

Village Meeting 5.3.16

Steve Hepworth, as Chair of the Parish Council, outlined the situation regarding the proposed Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) for the Honeystreet sawmill.

He said that the NDO, which the Parish Council had initially favoured, had run into a number of problems.

There had been contradictory advice from Wiltshire Council which had at first encouraged the PC to take the NDO route but had later encouraged a standard planning application.

There was disagreement over the area to be covered, whether Honeystreet itself, or the whole parish. There was a case for including the proposed developments at the Wharf and at Fernbank together with the sawmill. But the PC did not have the time or the resources to deal with three separate schemes and three separate developers. Furthermore, doubts had emerged over the amount of control an NDO would provide. And it had emerged at a late stage that the sawmill had not been actively marketed as a going concern. For all these reasons the Steering Group handling the process was recommending to the Parish Council to withdraw from the process. It was open to the site owner to pursue development by a standard planning application.

Charles Reiss, as Secretary to the Steering Group, added that the questionnaire recently sent to all in the parish would still be of value since in any planning application local opinion would be "a material consideration."

A questioner asked how far it had been established that the existing sawmill was no longer viable. Steve Hepworth replied that the sawmill would have to be advertised on the open market before any change of use could be considered.

Another questioner was concerned that the questionnaire seemed to assume that development must happen and did not sufficiently allow for an alternative. Charles Reiss pointed out that one of the housing options was "zero." The results clearly showed that the main worry of local residents was "overdevelopment" closely followed, on the other hand, by "dereliction."

A questioner thanked the Parish Council for its efforts. Steve Hepworth pointed out that the next meeting of the PC would be next Thursday and that the public was welcome to attend. There being no further questions, the meeting closed.
