

**Appendix to the Minutes of the extraordinary Firsdown Parish Council meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup>  
September 2019 at 7.15pm in Winterslow Village Hall**

**Opening remarks by Cllr Simon Brown, Chairman, Firsdown Parish Council**

The Chairman noted that this was an outline application, and if approved, a further, more detailed application would need to be submitted to refine the details. Firsdown Parish Council had called the meeting to hear the views of Firsdown residents, and he noted that the Parish Council had not received any correspondence from residents about the application.

**The role of Firsdown Parish Council**

FPC cannot give planning permission, it is for Wiltshire Council to determine the application in its role as the Local Planning Authority.

FPC can give five possible responses:

- No comment – no observations to make
- No objection – as stated
- Support – proceed as presented as of benefit to the community.
- Support with conditions – as above, but concerns about specific issues.
- Object – self-explanatory, and must state why in planning terms ie be based on material considerations.

FPC can also ask for the Wiltshire Councillor to “call in” the application, which means arranging for it to be referred to the WC Southern Planning Committee for determination, rather than by the delegated powers given to the Case Officer.

The Chairman invited the applicant and his agent to give a presentation, but they declined.

**Questions from the Parish Council**

*Q. Provision of open space – how will this be managed and maintained in the future?*

A. The applicants and their agents haven't thought as far as this, but anticipate it will either be managed/maintained by a management company, financed by the new home owners, alternatively the Parish Council could take this on. A Reserved Matters application could cover the possibility of the FPC owning the open space land.

*Q. Paths – The plans show paths from the development and from Firs Road to the open space, will these be permissive access, or become public rights of way?*

A. It will be permissive access, not PROW.

*Q. The willow bed – how will it be maintained in the future?*

A. This is a low maintenance, closed discharge nutrient management system, not a sewage treatment system. The willow removes phosphates and nitrates, and will just require annual coppicing. The arisings can be used for bio-fuel, or crafting.

*Q. The cul-de-sac – will the road be adopted formally by Wiltshire Council or remain unadopted ie be the responsibility of the home owners?*

A. This is yet to be discussed with Wiltshire Council, but WC likes to adopt roads, and it will be built to an adoptable standard.

*Q. There is a lack of affordable housing – why?*

A. This would require an increase in the density, ie an increase in the number of properties which would need to be built on the site, and given the site's planning history, the applicant decided against this, and strived for a balance between the higher density required and matching that of Firs Road. However, this has yet to be fully explored with the Case Officer.

### **Questions from Members of the Public**

*Q. Are there any legal covenants on the land?*

A. Not known at present.

*Q. Extra cars and potential for speeding 1 – could this application be linked to the installation of some traffic calming measures?*

A. Would need to wait for the Full Application, but it was noted by the Chairman that the average speed (monitored by the Speed Indicator Device) through Firsdown is 31 mph, too low for Wiltshire Council to take any action.

*Q. Extra cars and the potential for speeding 2 – is there an increased potential for an accident, given the entrance/exit to/from the site is at the bottom of the hill coming from the Winterslow direction?*

A. That is a matter for Wiltshire Council Highways to consider.

*Q. Design – are these dormer type homes?*

A. Yes, they are chalet bungalows, designed to make the development feel and seem a natural extension to the existing village.

*Q. Eco-friendliness – will the houses have solar panels?*

A. Yes, these are included in the Outline Application, and there will be more eco-friendly items contained in the Full Application, in order to comply with the current planning regulations.

*Q. Sustainability – what benefit to the village does this development offer? People will need cars, because the village is considered unsustainable in planning terms, which will add to the speeding problem.*

A. Managed open space will be made available, so good for walkers. It was noted that there had been no development in the village for 45 years, and that the population in 2019 was approx. 600. First time buyers had been priced out of the market, not helped by the significant changes made to existing properties. This was not a mass development, and was very much in keeping with the existing village. Indeed, the density will be less than the adjacent Firs Close. The risk of speeding already exists, there will just be an additional 18 cars.

The houses, being chalet bungalows, will be 1.5 storeys, the height of the roofline, which determines the visual impact, has been carefully considered for this low-density scheme. There will be new tree and hedge planting, and overall, the scheme has been designed to blend in with the existing development.

*Q Flooding – the site floods, what is being done to mitigate this?*

A. The location of the pig farm which caused so many problems in 2019 will not be returning, as the owner had learnt from the experience. The Reserved Matters application would include any drainage scheme required, following appropriate test for ground water issues, and it would be designed so that any run off is no more than the existing from the currently undeveloped site. The planting of hedges and trees, plus the willow bed will absorb a lot of water as well.

Comments were also made about the lack of community consultation by the applicants, the disruption the building would cause, and the lack of notification by Wiltshire Council's Planning Department. Cllr Rogers undertook to consult further with neighbours and residents.

**The FPC Chairman then summed up:**

- FPC wishes to note that no formal correspondence has been received, from any parishioners with respect to the planning application.
- FPC notes the applicant has provided a detailed environmental appraisal which mentions high quality planting to mitigate the development. The appraisal states there would initially be some detriment, but mitigation measures would result in overall ecological gain.
- Landscape and visual impact assessments have been carried out – although some residents have queried their accuracy. These were not carried out for the previous planning applications at this site.
- Firsdawn is classed as non-sustainable development, and Wiltshire Council would not normally sanction infill of this scale, but the application states this doesn't lengthen village or merge existing developed areas.
- Chalet bungalows are proposed which are in keeping of the existing style of properties in Firsdawn. FPC notes the scale of development, which is low density compared to other cul-de-sacs in Firsdawn.
- This is development of a brown field site and FPC believe the visual and ecological conditions would be an improvement compared to the present semi-industrial use.
- The application includes provision of public open space – however it is unclear how this will be managed at this stage, and the amount of use it will receive.
- There will be inevitable increase in vehicular movements but the current large machinery movements would end. The application makes note of the bus stop but FPC questions how much will be used in practice, as the development will have multicar households.
- FPC has reservations about visibility for the access, particularly when turning right out of the development but expect the visibility splay will have to meet Wiltshire Council guidelines – it needs to be wider than the current access and the proposed removal of hedge at east side of entrance, should improve visibility.