

THE PARISH PUMP

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The occasional Newsletter of Trimley St Martin Parish Council

www.trimley-st-martin.org.uk



**From the
Chair**

John Barker

Dear Resident

We feel it is important that you should be aware of your council's full response to the Suffolk Coastal Council Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy Consultation. The final issue of the detailed LDF could shape the development or over-development of our village for the next 10 to 15 years. Our response was influenced by observations that you have made to us from the time of the publication of the first "Trinity Vision" up to and including the Trimley Joint Parish Councils meeting, early in March and addressed by Andy Smith The Suffolk Coastal District Councillor who chairs the SCDC LDF Task Group.

This response has been reproduced below



Introduction

Parish councillors of Trimley St Martin Parish Council have studied the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation document and whilst they appreciate that it covers the whole of the Suffolk coastal district, our response is mainly directed at those issues that affect the peninsular area and in particular, the village of Trimley St Martin

As a council, we feel that the questions contained in the accompanying CSIO questionnaire are 'leading' and that they do not fully address the issues that are of most concern to this parish. Accordingly our response will be in the form of this statement.

- ◆ With regard to the Housing Distribution Options as shown on page 45 of the CSIO, it is impossible for this council to be able to choose an option from those given since they are based on out of date figures. The housing figures used are now almost three years out of date and therefore do not accurately reflect the current housing requirements that are relevant today. It is our opinion that businesses would not be permitted to use three year old statistics when making long term decisions and we therefore feel that SCDC should not be an exception to this rule.

- ◆ Furthermore, none of the options present a balanced share of housing around the district and with the exception of Option One, are all heavily favouring the Felixstowe and Trimleys with large scale housing numbers. We cannot possibly state a preference for any of the options shown for the reasons already given: our preference of course would be an option which would contain a fairer spread of housing development over the whole of the Suffolk district.
- ◆ With regard to the Settlement Hierarchy shown within this document on page 26 – 29, the two Trimley villages are shown to be in the settlement classification of a Major Centre. However, this is contrary to earlier documents which showed the Trimley villages as being in the Key Service Centre classification, which is described on page 25 as being: *settlements which provide the full range of specified facilities and are capable of sustaining some minor expansion, groups of houses and infilling.* Following attendance at a number of LDF workshops, our views were made quite clear that we considered our village to be of a Key Service classification and it causes us great concern that of all the 115 towns and villages contained within this hierarchy, only two have been changed for the purpose of this consultation, namely Trimley St Mary and Trimley St Martin. Having included them under the ‘umbrella’ of Felixstowe, they are now classed as a Major Centre capable of being a *settlement capable of development for strategic purposes*, which in the case of the two separate Trimley villages is clearly not the case. Your reference 2.1.38 states that: *The villages have however retained their individual character and provide a range of services for the benefit of residents, commensurate with that of key service centres.* If this is the case, why then have they been moved into the Major Centre classification? Your reference 2.1.39 states that the Trimley villages should continue to retain their separate identities, a point which was reinforced by Andy Smith at the public meeting held on the 14th March at the Trimley Memorial Hall, but can they retain these separate identities if the SCDC LDF Task Force continue to treat them as one with Felixstowe?
- ◆ Continuing with this theme, it would appear that the Trimley villages have been linked with Felixstowe, as you may have identified, rightly or wrongly that residents of the villages work, socialise, shop and are educated in the town, but surely this premise can also be said of its neighbouring town to the north, Ipswich? It appears to be a naive assumption that Felixstowe and the Trimleys should be classed as one and the same on this basis, it could easily be Trimley and Ipswich on the same basis. We strongly refute the idea that a village/town should be placed in the settlement hierarchy merely based on the live/work ratio. If this were the case, then why have Hasketon/Woodbridge not been linked or Snape with Aldeburgh?
- ◆ Turning now to actual types of housing development, whilst we are not against house building in the village, we do however feel that the amount and design should be commensurate with the type of location that is personified by Trimley St Martin, namely a rural village. Our submission sent to you in December 2002 in response to the Local Plan clearly defines our views on the housing requirements for the village and this is detailed under LP25 which states:
The restriction on estate type development is broadly acceptable, but some infilling and small groupings of new housing will be needed to answer the local need for housing, particularly of the affordable type.
- ◆ As a village, we feel that along with Trimley St Mary, we have already contributed a large amount of our green field land to large scale development with the creation of the Barrett estate in Trimley St Martin and the Bloor and Broseley estates in Trimley St Mary. A significantly large area of open countryside was lost forever when these estates were built and the current village envelope cannot take any more large scale housing development. As you are aware, a major local landowner has already submitted its ‘vision’ to you for proposed large scale housing development within both villages, but mainly in Trimley St Martin and this completely ‘blankets’ all greenfield and any brown field land currently available in the village; the only land unaffected is that which is protected by its status as an Area of Natural Beauty. Such large scale housing development would completely over-shadow any village identity that Trimley St Martin currently has and which in your own words ‘*should be retained*’.

- ◆ Whilst we appreciate that the current document is not 'site specific' we would like at this stage to point out that there is adequate land for development in the north of Felixstowe, namely adjacent to Candlet Road and that there are various brown field sites which are currently available in the town of Felixstowe and others, which were identified in the David Lock report, and which will be available for development in the near future. The consultation document states in point 2.6.39 (a) that *'priority should be given to previously developed (brownfield) land in preference to greenfield land'* and we feel that this should be the absolute lynchpin of the whole housing development strategy. We whole heartedly agree with the points a – c under 2.6.47 regarding Site Specific Selection nor do we feel that you cannot under-estimate the importance of points: (e) *Landscape Issues*, (f) *Impact on areas of wildlife importance* (g) *Impact on the identity of individual settlements* and (h) *The Local need for affordable housing* when relating these to the village of Trimley St Martin.

- ◆ With regard to the subject of infrastructure, we feel that this has been poorly addressed in the current document. With the exception of Option 1, all the other options show proposed large scale development for Felixstowe/Trimley but with regard to the Trimley villages, neither of these currently have the infrastructure to deal with the potentially huge increase in people living in the village. The one road which runs through both villages is already under pressure at peak times of the day and due to its physical limitations, it cannot be improved upon. The A14 which runs parallel is already heavily used by both private cars and HGV's who use it as their one and only route into Felixstowe. With large scale housing, will come a significant increase in vehicles within the village, which will put the local High Road under extreme pressure because whatever local authorities may like to think, people will always use their vehicles above public transport which can be unreliable and incompatible with work, school and leisure timetables. Whilst point 2.9.3 on page 89 addresses the fact that *'where current infrastructure is inadequate to meet the needs of new development, developers will be required to fund new or improved infrastructure that is directly related to those needs'*, the CSIO document does not state that such infrastructure will be put in place **prior** to housing development. We feel that this is imperative to the sustainability of an increased population within an area. With regards to Trimley St Martin, vastly improved physical infrastructure in the form of transport, utilities, waste disposal etc and community infrastructure such as health and social facilities, schools, play space, community halls etc would all need to be provided hand in hand with large scale development. If not, then there is the very real danger that the village would merely become a large 'dormitory' with people living in the village but carrying out their working and social activities in neighbouring towns such as Felixstowe and Ipswich, but suffering from poor living conditions which inadequate infrastructure would surely bring.

- ◆ Turning to the subject of green space. Both villages currently enjoy a rural setting, particularly in Trimley St Martin. Your point 2.9.12 states that *'It is widely accepted that green open spaces are an essential resource in creating an agreeable quality of life and that 'Green open spaces also contribute to the character of any urban or rural settlement'*. We feel that Trimley St Martin has been overlooked as one of the main current areas of large green space with its open countryside leading to the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the river foreshore. Its current amenity of large scale green open spaces provides exactly what in your own words is needed in creating an agreeable quality of life, *'a haven for wildlife, places for quiet relaxation, places for healthy exercise and focal points for community interaction'*. It is our opinion that this should not be forgotten when drawing up the new Local Development Framework.

- ◆ Whilst the parish council appreciates that there is a need for more housing within the Suffolk Coastal District, especially of the affordable type (although we are dubious that there can ever be such a thing), we do feel that more consideration should be given to its location. The CSIO document relies heavily on the idea that residents should live close to their places of employment and cites the Port and its associated businesses as being one of the major sources of employment. However, whilst the Port has received the go ahead to proceed with the Felixstowe South Reconfiguration and it is speculated that this will increase the work force required, it cannot be relied upon especially when new technology already in place has meant

the loss of many of the businesses on the dock associated with freight movement such as the closure of the Customs House EPU, (all entries now being processed in Salford), importers no longer needing agents to process imports/exports and many of the office accommodation buildings over half empty such as the Trelawny/ Orwell and Routemaster buildings. Employees leaving or retiring from the Port are not being replaced, save for some management, following the enforced retirement of the quayside shift managers and supervisors at the end of last month. There is **NO** requirement for housing based on the present or currently projected state of the Port.

- ◆ As stated previously, this parish council is wholly supportive of a modest amount of new housing development and has no reason to disbelieve either the reasons for it or the numbers of housing required in the East of England region and in particular, the Suffolk Coastal District. However, we feel that all the options put forward within this document, with the exception of Option 1, are all heavily weighted towards high housing numbers for the Felixstowe/Trimleys, which we believe, translates in real terms, to the Trimleys and especially Trimley St Martin bearing the brunt of large scale housing development. Furthermore, there is absolutely nothing contained in this document which would benefit the existing residents of either village. Large scale housing would destroy any rural character that currently exists within the villages and although they have been able to support previous estate developments, it is felt that any further large scale development would be hugely detrimental to the area and would completely destroy both their individual identities, making them merely a suburban area of Felixstowe.

Conclusion

It is of major concern to us that this consultation process cannot be perceived as being transparent or honest since we are aware that the LDF Task Group have already expressed their own preference for Option 6 as recorded in the minutes of their meeting held on the 26th July 2006. Were it not for a recent change in Government policy in the Autumn of 2006 whereby it was stated that local authorities were not permitted to express a preferred option in their consultation documents, but to present all options, then we believe that we would have seen the LDF Task Force putting forward Option 6 as the only way forward as the sustainable option.

We would question whether the LDF Task Group are in fact receptive to the responses that they will be receiving to the consultation document, when in fact in reality, their minds are already preset to one particular option, namely Option 6?

In responding to this consultation document, we have chosen not to answer the questions asked in the CSIO Consultation Questions booklet for the reasons already mentioned in our introduction, but have sought to address the issues of how our village will be affected by the whole of the LDF process. We feel that we would be lacking in our duties as a responsible parish council in not putting forward the views of our residents who elected us and therefore we trust that you will give due consideration and notice to the points raised in this response.

Tracey Hunter

Parish Clerk

From your County Councillor

Life within Trimley St Martin has recently been anything but quiet and tranquil, we have had the public meeting with councillor Andy Smith and officers of Suffolk Coastal District Council, held in the Memorial Hall. This meeting was held at the request of the two Trimley village Parish Councils, (you have to attend to know what they are up to!) and was called in an endeavour to get some clarity on what SCDC has planned for the villages in the way of housing. The Memorial hall was full to capacity, Angel and I assumed we would just slip in the back and listen but were treated like Royalty and given reserved seats at the front of the hall, very kind but embarrassing. The meeting got under way and to put things in a nut shell we were told that no "site specific" plans were in place, whilst one has to assume this is true the cynics in the hall were not convinced.

Monday 19th March I was invited to the Parish Council F & GP meeting to which I duly went, also on that night Felixstowe Town Council were meeting to discuss the SCDC Local Development Framework, (LDF) and not being able to attend two meetings at the same I dispatched (whinged until she agreed) Angel to go to FTC and here what they had to say. The answer was just the same as was said at the Memorial hall but this they also said they were keen on one large site as this would bring in more money via a 106 agreement.

Also we have had the debacle of the A 14, the complete failure of Operation Stack by the Highways Agency and the Police and the horrible thought that if the Fire Service needed to get to an incident in the villages it would have been tough luck. There has been so much anger and frustration vented by us all at a whole host of people who might just be able to ensure this never happens again that I am for once hopeful our efforts will not be in vain.

Then just to add to the woes of a somewhat jaded County Councillor we have had the Suffolk Schools review to contend with, luckily our area is not affected as we are already at a two tier system and it works well for the children of our area. We have however had an unprecedented number of e mails on this matter from a small number of people who want to keep their three tier system. Being married to Angel I am used to bullying and abuse but some of the stuff that came in had to be seen to be believed, anyway amongst all of this tirade of hatred and abuse I got a card. The card was a wonderful hand painted affair and written within were some very kind words from a lady at the Trimley Wives Club, I have to tell you that card made all of the problems listed above seem very worthwhile.

Regards to all

John Goodwin

Trimley St Martin Memorial Hall

Activities in your Village Hall

Did you know the following activities are held in the Memorial Hall: Table Tennis, Trimley Wives Group, Sequence Dancing, Line Dancing, Trimley Saints Drama Group, Keep Fit and Quilters Club. Hopefully a yoga club will also be starting soon. For contact details of all these activities, just phone the Hall Secretary on 275575.

Memorial Hall Committee AGM 2007

The Hall committee held its AGM on the 2nd March following a significant year in which a major project was completed, i.e.: the installation of a new disabled toilet, new kitchen, lobby and overhead gallery. Our Treasurer of 23 years standing, Noel Smith, has now retired and a vote of thanks was recorded for his hard work over this time. Tony Rodwell stood down as Chairman and was elected Treasurer. Nigel Smith was elected as our new Chairman. The Secretary and committee were re-elected en bloc. Our latest project has been to install radiators in the Hall and we are now raising funds to pay for a new flooring in the kitchen and lobby. To raise some funding for this, we are holding a Table Top and Car Boot Sale at the Hall on Saturday 5th May at 2.00pm. If you would like to reserve a table or boot space, please phone either 275664 or 275575.

Trimley Saints Players

Following a complete sell out of tickets for the annual Panto in January, Saints will be donating a large cheque to the Memorial Hall, to be earmarked for new (comfortable!) seating.

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