

Annual report of the Parish Council Planning Committee May 2020

The Parish Council has considered 118 planning applications over the course of the last twelve months - an increase of 10 from the previous year.

We have also seen an increase of tree works applications - 43, as opposed to only 28 in the previous year.

The Parish Council's planning committee cannot make decisions on planning applications and acts as an advising 'stakeholder' in its responses to the decision making New Forest District Council. The parish committee takes into account the opinion of planning officers and planning policy when discussing and deciding its decision but the most important consideration for the committee is the opinion of residents and as elected representatives of the village very careful note is taken of the local voice. Generally we find that we can reach a decision which agrees with that of the District Council. This year there have been 71 applications which we were supported by both the Milford Parish Council and NFDC and 12 applications to which we objected and these objections were upheld by the District. Only 2 applications were supported by the Parish but refused by NFDC. Occasionally we will be faced with an application to which we object but which NFDC grants - this year has seen 3 such issues.

If the planning officer's judgment is different to that of the Parish then the application will go to the District's planning committee where the Parish can be represented in a three minute address to district councillors. Parish Councillors will attend such meetings on a rota basis. The Parish is also represented at appeal hearings either at public hearings or in writing.

There are major developments in course of construction in Milford on Sea, or planned for the village. The Parish Council continues to monitor the site known as MoS 1 adjacent to the school and has recently agreed to take ownership of the land next to the site which as public open space is a condition of the planning consent. When circumstances allow public meetings the Parish will be consulting with the village as to the use of this land and what facilities the residents may wish to see there.

The Parish has been represented at meetings with inspectors and planning officers in connection with the new local plan and we shall be vigorously involved when the site (MoS2) in Manor Road may come to application stage. At the forefront of our 'wish list' for the village is affordable housing for local people, either rented or on a part ownership basis. We shall continue to fight for such housing and lobby for a change to the existing situation whereby a developer can claim, and prove, that a requirement for affordable housing is financially not viable to be included at a level which current policy determines. As we have seen with MoS1 the policy for 50 per cent of the dwellings to be affordable has been very much overturned on the viability argument and the village need for affordable family dwellings has been sidestepped.

The Parish continues to have concerns about the Solent Grange development in New Lane and is carefully watching and reporting any potential breaches of the permitted use of this site. The public's awareness and interest in this site is of great benefit to the Parish Council.

We have consistently worked with residents to make sure their voice is heard especially, for instance, with regard to the development at the rear of the White Horse, the land behind Britannia Thai and Lytton Lawn caravan and camp site.

As chair I am expertly supported by Sarah Pitt, our deputy parish clerk and by my vice chair Cllr Patricia Banks. I wish to make especial note of my thanks to Sarah and Patricia for their wisdom, experience and efficiency. I also take this opportunity to record my thanks to my colleague councillors for their support of me in my role as chair.

Sue Whitlock