

SHERIFFHALES PARISH COUNCIL

*Including the communities of Sheriffhales, Lilyhurst, Burlington, Heath Hill,
Weston Heath, Redhill and Chadwell*

Clerk to the Council: Jennifer Cree,

35 Kingsford Park, Wolverley, Worcestershire, DY11 5TA

Telephone: 07512292579 Email: clerk@sheriffhalesparishcouncil.uk

Website: www.sheriffhalesparishcouncil.uk

15th January 2021

Shropshire Planning

Shirehall Abbey Foregate

Shrewsbury

Dear Mr Mike Davies

Background and Introductory remarks

Sheriffhales Parish Council has previously submitted comments on this planning application which was originally submitted in May 2020. It has also already commented and objected on two other related applications: the erection of an equestrian building west of Manor farm 20/00822/FUL and a proposed new pig farm development south-west of Manor farm 20/00820 as these three proposals are interlinked.

We had as part of our original response requested a detailed Transport Statement as none was provided initially with application 20/00821/OUT. We are grateful this has been provided at last.

We would note again that the site itself is in a Parish that Shropshire Council does itself not consider suitable for sustainable development. Secondly, the development is not in line with criteria used in the NPPF and exceptionality allowing this Planning framework to be set aside has still not been shown. Finally, the site of the development is located adjacent to a Conservation Area and the most congested area in the Village. Traffic generated can only travel through this congested area by using one or two very restricted roads (The Rock or Church Lane) to reach the B 4379 main route in and out of Sheriffhales.

We would also reiterate that all the three developments when considered together have traffic effects that increase complexity with varying impact in the area under review but also across a wider part of our locality. The report specifically states the conclusions within it are in the context of the housing development specifically and is not intended to consider inputs from these related developments though does in fact touch on some of these effects when modelling.

The Parish Council stated in its initial response to 20/00821/OUT that a description of the highway

network in the vicinity of the development would show the significant impact that this development and traffic associated with it would have on the existing highway resource, village and school. We believe the report confirms this.

Our response also noted there were no sustainable public transport links present and that the development did not enhance site accessibility by sustainable travel in any way.

The Parish Council also commented then that there was already significant local concern around increased traffic arising from the development affecting the way the School operated and the impact of this increased activity on local traffic pinch points. The Parish Council further noted then that some traffic generated by the equestrian business would still be routed past the development and the school and this would not be mitigated in any way by the housing development.

The report circulated has been considered against these comments and specific concerns which continue to be expressed within our community.

Specific Comments on Report Chapter1: Introduction

1.4 This states the report is intended to only consider the proposed residential developments impacts.

For the reasons mentioned above this weakens the report given the complexity of the traffic impacts of the three related developments.

Specific Comments on Report Chapter2: Access Sustainability and The Road Network

2.1-2.2 The comments in paragraph 1 and 2 are noted. Figure2 shows the highway into the Conservation Area. There is no footway here and the area around the lodges at the junction with Sheriffhales Drive is well known for flooding. A tributary of the River Worfe runs under the road near the speed limit terminal sign. The right-hand boundary of the conservation area is just before the sign and the Manor itself listed and within the conservation area is on the left. The modelled increase in highway traffic movement across this area past the houses mentioned is a considerable increase in traffic as mentioned in other consultee responses and will impact significantly and have a detrimental impact on these households. Traffic will feed into the narrow area beyond by the Village Hall School and Church impacting here also. The images provided may give a misleading impression of this as these other areas are not shown.

Since farming activity locally in this area has changed the unadopted road (originally known as Sandy Lane) which continues West towards the A5, has not been maintained along its full length and has deteriorated. The Western end of this road is intended to be used as the main access to and from the new Pig Unit and possibly used also for some of the traffic generated by the proposed Equestrian Facility which is located further along this Road closer to the housing development. This route is stated as strategically unimportant although detail on using this route to mitigate traffic impact in the centre of the village has not been considered as an option in Chapter 4.

2.3-2.4 The comments in these paragraphs are noted. Both Church Lane and The Rock are used to enter and exit the centre of the village as mentioned but we certainly do not agree that there is no safety concern in using these roads as routes given the projected increase in traffic arising from the development. There is already a significant traffic speeding issue on The Rock which narrows towards the B4379 junction and traffic currently must stop on the steep hill down to the centre of

the village to allow safe passing. There is no footway or space for one on this road. More pedestrian traffic uses Church Lane which has limited footway availability but does have traffic generated by the Village playing field entranceway and is congested at school times.

2.3-2.4 The selected camera angles in Figure 3 exaggerate the width of the road both next to the Church on Church Lane and at the bottom of The Rock. The latter picture is just before the sharp bend junction with Church Lane.

The statement that narrow sections of either road provide an element of traffic calming is surprising and certainly not accepted as the reality on the ground. In addition we would agree that increasing congestion on these roads is a highly likely impact and clearly undesirable.

2.5 We note the comments and do not agree. The visibility at the crossroads junction at the top of The Rock is significantly restricted to the North. Vehicles travelling south towards Shifnal accelerate out of the village across this junction. Sightlines at the top of Church Lane South are not optimal and the traffic calming in place on the B4379 just to the north of this junction directs traffic into the middle of the road here. The B4379 is increasingly busy at all times of day but particularly early mornings, school times and at the end of the working day. Traffic using this route has increased since traffic lighting the B4379 A5 junction. The data on collisions in the centre of the village does not record the fatal traffic accident that occurred over 5 years ago and in part resulted in the traffic calming now introduced.

2.7-2.11 This assessment of Sustainability and Transport is noted. The Census data provided and reproduced here explains why Shropshire Council considers Sheriffhales unsuitable for significant development and evidences our assertion that the balance of our community will be disrupted by development in the site this application refers to. Our small community has non-existent Public Transport Links currently with one bus on Saturday no cycle route and limited car parking in Shifnal. We do agree motor vehicles are essential to get to employment, services and major transport infrastructure. We consider that the Local traffic impacts generated from housing development at the Manor Farm site is particularly problematic given the site location in our community. Modelling later in the report unfortunately significantly underestimates this impact. There is unfortunately no evidence to support a community gain in sustainability in this submission with an emphasis on travelling out to interact with services or transport links.

Specific Comments on Report Chapter3: Development Traffic

3.1 The comments in this introductory paragraph confirm the importance of considering the traffic impacts of this development together with the traffic impacts of the other interlinked planning applications.

3.2-3.5 We note that the traffic movements in these two paragraphs are “derived” and essentially rough estimates. They derive from several assumptions made both of farming activity at the proposed new Pig Unit and of the impacts of loading the highway network by residential development. We have concern that the car ownership, number of journeys generated, and infrastructure impact is underestimated given trends in car ownership, type of housing being considered and distance to services. Given the location of the residential development near listed property, conservation area and some distance from the B4379 and with difficult road access to this main road at least one statutory consultee has already commented unfavourably on development at this site. We are strongly concerned that the local impacts to residential property close to the development and certainly the impacts in the centre of the village are underestimated. We have noted that no modelling of impacts should the scale of the Residential development or the size of Pig

Unit change is included in the report. A full transport assessment will be required in this event. The data as presented does not suggest the housing development supports the national or Shropshire's sustainability agenda or indeed benefits our community locally. Other consultees have noted this.

With respect to Traffic movements, we note that trip vehicle rates are shown in Fig 6 but feel these must underestimate the generated activity itself and hence the effects on other highway activity .

3.5-6 We note the acceptance that there are issues arising from the housing development that will require infrastructure improvement.

We are concerned that the modelled increases of traffic density on The Rock and Church Lane arising from the development at a split of 70%/30% are not realistic and are presumably based on assumptions relating to traffic flows to the B4379 north and south from the development not just School or Village Hall activity. We remain concerned that safety and congestion on both roads will increase.

Specific Comments on Report Chapter4: Local Highway Improvements

4.1-4 We note the observations concerning traffic congestion and safety in the area around the school. It is accepted that congestion already is a problem which is significant at times given the popularity of the school. A Montessori preschool group also meets regularly in the Village Hall immediately next to the School. Though not mentioned pedestrian traffic is also considerable at these times as a considerable number of families do walk to and from both schools. There is significant housing north and northeast of the B4379 between The Pinfold and Kettlemore Lane and also further off Church Lane in the Evergreens. This pedestrian traffic uses the only safe route to these schools and Playing Field down Church Lane. Being able to walk to school in our rural community is valued. It also meets a fitness agenda as does the School or Preschool when using our Playing field for games or when exploring our local environment. Pedestrian traffic can only be safe if traffic levels are low. The suggested routes from the development increase the use of Church Lane considerably. It is unclear how much an off-road parking solution would mitigate road congestion in the area around the school. Traffic is still generated on both roads out of the area even if congestion due to Parking is reduced.

4.5-7. We note this paragraph concerns a proposal that a Parking area be created distant from the centre of the village where the School is located. This site is opposite Sherifhales Manor and just beyond the area subject to flooding. From the map provided it is also, in part, just within the conservation area and some distance from the school entrance. We infer from previous comment in 4.4 this proposal aims to significantly reduce the congestion presently occurring around the school and to be considered a community benefit. We infer an additional benefit to the developer might also, if successful, be to facilitate traffic flows through this area to the B4379 should the development go ahead as it has been accepted that the increased volume of traffic created by the development will make congestion worse.

We note that should this proposal be accepted some way of entry and exit from the lay-by site is required. We are unclear how given the width of the road if traffic is expected to "three-point turn" in the entrance way to the new development, use the private entrance way to the Manor or reverse down the road to Sherifhales Drive and reverse there. Children arriving or leaving by car still need to walk through a congested area.

The total volume of traffic using Church Lane and The Rock is not mitigated in any way by this proposal. It further creates an additional congested area and further nuisance to residents and indirectly impacts the conservation area appearance.

This proposal does not result in significant mediation of traffic impacts on our community or community betterment of any significance. We object to this proposal.

Final Comments

We are grateful for the opportunity to review this full report, the assessments within it and the proposal for community betterment. Unfortunately, our concerns related to this housing development and its impacts are, if anything, greater now we have read the report, the assumptions made within it and the negative impacts associated with development as submitted. Our objections to these proposals remain for the reason set out in our various written submission.

Yours faithfully

Miss J Cree
Clerk to the Council