

Housing Growth in Martley

An Open Meeting was held in the Memorial Hall on 15th Oct with representatives of local developers regarding a proposed new housing development on 3.7 hectares of agricultural land behind the Post Office, Central Stores, Martley Garage and The Crown Inn.

The hall was packed with Martley residents.

Leading the meeting was Mr J. Cornwell, of Bell Cornwell, Chartered Town Planners, together with two architects, Henry Welton, lawyer for Marsden Developments, and a representative from Affordable Housing.

No one from MHDC was present.

A draft layout of the housing development was on view.

Martley lies within the West Midland Regional Strategy. We were told that in the Malvern Hills Local Plan, there are 4 categories. Martley is a Category 1 settlement area. The Housing requirements required for S. Worcestershire, including Worcester City, Malvern Hills and Wychavon are higher than was previously expected.

The plan is to build 35 Affordable houses, plus 48 "Open Market" houses, 2 Work/live in Units, a new Doctors' Surgery and an open children's play area. This would result in a 10% population increase.

In a sometimes heated exchange, many strong opinions were voiced, and many questions asked. Below is a list of the main points raised;

- **Flooding**; The developers have consulted SUDS, and a full assessment and report had been made.
- **Increased traffic**; Consultations had been made, and the site considered suitable.
- **Drainage including Sewage**; Existing Sewage Works were considered adequate.
- **Schools**; This has not been discussed.
- **Ecological impact**; An ecological survey had been carried out. Nothing in the report suggested the land in question was unsuitable for development. (WWT was not consulted in this).

Many people were deeply concerned about the visual impact that so many new houses would have on this unspoilt part of the village. The issues of additional noise and light pollution were also raised.

There will be 2 acres of allotments provided, but when asked if this was separate, or only as part of the overall development, they were unable to confirm. 2 acres was not considered sufficient, considering there are over 16 people already requesting a plot.

The question of building on Brownfield sites was raised. Mr Cornwell said this was not possible, even if a site was available.

When asked how environmentally "green" the proposed building will be, the architects said it was too early on to be precise. But it is likely that there will be rainwater/grey water storage put in place, as well as solar panels, and possibly Ground Source Heat Pumps.

It was generally agreed that Martley needed some affordable housing for local families. It was also unanimously agreed that farmland of this sort should continue to grow food, rather than houses and consequently more mouths to feed. The desire and need for locally grown and sourced food is increasing, so in such a rural area, this should be of high importance.

Most agreed that a development as large as this would result in at least 100 more vehicles using our already congested country roads and lanes, as well as the ultimate urbanisation of a rural village.

If you feel strongly about any of the issues raised here, please contact Martley Parish Council, and/or write in person to Malvern Hills District Council;

Planning Applications (Development Control) ... Malvern Hills District Council. Postal address: **Council** House, Avenue Road. **Malvern** WR14 3AF.

SOME USEFUL FACTS:

- Martley falls within the South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy (SWJCS). This is the single biggest planning document in Worcestershire, and will provide strategic direction for all development in the southern districts.

- There are proposals to build 24,500 new homes in the three districts of Malvern hills, Wychavon, & Worcester City.
- A series of consultation events will be taking place throughout the towns and the villages between now and the end of March 2010. There was one in Upton recently. A timetable for the villages is currently being prepared and it is an opportunity for local needs for such uses as allotments, open space, community facilities etc to be identified.

web; www.swjcs.org

- On the Malvern Hills District Local Plan, the area put forward for development is in area QL24, defined as an Area of Outstanding Landscape Value.
- Area (shaded yellow) QL17, (known locally as The Nubbins), lies on the boundary of the proposed development. This indicates a Site of Regional or Local Wildlife Importance, and also a Regionally Important or Geomorphological Site.
- This area (The Nubbins) is part of the nationally important Abberley and Malvern Hills Geopark.
- Worcestershire Wildlife Trust is working alongside the three councils to ensure that all developments put forward in the lifetime of the Local Plan will be sensitive to its local environment and provide significant enhancements for wildlife as a matter of course, and not as an add-on extra.

Contact Steve Bloomfield, WWT Planning Officer, on 01905 754919, or by email; stevenb@worcestershirewildlifetrust.org

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