

Care Village Notes of Teleconference on 20/5/2020

1. This note summarises key points arising from the presentation and question and answer session given by the Care Village Development Team to members of Melton Parish Council. Attending from the Development team were:- Richard Brown Planning Consultant Christchurch Group; James March Design Consultant Pegasus; Lauren Dearden; Katie Machin; and Tony Prendergast CEO of Carlton Hall which runs a Care Village facility like this in Lowestoft and would be running the proposed facility at Yarmouth Road, if approved.
2. Richard Brown (RB) explained the background and concept. The East Suffolk Local Plan is being reviewed currently and through that planning consultation he has challenged that insufficient provision has been made for “elder care” within that Plan. The Government Inspector reviewing the draft Local Plan has asked that this aspect be reconsidered in the light of the local housing market area assessment, showing a high population growth in the over 65s during the proposed life of the Plan. RB pointed out that page 92 of the emerging local Plan projects an increase of 57.8% in the number of people over age 65 in East Suffolk between 2014 and 2036. The Plan suggests that an additional 1,257 sheltered housing units and 1,118 extra spaces in registered care homes will be needed in that period but the Plan as drafted does not set out how this need will be met.
3. RB believed Melton/Woodbridge provided a “sustainable” site for such facilities giving access to shops, pubs, golf courses, doctors’ surgeries and bus and train services. A lot of what happens in the Care Village will be self-sufficient, but given the average age of residents will be 75 plus, the provision of a mini-bus service to access local facilities and also for outings further afield will be important in gaining access to these facilities.
4. Tony Prendergast (TP) noted that the Carlton Hall site in Lowestoft which has operated since 2009 has an 80 bed care home and 49 sheltered retirement bungalows. The concept is that older people downsize from their large family homes to the retirement chalets and that later as their health and independence deteriorates they can move into the Care home and sell their chalet. The entire site provides safe supervised living for the elderly with close contact to the local community e.g. visits from local schoolchildren, community use of on site cafe annual fetes etc and as much independence as the individual residents can cope with at each stage.
5. Concentration of residents on site allows more efficient provision of medical visits, meals on wheels and delivery of online shopping. TP noted that, since inception, Carlton Hall has been operating at or near capacity. In answer to questions from the Councillors about additional strain on local medical services TP indicated that since most residents were already local to the area, the Carlton Village was not adding to medical needs in the area, just concentrating them in one location allowing them to be met more efficiently. He felt the same would apply to the facility at Melton were it to be given the go-ahead.
6. TP explained that the design would be energy efficient and use renewable energy technology such as solar panels and “Air-sourced Heat Pumps”.
7. James Walsh, Design Director for Pegasus, gave an overview of the design principles which, within the Care Home, aim to give the feel of Suffolk Barns and Maltings type buildings and in the sheltered housing chalets, the aura of a “Center Parcs” community with communal rather than individual gardens and clusters of buildings aiming to support social interaction between residents.
8. The councillors raised a number of questions and a summary of key points is shown below:-

- Additional Traffic impacts on busy roads- expected to be minimal. Most residents would not have private cars and those that did were unlikely to use them during rush hours. In Lowestoft, the experience is that less than one third of residents have private cars. Mini-bus services are well used and similar would be provided in the Melton site.
- Dangerous proximity of the proposed entrance to the Care Village with the bend on Yarmouth Road near Melton Day nursery, especially given “speeding drivers” leaving Melton heading towards Ufford. Developer to consider if any further defensive features could be built into the design whilst noting the difficulties of “planning for people driving illegally”.
- Possibility of a pedestrian access either to the Jews Lane footpath or St Audrey’s Lane, to reduce need for residents to walk out on to Yarmouth road. Developer to consider and also reflect on whether Developer might pay for improvements for the footpath at Jews lane.
- Means by which residents might safely cross Yarmouth road to access scheduled bus services and continuous pavement down to Melton . Developer to consider although expected most journeys into Melton to be achieved by minibus service.
- Developer confirmed there were no longer any plans to build a “pedestrian refuge” or a right turn “ghost lane” on Yarmouth road.
- Fear that residents would use mobility scooters on the main road- Lowestoft experience has been that people tend to use such scooters only within the Care Village grounds.
- Loss of Hedgerow on Yarmouth road frontage. This will be cut down to improve visibility at the entrance but a new hedge will be restored in its place, set back from the road. Developers are committed to retaining and improving the other hedgerows around the site.
- Relocation of grass snakes on the site. Developers will investigate and feed back.
- Redaction of parts of Ecology report- minor parts only redacted for protection of identities, locations of species etc., not changing any material finding. Developer will check and report back.
- Potential issues raised re drainage of the site. Developers confident these can be addressed.
- Councillors asked why, if the need for care home was so great, the building of another care home on Bredfield Road (for which Planning permission was given several years ago) has not been completed. TP could not comment in detail as this referred to a different company with whom he had no connections. However he noted that the concept of the Care Village with high level facilities such as the one in Lowestoft, might be a more effective business model for the future of elder care, as compared with a stand alone Care Home.
- Future plans for the rest of the field at Yarmouth Road. The Developers have no plans for the rest of the field and are unaware of any development plans for it.
- Councillors referred to a small number of minor anomalies within the Design and Access statement that appeared to have been transposed from D and A statements concerning other developments elsewhere. Developers accepted these were clerical errors which would be corrected.
- Additional strain on local medical and dental surgeries . As noted above, the Developer’s view was that most of the future residents of the Care Village would be from the local area and

therefore to a significant extent those demands would occur in this area anyway. It was noted that in any event Suffolk and the UK as a whole faced the problem of the need for additional health resources for older people. The Developer anticipated that it would be required as part of this application to make some financial contribution to support such services in the Melton / Woodbridge area.

- Jobs in the local economy. Other than construction the expectation was that around 160 jobs (some full time some part time) would be created if the development proceeded.

Nigel Brown
Councillor Melton Parish Council
20/5/2020