

Minutes of a Special General Meeting of The Covington Parish Meeting held in the Village Hall, on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2019 at 7.30pm  
Under Standing orders 20.3.i.

**Attended by:** Jonathan Baker, Lee & Karen Barley, Rex Bigger, Michael Brown, Richard & Mo Brown, Glyn & Dianne Clark, John Fells, Fiona McCullough-Fells, David & Joan Hackney, Stephen & Gill Holmes, Pete & Carole Ludford, Karen Luscombe, Jack Luscombe, Sophie Luscombe, Robert Maclaren, Simon & Deirdre Peck, Graham & Sylvia Platt, Sarah Schofield, Peter & Sue Sewell, Polly Sewell, Paul & Dawn Spencer, Marilyn Turrell, Oliver Williams, Simon Williams, Rupert Williams and Hannah Ward, Simon Luscombe (Chairman) and Shirley Mathews (Clerk) (38 people: over 50% of the electorate, and 57% of the homes)

**Chairman's opening remarks**

The Chairman opened the meeting by reminding those present that they were meeting to consider an outline planning application. Also that there were only three options to respond. Recommend Approval, recommend Refusal or make no observation.

This meeting was a little different to usual meetings as the applicants were not present.

This is why the Clerk had asked for questions prior to the meeting, to enable the applicants to provide answers.

The questions and answers had been circulated along with the body of an email sent by the applicants to a number of residents.

The Clerk had also made the following documents available from the Council website for those present if required

- a. Floor plans    b. Site plan
- c. Site plan with designated trees    d. Relevant maps

Also available from Parish records

- a. Map of Covington conservation area
- b. Map of Covington settlement boundary
- c. Map of Covington sewerage scheme

1.     **Apologies for absence** were received from Doris Barley, Michael Mathews and John Turrell

2.     **To receive any Declarations of Interest** (Personal, Prejudicial or Predetermined)  
None were declared

3.     **To consider Planning Application 19/01848/OUT**

Outline Application for residential development for up to four dwellings with landscaping reserved. Land north of Woodland House, Keyston Road, Covington

Twenty different residents contributed to the discussion.

One supported the proposal, the remainder expressing concerns or reasons to refuse, including; The Small Settlement and built-up Area guidelines; Sustainability; Social Issues, the necessity for affordable smaller housing for young and elderly alike and Highway safety.

A précis of which will be included in the response to the Huntingdon District Council – see below.

4.     **To agree recommendation**

1.It was proposed by Glyn Clark that the meeting recommend approval, this did not receive a seconder and so fell.

2. It was proposed by Rex Bigger and seconded by Sarah Schofield that the meeting recommend refusal. On a 'show of hands' vote the motion was carried as follows

**FOR - 27. AGAINST - 2. ABSTAIN or not voted - 7**

Two teenagers attended who are not yet of the voting age

The Chairman & Clerk did not vote

The Clerk was asked to circulate the response to the council. This was not normal practice. Normally the minutes are displayed on the Parish Notice Board. However on this occasion the village would be circulated

**5. The Reasons were as follows;**

*Covington is a small settlement; the land concerned is outside the 'built up area' and the village considers it an excluded area.*

*Covington has no sustainability merits*

*The plan has no social issues merits.*

*Highway safety is a serious concern*

*The plan in no way complies with the Covington Planning Survey taken in 2012 in support of Huntingdonshire's Local plan to 2036*

*I attach the minutes of the meeting (attended by over 50% of the electorate and representing 57% of the homes), as a separate document, which shows the depth of concern in the village and enlarges on the issues listed above.*

- **Small Settlement**

Covington is classed as a small settlement in Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 as it has no services or facilities. The Local Plan makes no allocation for development in Small Settlements

- **Sustainability**

The Local Plan states that a development proposal within a built-up area of a Small Settlement will be supported where the amount and location of development proposed is sustainable.

This includes access to everyday services by walking, cycling and public transport. The proposed development does not meet the Local Plan's sustainability criteria.

This also includes the 'effect on the character of the immediate locality and the settlement as a whole'. Since the development makes provision for 16 vehicle spaces and no cycle storage, this would greatly add to the traffic movement within the village and would increase local environmental damage

- **Social Issues**

The proposed development does not support the following fundamental social issues highlighted in the Local Plan:

- The need for a range of attractive housing for older people.
- The need for housing suitable for smaller households.
- The need for more housing that is truly affordable.
- The need for local infrastructure to support development.

- The need to concentrate development in locations which provide, or have the potential to provide, the most comprehensive range of services and facilities

The properties are likely to be unaffordable for the young and old. The adjacent property (a four bedroom, three bathroom detached house) was valued in 2017 at **£750,000**. It is likely that the proposed five bedroom properties will sell at or above that figure.

The village needs properties for younger village families and the elderly to downsize

- **Covington: Built Up Area in Small Settlements**

The overwhelming opinions expressed in the meeting did not support any development of land outside the settlement boundary (whether or not the houses were affordable for first time buyers etc).

And it would be preferable if development proposals made within the settlement boundary could be for homes affordable for first time buyers, young people or the elderly.

The proposed development site is defined in table 4.85 of the Local Plan as being specifically excluded from the built up area of Covington as it would be classified as

*...Agricultural land, paddock, woodland, meadow, areas of water and natural habitats that penetrate the built form or sections of large residential curtilages where the character of the land primarily relates to the countryside...*

*These spaces can provide a visual buffer between built development and the open countryside, softening the visual impact and linking the built up area with its rural context. Large curtilages with grounds stretching away from the rest of the built up area are excluded to prevent sub-division of the plot for new development...*

*The built up area will exclude areas of open space, ..... paddocks..... Such land is generally considered to primarily relate to the countryside where it is surrounded by built development on less than two sides*

The land is entirely within the Conservation area

- **Highway Safety**

Access from the proposed development appears to be onto a bend in the village road, restricting visibility and potentially causing a hazard. Provision for 12 additional cars in the village would not help

- **The Covington Village Planning Survey as part of HDC's Local Plan**

The questionnaire results show villagers expressed a need for 2 bed small detached houses, 2 bed small semi detached or terraced houses. No respondents to the questionnaire expressed a need for large detached houses of 4+ bedrooms. Villagers strongly felt that development should be restricted to affordable housing deliberately targeted at first time and young buyers. The proposed development does not meet these criteria.

The Meeting closed at 8.20

