



Martock 2030

Martock Neighbourhood Plan Newsletter - February 2017

It's been about year since the village meeting to launch the Neighbourhood Plan. During that time there have been changes behind the scenes in the way the Plan is managed.

And we have been busy preparing arguments to put to Planning Inspectors on three large planning applications that were taken to them. In all three cases the Planning Inspectors have agreed with us. Here are the details.

Foldhill Lane, 35 houses

Main reasons for refusal:

- *It would spoil the view of the Landscape which is visible from many parts of the village and our footpaths*
- *The developer had not shown convincingly that building would not increase risk of flooding in East Street.*

The developer has since made a new smaller application which has been refused by the District Council (Jan 2017).



Ringwell Hill, 49 houses

Main reasons for refusal:

- *Too many houses. The South Somerset Plan calls Martock a 'Rural Centre' and development must be limited in Rural Centres.*
- *Too far from the village centre.*



Lavers Oak, 95 houses

Main reasons for refusal:

- *Too many houses.*
- *Keeping a separation between Martock and Stapleton.*



The Lavers Oak Public Inquiry

The Lavers Oak proposal was brought by a company called Gladman. They specialise in obtaining outline planning permission which they then sell on to developers.

Gladman called for a Public Inquiry to allow their lawyers to show that South Somerset was unable to guarantee the housing supply for the next five years as stated in the Local Plan. If they could prove that then the Local Plan no longer had legal force and any development could be permitted as long as it was 'sustainable' as defined in the National Planning Policy.

Anyone giving evidence in person could be cross examined by barristers. Neil Bloomfield and Roger Powell from the village bravely gave evidence in person on behalf of the Parish. Many others gave written evidence,

In the event the Inspector agreed with Gladman that the Local Plan was no longer valid but found that the Lavers Oak proposal was not sustainable because it was too large for a village such as Martock.

This was very helpful to us as it sends a message to developers to propose only small numbers of houses.

Who are the Planning Inspectors?

A planning application may be turned down by South Somerset District Council. This can happen if we all object to it and our arguments are strong enough to persuade our Local Councillors to vote it down.

The developer can then appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. The inspectors look at all the arguments for and against and make a decision. We have to supply all the arguments against. We can do that through the Parish Meetings that are always held to discuss the application, and also by writing individually.

There were two planning appeals in the village in 2014.

Middle Street, Bower Hinton,

This was an application to build a large house in the field south of Middle Street. It was turned down because it would harm the Conservation Area and the views from the road of the fine listed buildings nearby.

Gastons Lane, Bower Hinton,

This was an application for five houses near the top of the hill. This was turned down because the houses would stand out at the top of the hill and spoil the important skyline viewed from the footpaths to the west. .

Housing applications that have been approved in the last three years

Coat Road, 91 houses.



This application was brought by David Wilson Homes, a national developer. Building has not yet started after over two years. This suggests that the developer may be 'banking' the planning approval as land prices rise and the permission can then be sold on at a profit.

Lyndhurst Grove. 35 houses.



This was approved in principle over three years ago but a dispute over the cost of preparing the plot has prevented building being started so far.

Water Street, 35 houses.

These are under construction. The first builder went into liquidation. The permission was taken over by a new company but some of the less profitable elements such as some planned 'affordable homes' were removed from the plan as part of the rescue deal.



What can we learn from the appeals to the Planning Inspectorate?

The inspectors' reports give us guidance about what we should (and should not) put into our neighbourhood plan

Note that traffic, crowded schools and surgeries and lack of public transport are not on these lists. They are not planning matters

What are the most important planning matters?

- The overall number of houses to be built in a rural centre like Martock should be limited.
- Protecting the most 'sensitive' parts of the countryside, including good views.
- Preserving the conservation area and its buildings.
- The development should not increase local flood risk.
- Creating land and buildings for economic development (employment).

Some less critical, but still important, matters

- The distance from Martock centre
- The design and layout of the houses (this seems to be regarded as a local matter)
- Protection of important habitats and species.
- The provision of social housing.

Numbers

% increase in houses in the last decade nationally **5%**

% increase in houses per decade planned nationally, 2017 **10%**

% increase in houses in the last decade in Martock **12%**

Please help

You can help in many ways.

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<https://www.facebook.com/MartockNHP/>

- ▶ Find out more and make comments on the MartockPlan website.

www.MartockPlan.org.uk

- ▶ Join the Plan email forum to find out about the plan as it develops. Comment on the ideas.

Send your email address to info@martockplan.org.uk