**Minutes of the special meeting of the North Molton Parish Council held on Wednesday 27th August 2014 in the Victory Hall.**

**Present**  Councillor Stanley (Chairman), Councillor Dunn, Councillor Gammon, Councillor Bulled, Councillor O’Brien, Councillor Peek, District Councillor Edgell and the Clerk. Thirty-four members of the public were present.

The meeting began at 7.45pm when the Chairman welcomed members of the public to discuss planning application NDDC 57625, outline application for 34 dwellings, in land off Back Lane.

1. Apologies. None.

2. Declarations of interest. Cllr Dunn, as his garage backed on to the proposed development. Cllr Edgell declared a personal interest as one of the applicants was known to him.

3. The chairman invited Mr Mears, architect of the proposed development, to present the plans. Mr Mears explained the plans and made the following points:

   That the land in question had first been identified and recorded as suitable for development in 1995.

   That the application was outline only with all matters being reserved. In effect, it was asking “Is this site suitable for development and what needs to be considered?”.

   He believed the plans took account of local context and character and that in particular views to Court House and the Church would be preserved.

   As part of the process, he had consulted the North Devon Highways Engineer and the Planning Department who had advised that access to the development should be via Oakford Villas.

4. The chairman then threw the meeting open to the public, inviting them to question Mr Mears.

Various points of concern were raised, most were around the proposed access to the development which was felt by many of those present to be deeply flawed. Several people expressed the view that problems with increased traffic flow and parking would impact severely upon residents in the Oakford Villas area, and that there were no realistic solutions for dealing with increased traffic in a village like North Molton.

At 8.20pm, the Chairman closed the public part of the meeting. He undertook that any response from the Parish Council would accent the apparent problems with access.
5. Councillors discussed the application and the following points were noted:

A site meeting involving local residents, PC representatives and the Planning Department would be beneficial.

The Government was pushing Local Authorities to provide more housing. There was a need to get through to the next layer of decision makers with local, sensitive matters taken into consideration. In this case, access, parking, increased traffic flow etc.

Responsibility for the maintenance of the proposed earth bank in Back Lane needed to be established. There was a danger of some of the proposed properties dominating existing houses.

Proposed footpath access to the centre of the village should be improved.

The state of New Road was already bad and would be exacerbated by construction traffic and any subsequent new commuter traffic.

Existing sewage capacity was likely to be insufficient if more than thirty-five homes in total were built in the village.

The development would take the area over the number of properties identified in the Local Plan.

6. It was proposed and unanimously agreed that the application be approved but with the various points of concern highlighted.

Councillors agreed that the clerk should draft a reply to the Planning Department summarising the points of concern identified in the meeting. The clerk undertook to circulate the draft to all councillors for any comments or corrections before submitting it to the Planning Department. (The draft was duly circulated, minor amendments were made and the response was sent to the Planning Department. A copy is attached).

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.

*FAO Miss T Blackmore. Re NDDC 57625, outline planning for 34 dwellings etc at land off Back Lane/Heasley Mill Rd, North Molton.*

The application was considered at a special Parish Council meeting on 27.8.14. 34 members of the public attended and the applicant's architect presented the plans, outlined their vision of the development and answered questions of the public and council.

The Parish Council wishes to make the following points:
It is concerned that, contrary to normal practice, this outline planning application does not provide sufficient information about access to the site.

Although the site was originally identified as suitable for development in 1995, car ownership and the volume of road traffic has increased significantly since then. What was suitable then may no longer be suitable today.

A previous development, Roberts Field, is still in an unfinished state and the site requires making good. This should be tackled before any new permissions are granted.

Liaison between the various developers seeking to build in North Molton over such matters as traffic management and access points would be useful and should be encouraged by the NDDC Planning team.

If approved, this application, taken with others already approved, would mean that the number of houses to be built over the next few years would exceed that quoted in the Local Plan.

The council feels that a site meeting between representatives of the Planning Department, Highways, the architects and interested parties from North Molton would be a very helpful and constructive step.

However, the council approved the application, subject to the following items of concern being addressed:

1. The proposed access to the site is unsuitable and would cause severe inconvenience to residents of Oakford Villas/Close as well as adding significantly to traffic congestion around the school entrance. The site itself is an obvious candidate for development but access to it is a major problem.

2. There is a need for the development to maximise parking capacity to cope with the increased number of vehicles and journeys attendant upon the application. The council suggests that the development includes a minimum of two parking spaces per dwelling as well as extra parking for the community. Allied to this, the school crossing needs to be upgraded, possibly to a Toucan crossing.

3. Responsibility for maintenance of the bank adjoining Back Lane needs to be made explicit. Also, properties in this part of the development should be changed from multi-storey to bungalows, so that they do not dominate existing properties there.

4. The proposed layout of footpaths needs to be reassessed so as to ensure, so far as possible, that pedestrians have a level access route to the centre of the village.
5. The main road out of North Molton is already in dire need of repair and would require substantial work in order to safely carry vehicles involved in building work, in the first instance, and increased domestic traffic thereafter. A significant commuted sum from the developer of any large site would be looked for in regard to this.

6. Sewage management in North Molton is already problematic and any new development must address this.

Regards, Nigel Penfold, Parish Clerk. I'd be grateful if you could confirm receipt of this message. Thanks.