2018, when the planning consultant (Mr Henry Venners of JPPC) acting for the owners of the Upthorpe Farm site (Cook Family Trust) made contact.

Previously there was no consultation ahead of the planning application and so Mr Venners was encouraged by the PC to consult with the villagers, particularly those neighbouring the site. He agreed to hold a meeting ahead of the PC meeting on 16th July and the consultant alerted properties on the Croft and corner of Moreton Road, the PC alerted all villagers via the eNews with the PC agenda.

At the meeting Mr Venners showed plans for 15 houses on the site (in addition to the 10 already approved). This is not a formal application at this stage, just up for discussion. He gave a deadline for any further views to be submitted to him of the 24th July. The PC did not have sight of the plans ahead of the meeting. The intention by all parties for this meeting, was to allow neighbouring properties to feed in views, such as a preference for smaller units or a handful of large houses, to avoid overlooking, etc..

The PC has avoided giving formal views at this stage to ensure that it does not compromise any arguments to support its future recommendation and because it has not had an open meeting to formally discuss the application and reach a consensus.

What happens now?

Subsequent to the meeting, Mr Venners has emailed a number of residents and the PC (see attached), summarising the feedback to date and encouraging further comment by mid-August. To

enable the PC to discuss its response to this letter and to consider whether professional advice should be sought as to how best to respond to this planning application, an Extraordinary Meeting is planned for Wednesday 22nd August. The next PC meeting is not until 17th September, which the PC feels is too late to discuss this. The Extraordinary Meeting will also give villagers the opportunity to provide views relating to the potential development.

Mr Venners and JPPC will work with the owners of Upthorpe Farm to prepare a final design for submission to SODC as an application for planning permission. Once submitted the plans will be placed on the SODC website and be available for inspection at the SODC offices and via our Clerk. The PC and villagers will be invited to provide views to SODC on the development in the normal way. The PC will discuss it at a PC meeting (potentially holding an extraordinary meeting if required).

What can you do now?

1. If you would like to be kept updated regarding Upthorpe Farm developments, please email the Parish Clerk with your email address stating that you would like to be kept updated. An email list will be formed for this purpose only and you will receive a monthly update from the Parish Clerk (more frequently if relevant). This will be over and above eNews alerts, which have their own policy regarding when to send out emails.
2. If you would like to ensure your views are counted, please be prepared to (most important = a, least important = c):
 - a. Reply to the SODC consultation (when formal plans are registered)
 - b. Attend the Parish Council meeting when the development is discussed (the PC can then highlight the number of attendees at the meeting to indicate the strength of feeling in the village on the development). Everyone is welcome to also attend the Extraordinary Meeting on Wednesday 22nd August.
 - c. Respond to any other requests that the PC working group may make.
3. There are currently 3 vacancies on the PC, if you would be interested in becoming a Councillor and getting more involved in issues like this, please contact the Parish Clerk.

Aston Tirrold & Aston Upthorpe Parish Council

Parish Clerk contact: astons.parishclerk@gmail.com