

*The Planning Officer*

*Staffordshire Moorlands District Council*

*Stockwell Street*

*Leek*

*Staffordshire ST13 6HQ*

*Dear Sirs*

*With reference to the planning application **SMD/2015/0435** by Messers Geal and Jackson pertaining to land adjacent to 17, Saltersford Lane in Alton, I wish to register the strongest of objections on grounds as outlined below;*

### ***Road Safety***

*Saltersford lane is currently a narrow and congested lane where it is frequently difficult to pass and, occasionally, impossible for service vehicles to navigate. The top of the lane, at it's egress to the B5032 is particularly dangerous for both pedestrians and vehicular traffic alike due to the poor visibility, complex junction structure and the absence of footways. There are numerous near misses at this junction on a daily basis, exacerbated by the large numbers of motorists unfamiliar with the road layout, and residents with mobility restrictions or pedestrians with pushchairs are denied safe exit at all but the quietest times. The suggestion in the design and access statement that there be access to the proposed development over Saltersford Lane is ridiculous to the point of being risible. One almost wonders if the consultants employed to write the design and access statement have not advised their clients to offer a 'sacrificial' feature to the development so that they might manipulate the planning committee into thinking that they are being reasonable by giving up that particular feature, only to gain agreement to the proposal overall. Even if the access in any proposed development is restricted to the land adjacent to Bee Cottage and the exit on to Uttoxeter Road, there is still likely to be a catastrophic effect on the traffic flow. Even at less busy times,*

*traffic trying to turn on to the new development having approached from Tythe Barn will need to wait to turn right, this will block the junction of Uttoxeter Rd with the B5032 which will in turn prevent the cars blocking the access onto the new development from moving either backwards or forwards and gridlock will ensue. Given that the route through the village is already massively compromised at busy times it is tantamount to negligence to knowingly aggravate the issue and to put at risk the lives of residents and visitors alike.*

### **Loss of Amenity and Enjoyment**

*The residents of Alton have for decades shared their beautiful surroundings with the thousands of visitors who come to our village or its environs every year. Latterly, the village plays host to many visitors and tourists year round not just 'in the season'. However, the beauty and appeal of the surroundings is maintained by a kind of unspoken 'balance' - which includes the ability to get off the beaten track or away from the hubub with little effort. The building of the proposed development would substantially detract from the enjoyment of the affected section of the ancient salters track and the, so called, minor rerouting, (and, no doubt, fencing off), of neighboring footpaths will constitute a significant loss of amenity. The 'rerouting' will render part of the footpath un-navigable in the wetter months making the network of footpaths beyond the Staffordshire way inaccessible from Saltersford Lane.*

*The impact on those properties backing on to and, inevitably, overlooked by the houses proposed will be substantial. In addition to the loss of privacy, aesthetic detriment and loss of light and views, there will also be increased traffic noise and pollution not to mention light and noise pollution from the houses, and their residents, themselves.*

### **Impact on Wildlife**

*Any proposed development in the location, let alone one as large and intrusive as set out in the application, will have an unacceptable impact on wildlife. The barn at the back of my property has long housed bats - at least two species were recorded during last year - and has been home to owls on and off for the 40+ years that my family has lived here. There is evidence of dormice and field mice, there are badgers in the upper field towards Aron's Head and there*

*are frequent sightings of hedgehogs and rabbits together with a wide range of birds who nest in the hedges and trees bordering the proposed development.*

## **Infrastructure**

*Transport links have been reduced in the last 12 months with the local bus service now limited to 3-4 buses per day and only at restricted times with the Sunday service having been cancelled altogether. The Surgery has now stopped taking new patients unless they live within the village itself. Places are limited at St Peter's School and, although SCC have decided that extra pupils might be squeezed in without a request for extra funding, this will be to the detriment of existing pupils as class sizes increase.*

*The current electricity supply is unreliable with voltage drops not uncommon. Broadband speeds are intolerably slow - with the service in Saltersford Lane being inaccessible during evenings and weekends. Plans to upgrade provision in the village have been delayed once again.*

## **Planning Compliance**

*My final concern is more difficult to articulate. You have already been presented with evidence, by another neighbour, citing something of a tendency by at least one of the proposed developers to flout the restrictions and expectations of planning policy concerning Ashleigh House, (formerly Woodbine Cottage), its designation as a purely residential property and the uses to which some of its supposedly domestic buildings are put. Some of the cited issues may, at a stretch, be explained away by differences in interpretation. There is, however, material evidence that previous planning agreements have not been honoured in the shape of the finished property at Woodbine Cottage itself, subject to your own planning permission SMD/2007/0253, which is at variance with what was agreed in the plans. The matters aforementioned, considered individually, may not constitute grounds for a refusal in and of themselves. However the tendency to ride roughshod over the rights and amenities of residents that the planning laws are supposed to protect, together with the need for planning decisions*

*to stand up to even greater scrutiny in light of current allegations in the local press, would imply that to make a planning decision that did not take these matters into consideration would be inadvisable in the extreme and expose the committee to further criticism.*

*Whilst your letter of 07/09/15 states that you are not able to respond to individual points raised, I hereby request that you both acknowledge receipt of this objection and, furthermore, inform me in good time of the date and time of the scheduled consideration of this proposal so that I may attend to hear deliberations should that be permissible. In any event, I must assume that any or all decisions and proceedings will be a matter of public record and I would be grateful to be informed of how I might be party to same in due course and also to how an appeal might be lodged should any initial decision be reached in favour of the proposed development.*

*Yours Faithfully*

***P R Gwinnett B.Eng (Hons) AMIET***

*Ivy House*

*Saltersford Lane*

*Alton*

*Staffordshire*

*ST10 4AU*