

PLANNING COMMITTEE



WEDNESDAY, 1 JUNE 2022 - 1.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor D Connor (Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor M Cornwell, Councillor Mrs M Davis (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Mrs J French, Councillor Mrs K Mayor, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor M Purser and Councillor W Sutton.

APOLOGIES: Councillor C Marks and Councillor R Skoulding.

Officers in attendance: David Rowen (Development Manager), Alison Hoffman (Senior Development Officer), Stephen Turnbull (Legal Officer) and Linda Albon (Member Services & Governance Officer)

P1/22 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022 -2023**

It was proposed by Councillor Purser, seconded by Councillor Sutton and resolved that Councillor Connor be elected as Chairman of the Planning Committee for the municipal year.

P2/22 **APPOINTMENT OF THE VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022 - 2023**

It was proposed by Councillor Connor, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and resolved that Councillor Mrs Davis be elected as Vice-Chairman of Planning Committee for the municipal year.

P3/22 **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the 4 May 2022 were confirmed and signed as an accurate record.

P4/22 **F/YR21/1031/F**
DENNICKS YARD, BACK ROAD, GOREFIELD
ERECT 38 NO DWELLINGS (1 X 2-STOREY 5-BED, 14 X 2-STOREY 4-BED, 5 X
SINGLE-STOREY 4-BED, 2 X SINGLE-STOREY 3-BED (ALL WITH GARAGES)
AND 16 X 2-STOREY 3-BED (NO GARAGES)) AND A DOMESTIC WORKSHOP
SERVING PLOT 17 ACCESSED FROM WOLF LANE INVOLVING DEMOLITION OF
BUILDINGS

Alison Hoffman presented the report to members.

Members asked questions of officers as follows:

- Councillor Sutton noted that the Parish Council have raised objections as to the proposal being over-development and having a lack of amenity space and requested confirmation that the properties do have the recommended third of the plot as amenity space? Alison Hoffman responded that she has undertaken an evaluation and calculated all the garden areas to be at a third or above.
- Councillor Sutton referred to NHS England East request for £9,234 for blue light services and asked if this has been rejected because of the viability as, in his view, it appears to be a small sum being requested and attempts should be made to accommodate it. Alison Hoffman responded that as the scheme has been proven not to be viable by the Section

106 Officer, the Council would not be able to go back to the agent and request that they make an allowance for this money as this is not part of the Council's approved policy and if there was money available for the applicant to enter into a Section 106 Agreement the first priority would be for it to be directed to policy requirements. Councillor Sutton expressed his disappointment but accepted the costs of demolition and remedial work will be huge.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Sutton stated that reading through the comprehensive officer's report all the residents concerns and complaints seem to have been addressed and as long as there is the third of amenity space he does not feel in terms of policy that members can do anything other than approve the application.
- Councillor Mrs Davis expressed the view that officer's have got the recommendation right and whilst she acknowledges the Parish Council have submitted an objection it is the same objection it submitted on the first application and it has not commented on the additional properties. She does not see how the committee cannot approve it according to the NPPF.
- Councillor Mrs French supported the comments of Councillors Sutton and Mrs Davis. She expressed the view that villages need to be supported where they need affordable housing.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs French, seconded by Councillor Mrs Davis and agreed that the application be GRANTED as per officer's recommendation.

P5/22

F/YR21/1370/F

ELM FARM, HOSPITAL ROAD, DODDINGTON

ERECT 1 X DWELLING (2 STOREY 4-BED) INVOLVING THE REMOVAL OF EXISTING RESIDENTIAL CARAVAN, AND THE RETROSPECTIVE SITING OF A CONTAINER

David Rowen presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from George Boreham, speaking on behalf of the agent. Mr Boreham stated that the majority of the letters of support for this application are from people who live in the road, with the remainder from Doddington, which, in his view, shows local support. He made the point that one of the supporters is Mega Plants which is a business along this road and that all consultees support the application, with no objections.

Mr Boreham acknowledged that the site is in Flood Zone 3, however, mitigation measures have been proposed in the independent Flood Risk Assessment, which has been approved by the Environment Agency. He stated that the site has had an approval for a residential dwelling in the change of use of the existing barn in 2015, with previous approvals allowing the setting of the caravan on the site.

Mr Boreham referred to their being no objections from County Council Highways and an application submitted by Mega Plants will provide passing bays, which will further improve Hospital Road. He stated that the applicant has lived on site for almost 9 years in the mobile home as well as running a business for the same period of time and during this time he has paid Council and Middle Level drainage charges.

Mr Boreham stated the applicant buys, sells and repairs various machinery and tools and the containers and the shed on site are for equipment and used as a workshop. He advised that the applicant has been broken into 4 times, with tools and equipment having been stolen.

Mr Boreham stated that the proposal is for a dwelling on site to allow the removal of the mobile home, the dwelling has approved mitigation measures by the Environment Agency and is safer living accommodation than the mobile home. He expressed the opinion that having a permanent

dwelling on site will also aid security and the removal of the mobile home will improve the character of the area.

Mr Boreham reiterated that there is local support for this proposal and from Doddington Parish Council and, in his view, there are no concerns raised about the design, size or neighbouring amenity, with the application being for the running of a local business on a site which has previous planning approvals for a residential barn conversion which would have allowed a residential property on the site. He stated the business has been running for almost 9 years from this site and is established within the existing barn.

Mr Boreham requested members support this proposal for a local business.

Members asked questions of Mr Boreham as follows:

- Councillor Benney referred to the fact that it was said the applicant has been paying Council Tax and queried whether also business rates applied to the property? Mr Boreham responded that as far as he is aware Council Tax has been paid but he is unsure regarding business rates. Councillor Benney asked if it an agricultural business that he runs from the site? Mr Boreham responded that he was unsure.

Members asked questions of officers as follows:

- Councillor Mrs French asked how long the mobile home had been on the site, she has heard 9 years, and also in 2015 there was an approved application? David Rowen responded that as set out in the history section of the report there have been previous approvals on the site for a mobile home on a temporary basis for agricultural workers and those permissions elapsed in 2014 so the mobile home has been on site since 2014 without permission. In terms of the residential use of the site, he stated that in 2015 there was a Prior Notification submitted for the conversion of the most substantial building under Class Q and that was approved at that time, however, that has not been implemented or the works have not been completed within the requisite time and whilst there was a resubmission of that application in 2018 it transpired that the building was not being used for agricultural purposes and, therefore, does not qualify as a Class Q conversion. David Rowen stated that as it stands there is no extant approval for residential on the site.
- Councillor Mrs French referred to Councillor Benney's question regarding the use and asked if officers know what the use is if it is not agricultural? David Rowen responded that it is officers understanding that it is a B8 storage use and as Mr Boreham indicated in his presentation the applicant operates a buying, selling and refurbishment of equipment and machinery business. Councillor Mrs French asked whether it is agricultural machinery? David Rowen responded that whether it is agricultural machinery is not an agricultural use but the maintenance and refurbishment of machinery.
- Councillor Benney asked if it known whether Council Tax has been paid on this site as residential and if so for how long? David Rowen responded that it his understanding that Council Tax has been paid since 2014 but he is not aware of whether any business rates have been paid.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Sutton referred to the long history of temporary permissions on the mobile home which ran out in 2014 and that temporary permission was for pheasant breeding at the time which has ceased to exist and the new use does not seem to be agriculture. He stated that it has been confirmed that the mobile home is being lived in without planning permission and his view would have been favourable if it had had extant permission to replace the mobile home with a dwelling but, in his opinion, members should not be giving permission to replace something that does not have permission. Councillor Sutton believes the officer's recommendation to be correct.
- Councillor Murphy agreed with the comments of Councillor Sutton. He feels that this proposal is going from a caravan to "Southfork" and feels members are being misled.

- Councillor Benney stated that there is a mobile home on the site that has been there since 2014, it does have extant permission on it but it has not been followed up by enforcement to remove it. He referred to a similar case at Guyhirn where there was a mobile home with people living in it and permission was given in this instance. Councillor Benney made the point that there is a business on this site, Council Tax has been paid, no enforcement has been undertaken and a house on this site would be better than leaving a caravan here. He feels the principle of residential use was approved in the barn conversion, with the barn not being a quaint old one, but a standard agricultural building. Councillor Benney stated that he is inclined to support the application as a house would be better to live in than a mobile home and allow this business to flourish.
- Councillor Mrs French asked whether the applicant could have applied for a Certificate of Lawful Use? David Rowen responded that the residential use of the site would not be lawful at this point of time as it has not been there for the requisite period of time.
- Councillor Connor expressed the view that Council Tax has been taken off the applicant, planning permission was approved a few years ago for a barn conversion with the applicant perhaps not being in a financial position to undertake the works and members need to ask themselves if Fenland open for business or not. He made the point that the country has been through Covid and the applicant has still paid his Council Tax and carried on his business. Councillor Connor stated that whilst he sympathises with officers and their position, Fenland is open for business and, in his view, the applicant should be given a chance, there are houses further along Hospital Road, one next door and four approved at the top of the road, with Mega Plants just getting permission for a café and he will go against officer's recommendation.
- Councillor Mrs Mayor expressed concern, not with the fact that the Council has already approved properties along Hospital Road, but whether a business is being run on the site or not or is the property just going to be built as one in the countryside.
- Councillor Mrs French referred to the description of the application which does not refer to the running of a business at this location.
- Councillor Cornwell expressed the opinion that members were wandering off the subject as the documents do not mention the business, this is an application to replace the mobile home, that seems not to have permission in the first place, with a large house and a decision is required on what the officer's report says.

David Rowen explained that the application is not for the retention of the business and the area where the business takes place is not within the red line boundary of the application site. He stated that the comments made about the application being purely for a dwelling are correct, the business element is coming mainly through the applicant's submission that effectively the dwelling is required in connection with the business.

David Rowen made the point that the payment of Council Tax is not a material planning consideration in determining this application and does not have any bearing as to whether the residential use of the site is lawful or not. In reference to comments made by Councillor Benney regarding previous decisions the committee has made relating to replacement of mobile homes, he stated that to the best of his knowledge the ones that have been brought in front of the committee and been granted by members have always had a lawful residential use on the site, which is not the case here. David Rowen referred to the residential approval that was on the site in 2015, the change of use of the building under Class Q Agricultural Buildings and Residential Permitted Development Right is a very different issue from a policy point of view than the erection of a new build dwelling on the site and should not set a precedent for the erection of a new dwelling on land adjacent to those buildings. As it stands at the moment that building would not now be allowed to be converted as it is no longer an agricultural building and no longer qualifies under Class Q and this should not be something that members should base their decision on regarding this application, it is a case of what the application is and compliance with policies both nationally and locally.

Proposed by Councillor Sutton, seconded by Councillor Murphy and agreed that the application be REFUSED as per the officer's recommendation.

(Councillor Benney declared that he knows Matthew Hall, the agent for this application, he has undertaken work for him and is doing work for Chatteris Town Council which he is involved with)

(Councillors Connor and Mrs Davis registered, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that they attend Doddington Parish Council meetings but take no part in planning)

P6/22

F/YR22/0214/VOC

LAND WEST OF HEReward HALL, COUNTY ROAD, MARCH

VARIATION OF CONDITIONS 14 (LANDSCAPING/BIODIVERSITY MATTERS) AND 17 (LIST OF APPROVED PLANS) RELATING TO PLANNING PERMISSION F/YR19/1029/F (ERECT 19 X 2-STOREY DWELLINGS WITH GARAGES PLOTS 13 & 14 ONLY (COMPRISING OF 10 X 2-BED, 7 X 3-BED AND 2 X 4-BED)) TO FACILITATE DELIVERY OF THE SCHEME FOR 100% AFFORDABLE DWELLINGS, ERECT AN ELECTRICAL SUBSTATION AND AMEND THE ACCOMMODATION SCHEDULE TO 11 X 2-BED, 5 X 3-BED AND 3 X 4-BED DWELLINGS

Alison Hoffman presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Jake Stentiford, the agent. Mr Stentiford stated that he fully agrees with the officer's report and recommendation. He expressed the view that the proposed amendments are minor changes to the footprint and design of the dwellings along with the removal of two garages and provision of a sub-station which is required for the electrical connection.

Mr Stentiford expressed the opinion that there will be no negative effects from these minor amendments and the main positive effect is that this will enable the applicants to increase the provision of affordable homes on the site making the development more policy compliant and increasing the benefits to local people who are in need of affordable housing. He stated that they are keen to move forward and start delivering these homes so he hoped that members would support the application.

Members asked questions of officers as follows:

- Councillor Mrs French asked with this being such a minor amendment, and she does note that the Town Council have not submitted any material consideration objections to the proposal, why this application is before the committee as this would have taken enormous officer time to produce the report? David Rowen responded that he does not disagree, but the Scheme of Delegation is clear that if the Town Council comments are at variance to the officer recommendation on a major application then it has to come to committee. He stated that the Town Council have objected to the application reiterating their previous concerns relating to the amount of development and its impact on the surrounding area so consequently it has to be determined by the committee.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Sutton reiterated the concerns of other members that this proposal is absolutely unnecessary to be before committee as, whilst the Town Council objected to the original application, it does already have planning permission.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs French, seconded by Councillor Davis and agreed that the application be GRANTED as per the officer's recommendation.

(Councillors Mrs French and Purser registered, in accordance with the Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that they are members of March Town Council but take no part in planning)

P7/22

F/YR22/0297/O

LAND EAST OF MAPLE FARM, BLUE LANE, WIMBLINGTON

ERECTION OF A DWELLING AND GARAGE/WORKSHOP (OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH ALL MATTERS RESERVED)

David Rowen presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure, from Dave Bridges, the applicant, and Russell Swann, the agent. Mr Bridges stated that him and his wife were both born and bred in the local area spending the first 20 years in March and the last 11 years in Doddington and love the villages of Doddington and Wimblington being keen to stay local. He stated that his 3 children are at the local school and he and his wife are on local charitable committees.

Mr Bridges stated that they have been looking to move, whilst staying in the villages, for 3 years but cannot find any properties within their budget for their family's needs. He explained the site forms part of a larger farm owned and run by his father-in-law, with the 3-acre corner field being of low-grade agricultural soil and with fertiliser costs tripling this year it is non-feasible to farm in the current market.

Mr Bridges expressed the opinion that a single-family home would help off-set these losses, with the corner chosen for agricultural reasons so tractors can still access the other part of the farm. He stated that the home will be built set back from the road, with the hedgerow replanted further back to allow visibility and passing along Blue Lane, which, in his view, will improve safety.

Mr Bridges advised members that he runs a local fire and security business which employs 11 people in highly skilled and highly paid jobs, which, in his opinion, is of great benefit to the local area and is the only approved firm in Fenland. He stated that they have a small retail unit in Whittlesey which is used as their operation but need a workshop that can be accessed 24/7 for the assembly of control equipment and transmission devices, with the devices needing to be preconfigured prior to being delivered on site and the application site is perfect as there is an 800 metre line of sight to his father-in-law's sheds and, therefore, he can set up and use these long distance transmission devices, which will result in the increase of the products he can offer and in turn employ and train more local people.

Mr Bridges expressed the view that this development is essential in providing his family with a quality home, whilst improving additional jobs in the area.

Mr Swann stated that the application is before committee due to the level of support received and the site is currently a small triangular grade 3 piece of agricultural land, which has been owned by Mr Bridges for many years, has not been farmed and is on the edge of the built form of Wimblington. He referred to the Planning Officer comments within the report that state the site is located in an elsewhere location but expressed the opinion that LP3 classifies Wimblington as a growth village and this site is opposite Coney Walk estate and adjacent to residential properties further along Blue Lane.

Mr Swann made the point that there is a planning application pending consideration on the land immediately to the south of the site for a new car park and 2 metre high fence extending Knowles Transport to the boundary of this property. He stated that the site lies within Flood Zone 1 demonstrating a profitable location for a new workshop and dwelling under the Local Plan.

Mr Swann expressed the view that the site lies just outside the speed limit signs and Highways have indicated that there would be no objection to the proposal as long as the boundary hedge is trimmed, which they would be happy to be conditioned. He stated that the proposed widening of the road at this location will also, in his view, benefit the wider community.

Mr Swann expressed the opinion that the proposal complies with the NPPF and Local Plan and ensures the proposal is consistent with other recent approvals. He stated that Mr Bridges' is preparing his business for the future in order to plan for the economic instability that we have all be warned about and are beginning to see with the cost of living and energy crisis.

Mr Swann feels that businesses like this need to be helped to ride the wave and survive into the future as they are the future of Fenland. He reiterated that the proposal is adjacent the built form, within a growth village, on grade 3 agricultural land that will never be used for agricultural purposes especially if the car park for Knowles is approved land locking the site, there have been no objections from Highways and the site is in Flood Zone 1. He asked members to support this small business and approve the application with conditions deemed appropriate.

Members asked questions of Mr Bridges and Mr Swann as follows:

- Councillor Mrs Davis asked, when Highways say the entrance is acceptable as long as the hedgerow is cut back, who owns the next part of the field along where these bushes are? Mr Bridges responded that the whole field along there is owned by his father-in-law and would be maintained.
- Councillor Benney asked how many people were employed at present and how many additional jobs would the proposal bring forward? Mr Bridges responded that he currently employs 11 people and the scheme will help increase the services it offers and it will be around 2-3 new employers per year.
- Councillor Cornwell questioned what is effectively being applied for is a workplace home as a business will be carried out on part of the site? Mr Bridges confirmed this to be correct, with the workshop used mainly for construction of plant equipment and testing.
- Councillor Sutton asked for the potential car park to be shown to him again and officers displayed a plan showing the location on the presentation screen. Councillor Sutton expressed the view that the workshop does not look much bigger than a double garage. Mr Swann responded that this is an outline application at the moment so all these matters are reserved and these elements will be designed to Mr Bridges needs at the time and if the committee wanted to see the Reserved Matters application they would be happy for this to come before members.
- Councillor Purser stated that Wimblington is not a high crime area but is part of living on site providing security for the business as well? Mr Bridges responded that as an accredited firm a lot of the work he does has to be controlled, with the workshop anything preconfigured should be kept secure until it is despatched to site and it is essential to be near this equipment.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Cornwell stated that the committee is looking at an outline application consisting of a dwelling with a garage/workshop which would appear to be an essential element of what the applicant needs, so this is a business use and members need to consider how this complies with the rest of the area. He made the point that Blue Lane is not very wide and there is a balance between the residential side of the application with the business side and questioned whether the committee was able to do this.
- Councillor Connor stated that the committee needs to look at what is front of them, which is an application for a residential unit and a unit in connection with the applicant's business, so consideration is required of both elements.
- David Rowen stated that the application as submitted is for a dwelling and workshop/garage, with the supporting information indicating that it is in connection with a business, however, if you were more typically looking at a workplace home you would

expect the workplace element to be made more prominent in the submission and the building is talked about as a garage/workshop as opposed to being a commercial building within a particular use class, which does give the impression that its more low key than is being reported by the two speakers. He quoted part of the Design and Access Statement submitted with the application, which states “the garage/workshop will only accommodate a single worker, therefore, will not generate a significant amount of noise”, and there are similar references within this document, which reiterates the almost low key, working from home, spilt between domestic and a small element of commercial but nothing significant whereas what has been heard from the speakers is that this is going to be a more intense commercial use on site referring to line of sight with adjacent properties which will allow trade to take place and the potential for additional people to be employed, which is somewhat different to what is stated within the application. David Rowen expressed the opinion that from a highway perspective he is not sure they have commented on a more intense commercial use but on a proposal for a dwelling with a garage/workshop.

- Councillor Cornwell stated that when he saw the proposal contained a garage/workshop he was thinking more of a domestic workshop, but from the presentation this is coming over differently and brings a few question marks into his thinking. He feels it is raising more questions as he thinks members are now considering a business use rather a fully domestic use.
- Councillor Mrs Davis agreed with Councillor Cornwell, initially when you look at the application you are thinking in terms of a house with a small workshop. She stated that the site’s position is out in the open countryside and is on quite a dangerous bend and if the idea is to make this more of a business there will be different vehicles entering and exiting the site and Highway comments are not related to a larger business but a house with a small workshop. She feels if the applicant is definitely going to make this a bigger business the application should possibly be deferred and a better application submitted.
- Councillor Mrs Mayor expressed concern over the highway issue, with the Parish Council objecting on highway grounds, which she believes is correct. She stated the Councillor Mrs Davis knows the area better than most and Highways did comment that the site was on a dangerous bend.
- Councillor Sutton agreed with comments of other speakers that is why he questioned the size of the garage/workshop as he could not weigh up how it was much different to a decent double garage. He stated that if he had access to that bit of land and could place a house anywhere he chose it would certainly not have been in the corner where it is being proposed, he would have positioned it closer to the houses opposite it and had the house been in this position he might have had a different opinion but he expressed the view that he could not support the application as it stands as there are too many questions unanswered. Councillor Sutton stated that although the Council wants to support business it cannot be at the expense of everything else and the proposal does raise far more questions than answers.
- Councillor Connor expressed the opinion that he does not think committee should defer the application, it should either be granted or refused. He made the point that the applicant has another chance to submit an application taking into consideration the committee’s points if it is refused.
- Councillor Benney agreed with the comments of Councillor Davis and others, particularly with the siting of it and putting in a better access point that would lead to the house. He made the point that if the application is deferred it is just put back but if refused it can be re-submitted as a free go.
- David Rowen made the point that with a free submission there are certain criteria around that, such as the same application site and same character of development, and urged members to be cautious in giving a free application away.
- Councillor Sutton made the point that a free application has to be where the red line is, but he feels it cannot be approved as it is.
- Councillor Benney expressed the view that there is a business here that the Council should be supporting but he feels the access is not the best for this site and the committee has

given the applicant a bit of a steer as to where a different application could be supported. He feels that there is not enough information, which is a problem with an outline application, and a full application showing the workshop and in line with the proposed use would give members a more informed decision.

- David Rowen again expressed caution in members being too proactive on what may or may not be acceptable in terms of different access positions or siting as any future application needs to be considered on its merits and needs to go through the relevant consultation with consultees, such as the Highways Authority.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that she has visited the site and the bend was, in her view, bad.

Proposed by Councillor Sutton, seconded by Councillor Mrs Davis and agreed that the application be REFUSED as per the officer's recommendation.

(Councillor Mrs Davis registered, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that she is Chairman of Wimblington Parish Council but takes no part in planning)

**P8/22 F/YR22/0380/F
LAND NORTH WEST OF 35 DODDINGTON ROAD, BENWICK
ERECT 1 X DWELLING (2-STOREY 3-BED)**

David Rowen presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure, from George Boreham, on behalf of the agent. Mr Boreham stated that there are no technical objections to this application and all letters of support submitted are from Doddington Road where this proposal is located indicating local support. He made the point that Benwick has a shop, primary school and roads connecting to Whittlesey, Chatteris and the surrounding villages.

Mr Boreham stated that the site is located in Flood Zone 3 and a detailed Flood Risk Assessment has been provided and approved by the Environment Agency with mitigation measures which will comply with Policy LP14. He made the point that the majority of Benwick lies in Flood Zone 3, with a limited amount of land in Flood Zones 1 and 2, which has been developed.

Mr Boreham expressed the view that the proposed dwelling is a modest 3-bed chalet bungalow, which limits the height of the dwelling. He referred to concerns regarding on-street parking but stated this would not take place as the proposal provides off-street parking for both the proposed and existing properties.

Mr Boreham explained that the proposed dwelling will have an air source heat pump and solar panels to ensure energy efficiency for health and well-being as per LP2. He referred to a map displayed on the presentation screen and pointed out that when you view along this section of Doddington Road there is Fountain Close, which extends further away from Doddington Road rather than just frontage development, and further west into Benwick along Doddington Road other developments have been allowed, such as Heron Way and Cricketers Close, which extends back from Doddington Road.

Mr Boreham referred to 10.5 of the officer's report which advises that the design and materials will not be incongruous with the surroundings and under 10.7 there would not be adverse impact on residential amenities.

Member asked questions of officers as follows:

- Councillor Cornwell asked someone to explain what is the difference between this application and the previous one as all he can see is referral to the number of supporters?

David Rowen responded that this is an identical application to one that was refused planning permission earlier in the year other than this application has been accompanied by letters of support asking it to be referred to Planning Committee.

- Councillor Mrs French asked if the reasons the previous application were refused have not been addressed? David Rowen responded that to be fair to the applicant it is difficult to address the issue of back land development, the site is where it is but nothing has changed from the previous scheme.
- Councillor Murphy referred to the letters of support and expressed the view that these were proforma letters with names and addresses added and feels this does not constitute letters of support. David Rowen confirmed that the letters of support were not individual bespoke letters they were of a uniform nature.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Sutton stated that he looked at comments on public access and did note that if it is the person he thinks it is there is a comment from a former District Councillor in a neighbouring authority who is very experienced and sat on their planning committee for a number of years and responded using policy numbers objecting to this proposal, which he feels is the right approach. He made the point that applications often receive letters of support, with people not understanding that material planning considerations are required and some comments have to be disregarded. Councillor Sutton expressed the view that the proposal is back land, it is out of keeping and despite what the agent said the areas he referred to are more in the core of the village. He feels this would set a precedent and that the officer's recommendation is correct.
- Councillor Mrs Davis expressed the view that some people might think this is playing the system as the previous application was refused and this application is exactly the same, the only difference being that there are now people supporting the application. She stated that she is happy to go with the recommendation as she does not feel that anything has changed and those 7 supporting letters do not make any difference.
- Councillor Benney stated that he knows Benwick well and he feels that villages struggle, including the shop, and the whole community will lose out as potentially the shop will cease trading. He has been on the committee for 4 years and he has not seen an application come through that has been passed for housing in Benwick and if villages do not get growth they will shrink and die and people are needed to keep facilities viable. Councillor Benney expressed the view that Doddington Road has Fountains, which is just further up going into the village, and Heron Way, which is also built back with the river behind it which is a natural buffer zone. He does not see any problem with approving this application, there is only 3 or 4 other houses between Fountains and where this application is and feels it is a good place to build a house and possibly more. Councillor Benney questioned whether this would bring more development, which it could do, and referred to the development and growth that had taken place in Manea, which is now a thriving community. He stated that he is minded to support the application as Benwick needs housing, which would provide community benefit.
- Councillor Mrs Davis pointed out that Benwick Parish Council has said that they did not want individual back land development when there are so many brownfield sites that could be developed and there has to be something wrong if developers are not coming forward. She stated that she does not like this application as it is back land development and whilst she hears what Councillor Benney is saying she wonders why the developers are not coming forward and questioned whether it was that people do not want to live as far out as Benwick.
- Councillor Sutton stated that he agrees with 99.99% of what Councillor Benney has said but this proposal is not the way to get development because 1 dwelling is not going to keep the shop open and these issues need to be addressed through the Local Plan review as it not only Benwick it is all the small villages that need growth and fast as all the facilities will be lost. He expressed the view that from what he saw of the Local Plan it will ruin the villages if the proposals go through.
- Councillor Murphy agreed that as this application is only for one house, it would not keep

the school or shop going and feels the comments made the Parish Council are right, there is nothing different between the last application and this one. He made the point that it is in Flood Zone 3 and does not address the reasons for the refusal.

- Councillor Mrs French agreed with the previous speakers that nothing has changed, but in relation to Councillor Sutton's comments she stated she is on the Local Plan Working Party and she believes the new documents are out today and he will get a surprise with what is being presented to Cabinet on 13th.

Proposed by Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor Mrs Mayor and agreed that the application be REFUSED as per officer's recommendation.

(Councillor Benney declared that he knows Matthew Hall, the agent for this application, he has undertaken work for him and is doing work for Chatteris Town Council which he is involved with)

P9/22 PLANNING APPEALS.

David Rowen presented the appeals report to members.

Members made comments as follows:

- In relation to the appeal for F/YR20/0985/O, Councillor Benney expressed the view that this site is opposite his house and was refused under delegated powers which he feels was the correct decision as there was a previously application on the site which had expired and since then the leisure centre has been built with its access directly opposite, with the junction being much busier, and this does not seem to be reflected in the appeal.

Members considered and noted the appeals report.

2.56 pm

Chairman