

Public Meeting Hosted by

Dunkirk Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held at Dunkirk Village Hall on 1st July at 7.30pm

Present:

Parish Councillors: Cllr K. Kemp (Chair of Parish Council), Cllr J. Tutt, Cllr P. Barkaway (Vice-Chair), Cllr J. Clifford, Cllr J. Gray, Cllr D. Brice and

Cllr G. Hewett. Cllr A. Gould (SBC)

The meeting was attended by over 100 people. There were parishioners from Dunkirk and many neighbouring parishes, as well as representatives from local groups and national organisations. The hall was packed to capacity, with some people standing in the vestibule and others outside the hall taking part through open doors and windows.

1. **Apologies for absence** –. None
2. **Planning:**

Consider application:

24/502123/EIOUT

Outline application (all matters reserved except for access) for a mixed use phased development comprising up to 1,815 dwellings (Use Class C2 and C3); an Employment park (Use Class E(g) and B8); local centre accommodating a mix of units to provide a Health and Wellbeing Centre (Use Class E(e)), all purpose store (Use Class E(a)), shops/ancillary retail units (Use Class E(a)), community/general use units (Use Class F2) and food and beverage units (Use Class E(b)); public open space and recreation including community park, recreation trail and improved pedestrian/cycle links across the A2; sports and education facilities comprising 2 From Entry (2FE) primary school (Use Class F1(a)), early years centre (Use Class E), leisure facility (Use Class E(d)) and sports pavilion (Use Class E(d)); provision of a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain; transport and access infrastructure including an integrated bus link to the surrounding area, upgrades to the Dunkirk A2 junction through a new trunk road slips and an electric vehicle charging hub (c.0.2 ha) within the village centre for approximately 36 vehicles as a mix of medium, rapid, ultra rapid and Tesla chargers, alongside associated facilities including toilets and potential for cafe facility; and associated parking, servicing, utilities, footpath and cycle links, drainage, ground and other infrastructure. | Land North And South Of The A2 Boughton Bypass Dunkirk Kent ME13 9LG

Link to find this application online:-

<https://pa.midkent.gov.uk/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage>

The deadline for all objections to be submitted has been extended to 16 JULY 2024

Chairman's Opening Remarks

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming the audience. He made it clear that Dunkirk Parish Council had, at a previous meeting decided to object to this proposal. The Parish Council would be submitting their own reasons for objecting, but they could not do everything and explained that local people had a real part to play by posting their own objections onto the Swale planning Website.

Objections and considerations made by the public.

- Already traffic trying to negotiate the difficult turn from Staple Street to London Road goes too fast and often goes over the pavement. This would only increase.
- Concern about already too much traffic going through Boughton. With all the parked cars, buses and large service vehicles often have great difficulty getting through.
- More cars are being parked in Courtenay Road, some now by non-residents who park there to catch buses, for example. Actual example given of a blue lighted fire engine which had great difficulty getting between parked cars and fire personnel were discussing the possibility of moving one of the parked cars by force.
- Concern about increased air pollution and noise because of all the extra traffic.

- Great concern about the construction traffic. The plans say that HGVs going from Brenley Corner towards Canterbury to get to the site would have to go on the A2 past Canterbury to the Bishopsbourne slip road, do an effective U turn to then go back to the slip road beyond the Esso Station. Great disbelief that they would in fact do the extra mileage and take the time to do this rather than go through the middle of Boughton.
- Great concern that already water supply is cut off to areas of Dunkirk and that this can happen several times a week. Cllr Gould explained that if a site gets planning permission, then the water companies have a statutory obligation to supply water to the buildings. This is getting increasingly difficult for South East Water. Water boards cannot object to new buildings even if they have no water. Water boards have objected to the Duchy plan as they have concerns about water supply and sewerage there.
- In times of high rainfall, water pours off the top of the hill at Dunkirk down into Boughton. This situation has got worse since the road was upgraded and there is now a stream flowing across the road at such times. Buildings and impermeable surfaces at the top of the hill would exacerbate this situation but there is little indication of how the development would seek to solve this problem.
- The number of new houses might be expected to house over 7000 people., and probably over 3000 cars. This is probably as great as, if not larger than, the number of people already living in Dunkirk and Boughton. The existing infrastructure cannot cope with the traffic as it is. The plans are vague, but it suggests that between 400-800 houses would have to be built before the new slip roads onto the A2 would be constructed.
- Danger of increased use of Courtenay Road being used as a rat-run.
- We could benefit from an expert report. This has happened with the Duchy Land. However, unless some crowd funding project is set up the Parish Council does not have enough money to do this. Could a benefactor be found or a group set up to do this?
- Worry that the plans seem to think walks to and from Selling station are feasible as part of a daily commute.
- It was stated that 3 other developments have found success at stopping developments by emphasising wild life and conservation concern, transport problems, and lack of infrastructure such as electricity and water.
- Cllr Gould stated that when the Winterbourne site was looked at in 2021 it was excluded from the Swale local plan because it was found not to be sustainable by public transport, and that cars would be needed by residents. This is also evidenced in the Boughton and Dunkirk Neighbourhood Plan which is still valid until 2025 and is currently being updated.
- Representative of the Kent Wildlife Trust pointed out that the site is adjacent to that part of Blean Woods where the Heat Fritillary is found, one of the rarest butterflies in the UK. Other rare species are also found there. The scoping report points out that the buffer zone between the site and the Blean Ancient Woodland is not sufficiently wide.
- Great concern about the inadequacy of the present bus provision for local school children. There are too few buses, they are overcrowded, they often don't stop at bus stops because they are already full, and some children have to catch buses as early as 7.00 am in order to catch connections to secondary schools.
- Parents already have problems getting children placed in schools because of restricted catchment areas. This situation can only get worse with the increase in the number of children living on this site, and the Duchy land and the northern Canterbury site if all these plans go through
- With regards to the plan for a new health centre on the site, Cllr Gould stated that in order to support such a centre a population equivalent to the size of a small town would be needed to make it viable. Even including Boughton and Dunkirk that would not be enough, and anyway finding staff for health centres that already exist is very difficult in Swale, one of the areas of fewest doctors per head of population in England and Wales.
- A member of Farms, Fields and Fresh Air, emphasised how important it is that we retain our farming land. Throughout the country there are a million homes that are empty and these should be used for housing needs first.
- There are currently 2 boreholes from the chalk aquifer to support 5500 people in Boughton and Dunkirk. One bore hole has had to be closed because of the levels of contamination from nitrates and phosphates. The remaining borehole is less contaminated but SE Water would need to spend millions that they don't have to clean them up.
- Levels of traffic at Brenley Corner are rising adding to the danger and congestion at this already dangerous and congested junction. This affects much of the traffic in East Kent which has no other viable way of travel.
- A parishioner spoke of a local housing project which had not been given permission because of the amounts of methane that would have been released from the London clay if it had gone ahead.
- This is an area rich in wildlife – 6 red kites seen for example.
- Local farmers have valuable contracts to supply food to supermarkets which provides jobs for local people as well as food for the nation.
- Kent described as The Garden of England by Henry VIII, with all the housing estates now being built it was proposed it should be called the Patio of England.
- Will the developers gain approval and then sell on the land so that all the proposals for building would change?
- In Selling, productive orchards grubbed up to provide building sites and 30-ton tipper lorries ruined the roads.
- When planning for waste dump at Winterbourne quarry suggested in the past, the application was turned down because the bridge over the A2 coming off the slip road after the Gate services was not strong enough to take the extra tonnage of the lorries.

- It was suggested that the most important aspects to comment on for objecting are Access, traffic generation, risk of flooding, water supply and conservation.
- It was suggested that the mobility hubs for parking on the scheme are not working well in other developments and that research could be done on the dissatisfaction of these in other places such as Poundbury and Bristol.
- Representative from CPRE said that although it is classed as grade 3 land, it is still used for growing crops and it was also pointed out that grades 1-3A are classed as good quality land.
- After inquiries about Tree Preservation Orders, it was pointed out that in the scoping document a reaction to the Winterbourne Plan from the Swale Tree Officer was one of two that had not been obtained.
- No mention in the plan of housing for the disabled or social housing. Child and Adult social services already stretched to the limit, this development would only make things worse.

The Way Forward:-

The Dunkirk Parish Council will object to the scheme, but it needs everyone to play their part and post objections onto the Swale site. Planning Reference:- 24/502123/EIOUT

- Local people could start a Crowd Funding scheme to help pay for legal representation.
- You only get a short time allowed to post objections onto the Swale site, so a good piece of advice would be to type the objection out first and then copy and paste it onto the site.
- We should look to meeting other protest groups such as at the Duchy land and for the other side of the Blean to the north of Canterbury to see if there are any lessons to be learned.
- Perhaps a local group could organise printing posters that we could blanket the area with to make people aware of the development.

Dunkirk Parish Council was thanked for their efforts and hard work.

The Meeting was closed at 8.45pm

Jean Gray
Dunkirk Parish Councillor

Signed
Chair
Date

Signed
Vice-Chair
Date

PLEASE VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE FOR ALL THE LATEST NEWS IN AND AROUND THE VILLAGE www.dunkirkpc.gov.uk