

**TOLLESHUNT KNIGHTS PARISH COUNCIL**

**Parish clerk: Miss V Banyard**

**21 D’Arcy Way Tolleshunt D’Arcy Maldon Essex CM9 8UD**

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**Application no: 21/00825/OUT**

**Proposed development in land east and west of Top Road Tolleshunt Knights**

The Parish Council **strongly objects** to this application on the following grounds:

Sustainability

The sites lie outside the development boundary of Tolleshunt Knights in an area which is remote from essential services and facilities. The Maldon District Local Plan correctly describes Tolleshunt Knights as a “small village containing few or no services and facilities, with little or no access to public transport, and very little or no employment opportunities” (Policy S8). There is a Village Hall in Top Road (which has no pedestrian footways) but this is mainly used for private functions. It does currently accommodate a play school and a few local clubs, but apart from this there are no other facilities in the village.

The nearest centre providing essential services and facilities is Tiptree, the centre of which is at a distance by road of nearly 3 kilometres from the sites. The sites are linked to Tiptree by an incomplete network of pedestrian footways, requiring the crossing of Brook Road at a point close to a sharp bend, two further crossings and negotiation of the Brook Road/Tolleshunt D’Arcy Road mini roundabout. There have been speeding problems in Brook Road for a number of years, as evidenced by letters of complaints from residents, discussions at Parish Council meetings and results of Trucam speed patrols. Therefore it is very unlikely that the majority of residents of the proposed development, especially those with young children or mobility issues, would use either cycling or walking as a practical means to access the services in Tiptree and beyond. It is also hard to see how, as cited in the application, the network of public rights of way in the area could be used to access these services as there is no complete or direct route into Tiptree by public footpaths.

The irregular 91 bus service into Tiptree and Witham would also provide a limited means of accessing facilities and employment. Residents would therefore have to rely heavily on private vehicle ownership which goes against government guidelines in the National Planning Policy Framework and the Maldon District Local Plan Policy D2 which seeks to “reduce the need to travel, particularly by private vehicles.” For those residents without their own cars there is the potential for social isolation and the resulting mental health issues. Whilst the affordable housing proposed in the development would be an asset to the village, the lack of facilities and the minimal public transport would make access to essential services difficult for those residents.

The Parish Council is also concerned at the applicant’s statement that the proposed widening of Top Road towards the junction with Brook Road would “encourage” prospective residents of the site to

avoid using Top Road towards its junction with Tolleshunt D'Arcy Road. Any increase in traffic in this part of Top Road, which is narrow, with poor visibility and has no pedestrian footways, would put members of the public at risk from vehicles leaving the new development.

Tiptree is currently undergoing a significant level of development, either recently built, approved or in the pipeline. Its medical facilities are already inadequate to meet its current needs, three local surgeries are no longer taking new patients, and the addition of 253 persons from this proposed development in Tolleshunt Knights could leave residents without proper reasonable access to doctors and dentists. Furthermore, the catchment areas for Tiptree primary schools do not extend across both the proposed sites.

*Appeal decisions relevant to this application*

***APP/X1545/W/18/3208827 dated 7.3.2019***

*Rosemead D'Arcy Road Tolleshunt Knights (distance by road to centre of Tiptree approx 2 km)*

*Demolition of stable block and erection of detached bungalow with associated parking.*

***Appeal dismissed*** – “Even in the event that the Council is unable to demonstrate a five year land supply of deliverable housing land .... it does not represent sustainable development”.

***APP/X1545/A/14/2217339 dated 10.10.2014***

*Land off Blackthorn Way Tolleshunt Knights (distance by road to centre of Tiptree approx 2 km).*

*Outline application for 6no detached dwellings.*

***Appeal dismissed*** – “The Council concedes that it does not have an adequate supply of specific deliverable sites to provide five years' worth of housing..... The harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and the likely additional trip generation would fail to accord with the environmental role of sustainable development. The proposal would, therefore, not amount to sustainable development”.

Colchester Borough Council Application no: 201401 – decision dated 8.7.2021

Brook Hall Cottages Factory Hill Tiptree (lying immediately adjacent to the boundary with Tolleshunt Knights) – distance by road to the centre of Tiptree approx 1.75 km)

Outline application for six detached bungalows, with associated access, layout, parking, amenity and landscaping.

**Refuse permission:** “The application site is in an unsuitable location for housing having regard to access to services and facilities. The development would fail to comply with policies H1 and SD1 of the Core Strategy which together seek to direct growth towards sustainable and accessible locations where the countryside would be affected .... The proposal would inevitably have a suburbanising effect upon the environment”.

Maldon District Council decisions relevant to this application

OUT/MAL/17/00364 DATED 15.6.2017

*Rear of Strawberry Lane Tolleshunt Knights (distance by road to centre of Tiptree approx 1.75 km)*

*Outline planning to erect up to 27 dwellings and form access road onto Brook Close*

**Refuse permission** – *“The proposed development ... would have an urbanising effect resulting in an unwelcome visual intrusion into the undeveloped countryside, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the rural area. Further, the application site is not considered to be in a sustainable location”.*

FUL/MAL/20/00825

*Woodacre 38 D’Arcy Road Tiptree (distance by road to centre of Tiptree approx 1.75 km)*

*Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 8no new C3 dwellings*

**Refuse permission** – *“The proposed development would substantially alter the character of the area and have an unacceptable visual impact on the countryside and the locality through the urbanisation and domestication of the site, representing an urban sprawl of built form outside the settlement boundary”.*

Highways infrastructure

The present highways infrastructure does not meet current demands, especially the route from the proposed sites via Tiptree and on to Kelvedon and access to the A12, where long queues frequently occur during peak hours. The Parish Council agrees with the response by the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group that any additional slow moving traffic through the centre of Tiptree would lead to further pollution and difficulties for pedestrians. With more developments going forward in Tollesbury and Tiptree, and the above development proposed for Top Road, these problems will only increase.

Effect on the appearance and character of the village of Tolleshunt Knights

The proposed development will have an adverse and urbanising effect on the rural character of Tolleshunt Knights and, if all houses are fully occupied will lead to a minimum increase in the village population of 22%. Tolleshunt Knights does not have the infrastructure or facilities to support a development of this size. There are also concerns about light pollution, given that at present the area is a “dark” space.

Flooding issues

Over a period of 22 years residents of Hawthorns and Blackthorn Way, which lie on the western perimeter of the western site, and properties in Brook Road which back onto the site, have regularly suffered severe problems with waterlogging and flooding caused by run off from the proposed site.

The pumping station cannot cope with the current demands and Anglian Water work on the station up to six times a year to deal with issues of sewage and backing up of the brook.

In its Consultation response to the application Anglian Water states that “the proposed development will lead to an unacceptable risk of flooding downstream We therefore highly recommend that you (the applicant) engages with Anglian Water to develop in consultation with us a feasible drainage strategy”.

The Parish Council is most concerned that any increase in the built form will inevitably cause more disruption.

#### The Monastery of St John The Baptist

The Orthodox Monastery of St John the Baptist was founded in 1959 in Rectory Road Tolleshunt Knights, and it is now the largest Orthodox monastery in the United Kingdom. It is also unique in that it is a mixed community of both monks and nuns. It lies within 200 metres of the eastern boundary of the eastern site. The monastery, with its focus on inner ascetism, has always played an active part in village life, and welcomes visitors of all faiths from the UK and beyond. Visitors have described it as “wonderfully peaceful ... an oasis of peace ... a place of great holiness”. The Parish Council is greatly concerned at the adverse impact on the peace and tranquillity of the monastery and its community with such a large development proposed so close to its location.

For the reasons given above the Parish Council asks that Maldon District Council refuses this application.