

Woolverstone News Thursday 9th February 2017

Statement from Woolverstone Parish Council - 8th February 2017

Woolverstone Parish Council is deeply disappointed at the decision not to be given leave to appeal against the judgment made at the Judicial Review hearing in July 2016 to grant planning permission for 285 houses, 60 bed Care Home, Hostel and other commercial/retail buildings on the former HMS Ganges site, Shotley Gate. At a meeting last night, Woolverstone Parish Council resolved to take no further action in relation to the appeal. It was unanimously agreed that we have gone as far as we can reasonably and legally go. We have always acted in what we believe to be the best interests of the community as a whole. However, we are now satisfied that we have pursued those interests as far as we can. Nevertheless, our concerns remain that such a large residential development, added to the one currently being built at Shotley Marina, will make Shotley one of the largest villages in Babergh District. It remains our view that this will have a significant impact on the Peninsula, its services and those living in the villages along the B1456.

We have always supported the principle of development on the former HMS Ganges site. For us, the obstacle has been the size and scope of any proposed development and the significant impact it will have on the Shotley Peninsula, large parts of which are an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and our village of Woolverstone, which itself is a Conservation Area. For us, the significant increase in traffic volume has been our major concern and the nature and path of the B1456. Surprisingly, there has never been an independent assessment of the impact of the additional traffic despite an increase in traffic expected to be in the order of 30%.

Throughout this protracted process we have worked within the legal framework. At the start of the Judicial Review proceedings the judge agreed we had an "arguable case" and the Planning Permission decision was "finely balanced". It was a cause worth pursuing as the character of the Peninsula will be changed – for ever. When the Ganges development is completed, along with the Marina, there will be no going back. This was our only opportunity to test the District Council's decision and the grounds on which it was made.

It should not be forgotten that **all** the parishes on the Shotley Peninsula, including Shotley PC, worked together in 2006 to bring about a Public Inquiry into the proposal for 325 houses on the former Ganges site. This Public Inquiry found that the impact of the development was too substantial to be allowed. This decision was agreed by the then Secretary of State. In our view, this current plan is only 40 houses fewer and, with the addition of the Care Home and the hostel, the impact will

much the same. Unfortunately, the changes in planning guidance has worked in favour of this development.

The High Court judge determined that the Planning Committee of Babergh District Council was justified in allowing the development, albeit the HMS Ganges site is in an "unsustainable location" and the size and type of development is contrary to the Babergh's Development Plan and Core Strategy. However, in particular, the elected members were entitled to grant the planning permission in order to ensure the future protection of the Heritage Assets on the site including the Mast, notwithstanding the fact that had this been a truly significant feature, the Council could have taken enforcement action. Shamefully they did not.

We will now work to try to protect our community from the impact of such an increase in traffic as far as is possible. We will work with the Police and Suffolk County Council to calm the excess speeding through our village. We will seek to negotiate the best calming measures we can with the funding from the developers to mitigate the impact of such traffic increase on speed, noise, vibration, severance and pollution. We will work to find solutions to the damage caused to our Conservation Area assets through the village, like our low brick walls. We will seek to work with Haylink to ensure that the planned 6,000 HGV trips and associated construction traffic over the three year period of development abides by industry guidelines for the Health and Safety of the communities through which they pass and ensure they respect our speed limits. We will also continue to work with Freston PC to achieve a safe junction at Freston crossroads.

This has been a long journey. We would especially like to thank the many Peninsula residents who have supported and continue to support us throughout a very long and costly process.

We all recognise the Shotley Peninsula it is a unique and special place. We are privileged to live here. We need to work together to protect its beauty and quality of life for all of us, not only for ourselves but for those who come after us.