WRAXALL AND FAILAND PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the discussion between Parish Councillors that took place remotely on Zoom at 7.30pm on Tuesday 3rd June 2025.

Present: Councillors Parsons (Chairman), Gorford, Muschamp, Robinson, Sandeman, Sheppard, Wolff

Parish Clerk: Monika Ward

No members of the public have requested to speak.

1. To receive any apologies for absence.

   Apologies were received from Councillor Malpas.

   Councillor Amos and Hussey were not present.

2. To consider the following planning application:

   25/P/0641/FUL - Buildings At Watercress Farm, Bristol Road, Wraxall, BS48 1NE
   Change of use of existing barns from holiday lets to use for educational, recreational and community purposes

   It was agreed (6 in support, 1 abstention) to support the change of use in principle.

   However, the application contravenes policy DM33 (Inclusive access into non-residential buildings and spaces), as there is no provision in the plans supporting the application for accessible toilets, the internal access for wheelchair users within the buildings is poor, and the whilst the previous plans for 23/P/0277/FUL show a permeable surface between the buildings and gravel to the parking area - the latter is unsuitable for wheelchair users and it unclear whether the permeable surface would be suitable for wheelchair users.

   The gates leading to parts of the estate and PRoW should conform to The Sensory Trust 'Outdoor Accessibility Guidance' dated 18 April 2023 outdoor-accessibility-guidance-18April2023.pdf (sensorytrust.org.uk) Outdoor Accessibility Guidance, formerly Countryside for All, by Sensory Trust and Paths for All.

   Section 5 of the Planning Statement refers to Development Plan North Somerset Core Strategy policies and Sites and Policies Plan Part 1: Development Management Policies (2016) the following, which are considered to be relevant, are omitted:

   - CS 33 Smaller settlements and Countryside
   - DM33: Inclusive access into non-residential buildings and spaces
   - DM51: Agriculture and land-based rural business development in the countryside
   - DM69: Location of sporting, cultural and community facilities.

   NSC Highways comments on the previous application 23/P/0277/FUL were related to use as holiday lets. The Planning Statement para 4.8 states that parties of up to 30 children are envisaged for school visits. In the previous application 5 parking bays were provided, it is unclear where the 20 spaces stated in the current application (p6)

are to be sited and if there are any constraints on the type of vehicle that can access the site (eg is there sufficient clearance for a coach). It is suggested that consideration be given for the applicant to provide a Travel Plan.

The Hours of Opening section of the application form (p9) states that opening hours are not relevant. However, the application is for educational, recreational and community purposes. The Planning Statement para 4.2 specifies Class F2 - Local community meeting place, area for sport and recreation. Under these circumstances, mindful that the nearest private dwelling is 50m from the site, it is considered appropriate to specify hours of use for recreational and community purposes, so that any noise impact on neighbours does not cause a nuisance.

Should the planning officer be minded to approve this application, it is requested that Conditions be applied that address the Parish Council's concerns regarding:

- poor execution of the plans in respect of the Equality Act 2010 for disabled access.
- vehicle access and parking.
- potential noise impact on neighbours when the site is used for recreational and community purposes.

3. To consider the following screening opinion request:

25/P/0960/EA1 - Land At Ashton Hill Farm Weston Road, Failand, BS8 3US
Screening Opinion request to determine as to whether proposed development is EIA development. Works proposed: residential development for up to 350 dwellings including 200 sq. m of Class E floorspace, land reserved for educational use, multi model hub, car park, public open space, landscaping, highway and associated infrastructure works and access - THIS IS NOT A PLANNING APPLICATION

It was unanimously agreed that an Environmental Impact Assessment is required for the following reasons:

1. The Proposed Development meets the criteria for an EIA assessment against the 'Schedule 2' criteria and thresholds set out in the EIA Regulations
   The criteria are:

   i) The development includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwelling house development; or
   ii) The development includes more than 150 dwellings; or
   iii) The overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares

   Accordingly, the Proposed Development does meet the threshold set out in the regulations over 150 homes on a site exceeding 5 hectares in size.

2. The settlement of Failand consists of 320 homes, it is not credible to argue that the addition of 350 homes would not have a significant impact on the local environment.

3. The proposed development is on land designated as greenbelt. Development on Green Belt land is generally discouraged and requires very special circumstances to be approved. These circumstances must be so compelling that they outweigh the harm to the Green Belt's purpose. Special circumstances have not been demonstrated.

4. The site has been evaluated by North Somerset Council as part of the Local Plan 2040 and has been determined to be less sustainable "https://map.n-somerset.gov.uk/HardConstraintsLessSustainableSites.html".

5. The site is situated adjacent to Ashton Hill Plantation, which is classified by North Somerset Council (NSC) as a "Site of Nature Conservation Interest." The character of the site would change from open farmland and woodland edge to suburban gardens. Wildlife such as owls, buzzards, sparrow hawks, kestrels and farmland birds would be substantially affected.

6. The environmental impact of the infrastructure required (power, water and sewage) for a Failand development will be significant and should be properly evaluated as part of the EIA. in particular, sewage from Failand's 320 homes currently flows through a main drain that is at capacity. The drain is routed through Belmont Coombe which is situated within registered historic park and garden. It is unclear how an additional 350 homes could be accommodated without significant environmental impact.

7. The National Trust estate of Tyntesfield has a nationally important roost of Lesser Horseshoe Bats and the site is in the North Somerset and Mendip Bats Special Area of Conservation Consultation Zones for Lesser and Greater Horseshoe Bats. The proposed development is within 350m of Tyntesfield Plantation woodland.

8. Proposals at this site have previously been dismissed at appeal in 2009 for the following reasons:

   - The effect on the Green Belt was considered harmful by encroachment into the countryside;
   - Impact on the character and appearance of the area;
   - Development would have an adverse impact on the highway network;
   - Not considered to be a sustainable location that benefits from a range of travel modes;
   - A lack of supporting facilities and services, commensurate with the proposed size of development and Failand; and.
   - Impact of habitat protection, protected species and biodiversity

9. In judging if the environmental impact of the development is significant, consideration should be given to the cumulative effects. Within Wraxall and Failand Parish there are two other proposed developments in excess of 300 homes. The combined effect of these developments will fundamentally change the rural nature of the parish and the impact should be fully considered as part of the EIA.

End of minutes.