

MINUTES OF MEETING OF ASSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
Held in Assington Village Hall on Monday 7th October 2019

Present: Councillors Simon Thorogood (Chairman), Rose Symonds, Helen Wallace, Ian Jordan and Bronwen Stacey

Attending: Babergh District Councillor Lee Parker, Jane Hatton (Clerk) and three members of the public

19/125 Apologies for Absence

Councillors Andrew Hill and John Symons sent their apologies which were accepted.

19/126 Declaration of Interest and Requests for Dispensation

No declaration of Interest or requests for dispensation had been received.

19/127 Minutes of Meeting held on 23rd September 2019

The minutes of the meeting were discussed and councillors agreed that the update from Ryes College should be made briefer and these minutes will be signed at the next meeting.

19/128 Public Forum

District Councillor Lee Parker advised that he had nothing to add from his update at the last meeting. Cllr Thorogood asked about the road works on the A134 as concerns had been raised to him by residents. Highways is the remit of SCC but DCllr Parker advised that in addition to the email updates which the clerk receives there is a good website which has the up to date details. Cllr Thorogood asked what was the outcome of the building issue in Bures. DCllr Parker advised that this case is still ongoing and is complex and the two at the front of the development have had enforcement notices issued on them to be removed.

The public meeting was closed.

19/129 Routine Correspondence

Since the issue of the agenda, two emails had been received:

- a. A quote for two signs for both entrances to the footpath to the Thicks was agreed. Wording needed to be agreed.
- b. Email received from the Community Engineer at SCC in response to a request from February 2018 to walk the village. It was agreed that dates should be arranged in December 2019 so that it could be incorporated in the Neighbourhood Plan.

19/130 Clerk's Report (Appendix A)

Clerks Reported was noted and there were no additional items to be raised.

19/131 Finance

All cheques signed and due for signing as itemized in appendix B, were authorized by the Councillors. The Councillors noted the income received since the last meeting and reconciliation of bank accounts against the bank statements, and Statement of Accounts against the Budget.

19/132 Planning

a. The Councillors reviewed **Planning Application - DC/19/04391** - Outline application to erect up to 19 dwellings at Land East of The Barn at Assington, The Street, Assington and resolved to **strongly object** to this application on the following points:

- 1) The applicant suggests that Babergh's five year land supply is not in place. This is not correct. Babergh has its five year land supply of housing land to meet the requirements of the core strategy.

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As a result, any overriding presumption in favour of development does not apply.

2) Impact on the highway: this development would considerably increase the volume of traffic onto a road which has no capacity for any additional traffic. The additional traffic will not only be the vehicles of the owners of the proposed new properties but also their visitors and deliveries.

Suffolk Highways have, in their comments to the previous applications DC/18/00687 and DC/18/05178, stated that this location in The Street is "not a sustainable location from a transport policy perspective. The increase in trips and traffic [from new development] would present a detrimental impact to the road network and landscape character of the area." DC/19/004391 proposes using the same access. Speeding traffic and the considerable increase in volume of traffic is already causing significant problems and dangers in the (often single file) road through the village centre. Any additional traffic will be dangerous to all road users.

3) The emerging neighbourhood plan has obtained high quality evidence from both consultation events and a village-wide questionnaire returned by 52% of the adult population (<http://assington.onesuffolk.net/assets/Neighbourhood-Plan/Consultations/April-19-Consultation-Boards-Final.pdf>, slide 3), showing that:

- 89% do not support larger developments of 10+ houses
- 77% do not support developments of more than 5 dwellings
- 75% say we have enough, or too much housing already in the village
- Less than 3% support having more than 50 houses built in the village between 2018 and 2036
- 97% said any new development should respect the landscape of The Brook, south from the Church, and past The Vicary and the Reservoir, including its valley-side slopes.
- 94% thought that new development should provide additional public access, green space and wild places in Assington. Far from creating it, this application destroys green space.
- 76% thought that the volume of traffic is a problem for us in the village (we have a narrow main street with cars forced to park on the road)

4a) The site is not even close (and certainly not in or adjacent to) to the **existing built up area boundary** or the proposed new **BUAB** in the emerging local plan (see diagrams below). There is a need for any planning application to evidence exceptional circumstance and need for development in 'Countryside'. Policies CS2 and CS 11 refer:

From a planning policy perspective this application therefore should be treated as a **development in countryside**, and approval should only be granted **if exceptional circumstances can be proved** AND subject to a proven justifiable **need for the housing** (policy **CS2** of Babergh Core Strategy 2014 and NPPF paragraph 79). This is NOT the case currently, as no 'exceptional circumstances' justification whatsoever have been presented as part of this application.

4b) The applicant needs to give evidence and prove that there is a local need for this housing; a full detailed housing needs survey would be required.

5) Babergh's emerging joint local plan identifies a need for 38 properties in Assington parish between 2018 and 2036. There have already been 54 properties granted in 18 months, almost 50% more than the amount Babergh have stated to be needed in 18 years! In addition to these 54, the emerging neighbourhood plan is likely to allocate additional sites, in sustainable locations (which this application is clearly not in) to be developed in a graduated way with community support between now and 2036. Assington has had 54 houses granted planning permission since 2018, 33% increase in housing with no investment in infrastructure. This is totally unacceptable to the PC.

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6) The scale of the development: and character of the village: The proposed plan is a clear overdevelopment of a small site and would fundamentally change the character of the area, particularly when taking in combination with the 23 houses already approved but not yet commenced in the barn area. This would have a major impact on the social, economic and environmental aspects of the village.

Policy CS11 states very clearly that the cumulative impact of development within villages and within the functional cluster of villages is a material consideration when assessing proposals in respect of “social, physical and environmental impacts.” Therefore this application should be considered at least in light of the 54 houses granted planning permission since 2018, a 33% increase in housing compared to the 164 houses in the village at the 2011 census. 33% is an exceptional and transformational amount of new housing for any location; it has come with **no investment in infrastructure**, and will **damage the village character** for present and future generations. A further 19 houses as proposed by this application will destroy it.

AECOM have been commissioned, and have recently completed a report (attached) for the Assington neighbourhood plan stating clearly that housing density in Assington is “below 15 dph and often below 10 dph”. This planning application would represent a significant increase in density - of approximately 22 dph.

7) This development does not demonstrate how it would achieve the three sustainable requirements as identified in **CS15 and NPPF para 8.**, social, economic and environmental. This application makes no attempt to address these issues, or to demonstrate how it would achieve them.

CS11 requires a site in hinterland villages to be:

- “A close function relationship to the existing settlement”. – *it is nowhere near the existing or proposed BUABs*
- “Well designed and appropriate in size/scale, layout and character to its setting and to the village” – *it clearly fails this test as described above*
- “Adjacent to or well related to the existing pattern of development for that settlement” and; - *it is not – the site juts out away from the traditional ribbon form of development of the village into open countryside*
- “Meets a proven need such as affordable housing or targeted market housing identified in an adopted community local plan/neighbourhood plan” – *application makes no attempt to do this.*

8) The application is in a special landscape area that enhances the rural and tranquil nature of the location and is highly valued by the local population. It should be preserved. This application is **different** from the previously granted applications DC/18/00687 and DC/18/05178 because it infringes far more on the highly valued valley area of Assington, protruding starkly into the countryside in a position that will be visible both from other dwellings and from public footpaths in the area. It was (tenuously) arguable that DC/18/00687 and DC/18/05178 protruded out only as far as the existing Vicary Estate development; this application protrudes far further. The impact of such development on this site on the nature, wildlife and environment would be disastrous for the long-term view of conservation in this area.

9) While the site has permission for touring, seasonal and static caravans for temporary occupation, none of these structures are greater than c. 2.5m in height. Replacing these with permanent buildings of 6 and 7m in height is therefore a fundamental **change to the landscape**, and one that cannot be screened by existing hedging or indeed additional landscaping. It will

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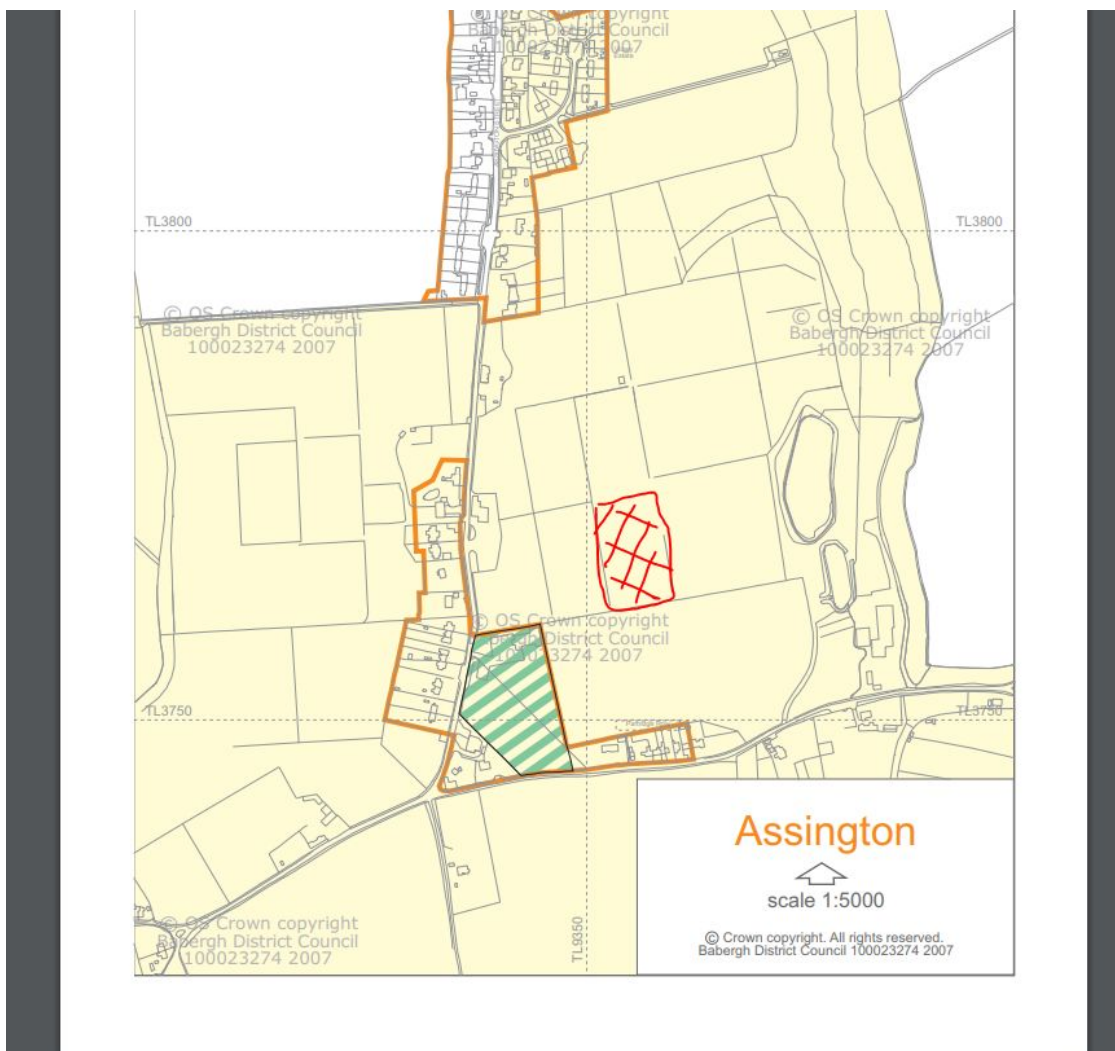
fundamentally change the landscape. There is a row of Listed cottages close, and adjacent to the site, in addition to the separate (and mentioned) Centuries Listed Village House. There is no possibility of this proposal sitting comfortably next to these village icons. Furthermore, whilst the wildlife (eg tawny owls) still live in this location, any actual new building would destroy the habitat and therefore the actual presence of the wildlife.

10) Infrastructure:

Assington has a lack of physical infrastructure in relation to public drainage and water systems. There is no main sewerage in most of the village. The drainage is constantly under pressure already, with roadworks to try to address road flooding issues.

11) Assington has few facilities (eg schools, surgeries, bus services) and all the neighbouring schools are already full.

For information the existing BUAB in the 2006 local plan is below (BUAB in orange, application site in red):



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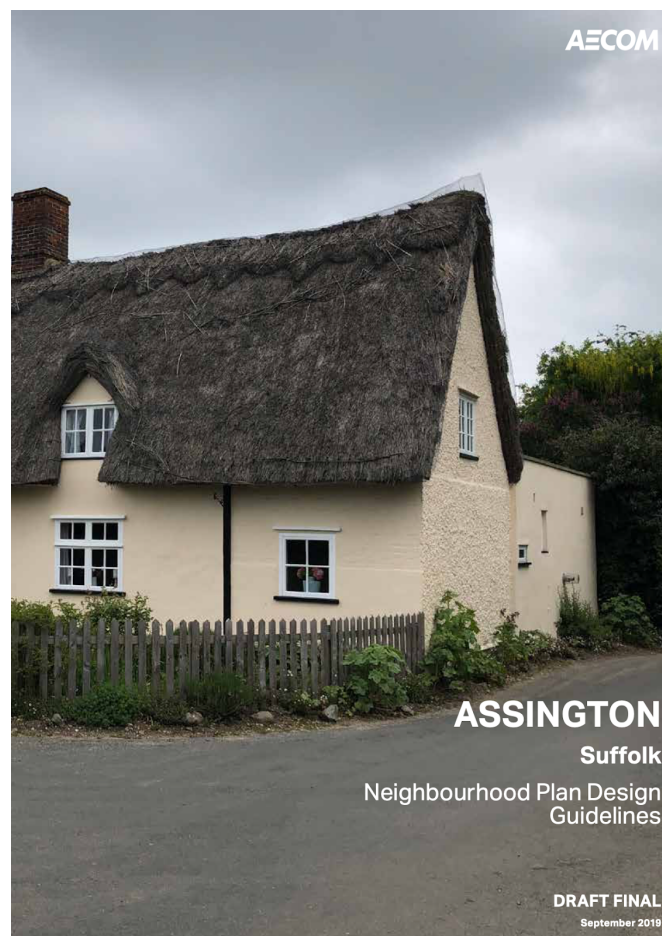
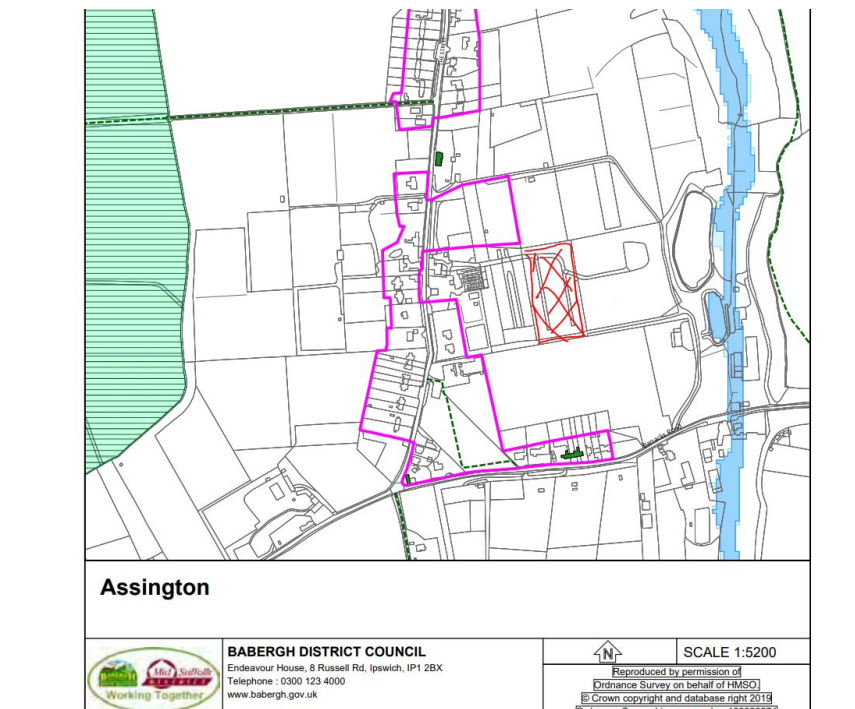
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The proposed new BUAB in the emerging joint local plan (site is in red, BUAB is in purple):



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b. Status of planning applications previous reviewed by APC are as follows:

Date Received	BDC Ref	Application	APC Ref	APC Response	BDC Response
26/07/19	DC/19/03504	Details under outline planning for access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for erection of up to 6 dwellings on land east of The Street, Assington	19/106b	Objected	

19/132 Street Name

Councillors agreed that the preferred name was Warners Rise and Cllr Symonds will contact the developer to confirm.

19/133 Question to the Chair

No questions raised.

19/134 Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting date is Monday 7th October 2019 starting at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm

Appendix A Clerk's Report

Minute	Action	Status	Done
	Minutes placed on website / sent to parish magazine / Lee and James		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Planning Comments sent to BDC		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
19/098	Cllr Hill to investigate if the kiosk could be reconnected and remain the property of BT	Waiting a response	
19/062	Cllr Hill to write to BDC for an explanation as to their approach to planning applications and why the PC suggestions and objects are often ignored	Waiting a response	
19/112	CCllrs Fince to organise for the SCC Road Safety Manager to visit The Ryes College to discuss their requirements		
19/118 a	Cllr Symons to contact carpenter for a quote for the repair of the Village Hall Notice Board		
19/123	The Clerk to investigate a new sign for The Thicks		
	Clerks Hours		
	1st April to 31st August 2019 : 110 paid /132hrs worked		
	Calendar Reminder		
	Shoulder of Mutton AVC renewal due 19th August 2024		

Appendix B RFO Report

Receipts and Payments

07/10/19	Boutique Print Limited	PO20	844		LA 2011 ss 1 to 8			66.00
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Bank Reconciliation

	Statement Date	Statement Balance	Actual Balance	Unpresented Cheques	Credits not shown	Difference
Community Premium Accounts	30/08/19	£100.00				
		£34,594.38	£38,287.58	£1,156.80	£4,750.00	£0.00
Cash		£0.00	£0.00			£0.00
		£34,694.38	£38,287.58	£1,156.80	£0.00	

Statement of Accounts vs Budget

	Budget	Actual		Reserves	Budget	Actual
Assets B/Forward		£19,181.80				
<u>Income</u>			<u>Expenditure</u>			
Precept	£9,500.00	£9,500.00	Staff Costs		£2,880.00	£1,713.90
Grants	£331.20	£331.20	Admin		£1,550.00	£428.68
Bank Interest	£5.00	£12.52	Donations		£600.00	£875.00
Loan	£0.00	£0.00	Street Lighting		£350.00	£373.75
Other	£360.00	£180.00	CIL		£0.00	£1,778.22
CIL	£0.00	£14,334.33	Insurance		£350.00	£329.28
VAT Repayment	£0.00	£298.01	Inspection		£350.00	£0.00
			P3 Scheme		£360.00	£0.00
			Licensed Footpaths		£175.00	£0.00
			Contingency		£500.00	£105.78
			Maintenance		£630.00	£0.00
			Loan Repayment		£0.00	£0.00
			Loan Interest		£0.00	£0.00
			Allotments / Conservation		£655.00	£79.92
			Neighbourhood Plan		£1,500.00	£55.00
			VAT Paid		£0.00	£85.75
Total	£10,196.20	£24,656.06	Total	£0.00	£9,900.00	£5,825.28
			Assets C/Forward			£38,287.58
Total		£43,837.86	Total			£44,112.86

End of Appendices

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