**The Meeting of Ashen Parish Council was held**

**on Thursday 16th February 2023 at 7.15 pm in Ashen Village Hall**

**Minutes**

Present: Cllr R. Purchas (Chairman) (RP)

Cllr S Simpson (SS)

Cllr L Cockburn (LC) Cllr

Cllr O Palmer (OP)

**Public:**  13 members of the public were present

RP welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the principal purpose of the meeting was for the Council to consider its response to the consultation on planning application 23/00194/OUT in respect of land adjoining and to the rear of Hope Cottage, Ashen Road, Ashen. Before the Council meeting commenced there would be the opportunity for any member of the public to raise any points which they would wish the Council to consider. The Council had read the documents on the BDC website relating to the application including the objections that had been made. Members had also read the representations sent or copied direct to the Parish Council.

Mr R V Wilson from Beauregard next door to the site addressed the meeting. He referred to his objection letter and in addition to the points in his objection letter explained that for two years they had expected an application to be made. He referred to the trees on the site and the lack of detail in the application. He pointed out the inadequacy of the links to Clare some 0.9 miles away. He was concerned by the access and the lack of any details in respect of sight lines or otherwise. The northern site boundary which ran across the open field appeared simply to follow the flood zone boundary to Zone 1 which was therefore unreliable in respect of flood protection. There were no other representations made from members of the public before the

council meeting commenced.

**Council Meeting**

**22.53 Apologies for Absence**

Cllr S Mattholie (SM) and Karen Melville-Ross, Clerk to the Council (KMR)sent their apologies due to other prior commitments. Iona Parker the district councillor also sent her apologies for not attending but asked to be informed of the outcome of the meeting.

**22.54 Declarations of Interest**

The declarations are as registered and any additional interests will be recorded as necessary. No additional interests were declared.

**22.55 Planning application 23/00194/OUT in respect of land adjoining and to the rear of Hope Cottage, Ashen Road, Ashen.**

The Council reminded itself that in this case the application was outside the settlement boundary and as such contrary to the Local Plan adopted in 2022 including policy SP3. As such permission would normally be refused unless material indications indicated otherwise. That would include national policy. In this case there was no current five year supply of housing land so that national policy is that permission should be granted unless the adverse impact of the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development.

The Council debated the matter at length and came to the unanimous conclusion that an objection should be made to the grant of planning permission for the following reasons:

1. The site is outside the approved settlement boundary and within the countryside and as such contrary to the recently adopted Local Plan policy SP3 and other related policies.
2. The proposed development would constitute what would be back land development and would be wholly out of character with the other development in the vicinity. It would materially and unacceptably detract from the amenities of Hope Cottage which immediately adjoins the site and the area generally.
3. The site is part of a greenfield, agricultural field used for grazing within the immediate setting of the River Stour, forming part of an attractive view from the highway and elsewhere in the locality. The proposed development would cause significant harm in the loss of this open view and amenity.
4. The site is part of an area which has significant ecological value for its flora and fauna including otters, lizards, grass snakes and slow worms. This would be lost or seriously diminished as a result of the development.
5. The site has wholly inadequate pedestrian access to the nearest service facilities at Clare. Such footway as there is along Ashen Road is very narrow, largely overgrown and unsuitable for wheel chairs or a push chair or pram so that pedestrians have to walk in the road which carries significant amounts of traffic travelling at speed and is unsafe. There is no street lighting for most of the route.
6. While the application is in outline, it seeks permission for the access. As shown, the site would access directly onto this fast and narrow stretch of the main road where speed is subject to the national speed limit. The sight lines are very limited and the road has a history of accidents. In the absence of any details to demonstrate how safe access could be secured within land under the control of the applicant approval should be refused for the access in any event.
7. There are no details of the proposed foul drainage, which would be likely to have to be by a digester. In the absence of demonstration how this could be satisfactorily provided on the site approval should again be refused for this reason in any event.
8. The Council notes that the permission granted for the two dwelling to the west of the site was on land which had been developed for permanent residential development and was frontage development. There is no reasonable comparison with the proposal now under consideration.
9. For all the above reasons the development would be contrary to the development plan and any limited benefit in the provision of three dwellings would be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by its adverse effects as set out above both individually and taken together.

**22.56 Other Urgent Business**

There was none.

**22.57** **Next meeting to be held on 16th March 2023 at 7.15 pm in the village hall.**

This was confirmed.