

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL  
**Minutes of a Meeting of Cusop Parish Council**  
**held remotely via Zoom 24th June 2020**

**Present:** Councillors J Wesley (Chairman), M Hainge, I Jardin, A Matthews and D Evans.

**In attendance:** Three members of the public. (Ward Cllr Hewitt joined the meeting very briefly before losing internet connection).

**1. Apologies for absence.** Cllr P Gilbert.

**2. Disclosures of Interest and Dispensations.** Cllr Evans declared an interest in item 5 of the agenda.

**3. Minutes. Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the chairman at a later date.

**4. Public participation session.** The main focus of the public participation session centred on objections to planning application P201614/0 – Land adjacent to Cherry Trees, Newport St (item 5 on the agenda). Opinions were expressed as follows:

- The application disregards the neighbourhood plan.
- There is no demonstrable need for luxury housing in Cusop at present.
- The proposed scheme does nothing to satisfy the need for affordable housing.
- The site is unsuitable.

A member of the public then brought the attention of the council to the timing of verge-cutting in the parish. This year the verges had been cut very early, before the wildflowers could set seed. Concern was expressed at the costs of cutting twice a year, as well as the damage this was doing. It was also pointed out that two passing-places had been blocked by fallen trees.

**5. Planning Application. P201614/0 – Land adjacent to Cherry Trees, Newport St.** Outline planning permission for the erection of ten dwellinghouses and access with all matters reserved save access. Resolved: that the Parish Council strongly objects to this application because

- a) The site is outside the settlement boundary and therefore contrary to Cusop NDP Policy 1,
- b) The NDP is now 2 years and 7 months old. Although technically "out-of-date" according to paragraph 14 of the NPPF, it is only by 7 months. Moreover the Council considers that, on the basis of its experience so far, the NDP is still fit for purpose, not in need of review or material amendment, and should therefore continue to be given substantial weight. The Council notes that the High Court in a recent appeal case has confirmed the primacy of the development plan, notwithstanding the NPPF,
- c) The Core Strategy minimum housing target for Cusop is 12% or 22 new dwellings. Although only nine years into the twenty-year period of the Core Strategy and NDP, 34 new dwellings have already been completed or approved, including the NDP-allocated site of 25 dwellings, so development is already 55% over the minimum target. The allocated site was completed only last year and some of the open-market houses have still not been sold (all the affordable housing was sold quickly). The addition of at least 10 more dwellings through this application would take Cusop to double its Core Strategy target, with the prospect of further windfalls to follow. This is a grossly disproportionate rate of growth for a small parish in the Golden Valley Housing Market Area,
- d) The site location is not well suited to residential development. It is opposite a noisy commercial site. It would extend residential use further along the B4350, away from the facilities of the rest of Cusop and Hay, especially bus stops, and would amount to ribbon development. It would be connected to those facilities by a single narrow footway on the other side of the B4350 and

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residents would have to cross the road to reach it. There are no public footpaths adjoining the site that could be used to reach the rest of Cusop to the east,

e) It would create an opportunity for further development in this location, including the remainder of the field behind it, which would be difficult to resist,

f) There are other options for the future direction of residential development in Cusop and it is important that all these options, including the location of the current application, are compared through a coherent process in which the community including other landowners can take part. The Parish Council expects to review the NDP as soon as Herefordshire Council's revised Core Strategy starts to emerge. This will be the right moment to do this,

g) The applicant's ecological appraisal is inadequate: it fails to note that the "improved grassland pasture" is in fact a traditional orchard listed in Natural England's Priority Habitat Inventory (easily found by reference to the government's online MAGIC maps and on Ordnance Survey maps) and that the "scattered trees" visible on aerial photographs and recently removed were the remains of that orchard. As a result it does not investigate the ecological value of this designation and what survives of it. There is also no mention of a search of the Herefordshire Biological Records Centre.

If nevertheless Herefordshire Council is minded to grant outline consent, the Parish Council considers that the following should be addressed:

h) Seeking permission for only 10 dwellings is a blatant attempt to avoid the inclusion of affordable housing units on a site that could easily accommodate more than this. The nearby allocated site of 25 dwellings achieved a density of one dwelling per 0.032 hectares. At the same density the application site could achieve 18 dwellings. Even assuming a slightly lower net density on a smaller site, a number well in excess of 10 could still be achieved and allow the inclusion of 35% affordable units,

i) All dwellings should be of 3 or fewer bedrooms in accordance with Cusop NDP Policy 4 which still carries full weight,

j) The developer's contributions should include funding of (i) the extension of the 30mph limit (plus 40mph buffer zone) and any other appropriate highway safety improvements, and (ii) the conservation and re-use of the redundant traditional farm buildings on the applicant's land immediately to the south of the site.

Proposed: Cllr Jardin. Seconded Cllr Matthews. Four votes in favour, one abstention. Carried.

**6. Councillors' reports.** Cllr Wesley reported that Scott Low, Planning Enforcement Officer, had visited the shepherd's hut opposite The Orchard on Cusop Dingle. Mr Low confirmed that the fencing and shepherd's hut did not require planning permission if they were for agricultural use, but that this would be required for the widening of the existing access. He would contact the landowner about this. The Clerk was asked to contact Balfour Beatty concerning the loss of drainage at the site. Mr Low had also been informed about a new gateway at No 6 Booker's Edge and another off Church Road, close to Trewern Outdoor Centre.

**7. Clerk's report.** The Clerk's written report was approved.

**8. Date of next meeting.** It was agreed that no date would be set for the next meeting.

**9. Employment matters.** Resolved: that Sharon Gardner BSc ACA be appointed as internal auditor. Proposed: Cllr Wesley. Seconded: Cllr Hainge. Carried unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.01 p.m.

Signed.....