**PL/2025/03116**

**COMMENTS FROM BISHOPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL**

**Summary**

**Bishopstone Parish Council:**

1. **does not object to the use of the site for housing purposes but does object to the scale of the development proposed in this application because it would:**
* **be contrary to the policies set out in Wiltshire’s Development Plan for small villages; and**
* **have a detrimental effect on the appearance of the landscape in an area designated as a National Landscape.**
1. **objects to the proposed layout of the site because it would:**
* **be poorly integrated with the residential groups on either side; and**
* **create additional traffic and road safety hazards through the proposed direct access onto the High Road.**

**Reasons**

Bishopstone Parish Council considered this planning application at its meeting on 15th May 2025. This followed a separate and well attended public meeting to discuss these proposals held on 9th May 2025.

1. **Use of the site for housing and the number of homes proposed**

Bishopstone village has few local facilities and is not the most sustainable location for new development. This is why, in both the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy and the proposed Local Plan (2024), it is designated as a “small” village which “may accommodate some very modest development to respond to local needs and to contribute to their vitality”. Specifically, Policy 2 of the proposed Local Plan says:

*“At Small Villages infill development for housing, employment or services and facilities within the existing built area will be supported where it respects existing character and form of the settlement, does not elongate the village or consolidate an existing sporadic loose knit area of development related to the settlement”.*

This formulation is similar to previous versions of the development plan and was the background to the preparation of the informal Village Plan produced by the community in Bishopstone in 2015 and which is quoted in the submitted Design and Access Statement. That was an attempt to identify the “built areas” within which infill development might be appropriate. These include the site the subject of the application.

Whilst the site might be suitable for some infill development, the Parish Council considers that this needs to be of appropriate scale and to respect the character and form of the settlement. A development of 15 homes is equivalent to about 6% of the number of dwellings in the village and is likely to be a similar proportion in terms of population. It is by far the biggest development proposed in the village in the last 50+ years and cannot be considered a “very modest” addition.

The Parish Council would support the provision of some affordable housing units to meet local needs (currently two registered with Homes4Wiltshire) as well as smaller market homes for sale that might be more affordable than other properties in the village and suitable for younger families. This would contribute to the vitality of the village which has 40% of its population over the age of 60 and 10% over 80.

Taking the above points into account, the Parish Council considers that the number of homes proposed in this application (15) is too many and that any development on this site should be in the range [6 – 8].

1. **Site layout**

Whilst the applicants justify the use of the site by reference to it being “infill” development the proposed layout is poorly integrated with the residential groups either side and does not tie into its existing context. The site is within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape and the Parish Council agrees with the comments from CCNL that there would be an adverse impact on the landscape from the houses proposed on the more elevated parts of the site. As the CCNL point out, this adverse impact would need to be taken into account should it be considered that the provisions in the National Planning Framework (2024) in relation to the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies to these proposals. A revised application with fewer homes, as suggested above, concentrated on the southern part of the site could reduce the landscape impact and assist integration with adjacent development – including via an access from Whitlock Rise (see below).

1. **Road access**

The Parish Council is particularly concerned about the road layout and the proposed access from the C12 (High Road). The Transport Statement by Bellamy Roberts, submitted with the application, seeks to show that the proposed development will not add to existing safety concerns in relation to road traffic along the High Road in Bishopstone. The Summary and Conclusions (para 7.2) state:

*“Having undertaken an analysis of the local highway network, it has been demonstrated that the development would not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety, and the residual cumulative impacts on the road would not be severe. The proposal would lead to fewer vehicle movements on the local highway network compared to the existing use, representing an improvement in highway safety.”*

The Parish Council considers that the traffic volumes, and movements in and out of the site created by the proposed development, are significantly underestimated in the consultant’s report. Trip rates have been calculated by reference to sub-urban locations in England (suburban area, edge of town, neighbourhood) where there is likely to be much greater choice of travel modes compared to a rural area such as Bishopstone

The general use bus service past the site (29/29a) has the following times (White Hart, Bishopstone):

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Towards |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Salisbury | 07.40 | 09.24 | 11.17 | 12.47 | 14.17 | 15.56 | 17.27 | 18.37 |  |
| Shaftesbury | 09.22 | 10.50 | 12.20 | 13.50 | 15.30 | 16.41 | 16.56 | 17.01 | 18.24 |

There is a reduced service on Saturday and no service on a Sunday.

Against this background the conclusion that: “the application site is located in an accessible area with genuine opportunities for residents and visitors of the site to travel to/from the application site using sustainable modes of transport.” cannot be justified. It is clear that most residents and visitors to the site would travel by car.

The statement that the proposal would lead to fewer vehicle movements on the local highway network compared to the existing use is clearly wrong by reference to the figures quoted in the report itself. This estimates that the existing use (or rather a theoretical future farm use) could generate between 14 and 18 two-way daily movements (para 6.7), whereas the scheme would generate 68 two-way daily movements (para 6.12).

The consultant’s analysis of traffic speeds along the High Road shows that the 85th percentile speeds are around 40mph, well above the 30mph zone limit. The applicant’s response to this is to offer to provide village “gates” to encourage vehicles to slow down. However, these would need to be sited at the entrances to the village, more than half a mile from the site, and are unlikely to have much influence on driver behaviour in the straight stretch of road past the site.

The Parish Council notes that the consultants make no mention of the proximity of the proposed site entrance to that which serves the adjacent development of Whitlock Rise some 80m to the west. The Parish Council considers that the combination of turning traffic movements at the two locations in close proximity is likely to create additional road safety hazards. Therefore, if housing development is to be undertaken on the application site, access should be from Whitlock Rise rather than the High Road. This removal of the site entrance from the High Road would also reduce the landscape impact of any development.

1. **Other issues**

The following additional points were made In public consultations:

1. Concern about over-looking of properties in Whitlock Rise. Deletion of the houses on the more elevated part of the site, together with additional planting, could address this issue.
2. If access is via Whitlock Rise there might be a case for creating a mini-roundabout at the junction with the High Road which would have a traffic calming effect on that road.

Bishopstone Parish Council

May 2025