

Good Morning

I am George Weeks - Chairman of Okeford Fitzpaine Parish Council

My question concerns the Council's refusal, as landowners, to agree to a small parcel of land at Mary Gardens Okeford Fitzpaine being designated as Local Green Space in the Okeford Fitzpaine Neighbourhood plan.

The site is used as an informal play area for children for the adjacent social housing and has been used in this way for many years.

The District Council has already had two previous planning applications for the site refused on the grounds of its amenity value to the village and ensuring compliance with the NDDC Local plan policies - so given that nothing has changed there appears little prospect of a further application succeeding.

In our view a change in the District council's economic circumstances does not constitute a sole reason to override two planning refusal decisions so it is hard to understand why council officers think that a further planning application could possibly be successful.

The Neighbourhood plan proposes 58 new homes in sustainable locations without the need for the development of this site.

Any income from commercialisation of this very small asset would not be material to the finances of District council and even less so in the context of the proposed unitary authority. Further it would be largely wiped out by the costs involved in an appeal that the Parish council would certainly make in the unlikely event of a successful application. Leaving aside the obvious conflict of interest arising from the District council approving development on its own asset that would need to be examined by the local government ombudsman when challenged by the residents of the village, a further legal cost..

The effect of this lack of cooperation from NDDC is to delay the progress of our plan, and in our view the District council expending further resource on yet another planning application and even employing planning consultants as has been indicated to me, is a gross unnecessary waste of your resource.

Overall this persistence with this action goes totally against the spirit of the Localism Act

My question is - has the Full Council approved this refusal, and how?, if so what are their reasons?

I have prepared a fuller briefing paper that I understand has been distributed to members of Council for information in advance of the meeting and happy to take any questions or observations that you may have

I am looking to you for swift solution

Thank you

The CIL/ S106 income to NDDC from the planned housing will certainly far exceed that from commercialising this site