

Community Group Meeting
Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 06 September at 5.30pm
Via MS Teams

Those present

Bob Dawson, Nineteen Acre Field Residents' Association
Cllr Corinne Garvie, South Cambridgeshire District Council, ward councillor
Annie Jackson, Windsor Road Residents' Association
Phillip Money, Storey's Field Centre
Cllr Edna Murphy, Cambridgeshire County Council covering Girton
Suki Mann, Huntingdon Road Girton Residents' group
Aaron Walker, Huntingdon Road Residents' Association

University and Development Partners

Matthew Johnson, Development Manager
Paul Milliner, Head of Planning
Adam Swift, Communications Coordinator
Tom Traynor, Head of Projects
Biky Wan, PR Manager (Acting Chair)

Brian Brady, Development Lead - Durkan
Kim Rickards, Senior Planning Manager - Durkan
Richard Edge, PRP Architects

Apologies

Cllr Sarah Baigent, Cambridge City Council, Castle ward
Janet Bunker, Parish of Ascension (Chair)
Pieter Desnerck, Eddington Residents' Association
Aimee Durning, University of Cambridge Primary School
Cllr Simon Smith, Cambridge City Council, Castle ward

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed participants to the meeting. Introductions were made.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

There were no comments regarding the Minutes of the last meeting in November 2021.

3. UNIVERSITY UPDATE

Matthew Johnson gave an update from the University. The following questions were raised.

Cllr Murphy: There was reference to a number of community infrastructure things like health facilities etc. How embedded and how well developed are those ideas in these plans?

MJ There are a number of community facilities. Eddington is quite unique compared to most developments in that we have delivered a lot of those facilities up-front. For instance the school with three forms of entry being the first building to open on the site. Unfortunately that means that you haven't got the community numbers that you would expect in the fullness of time to support all of those facilities. That has led to a slow take-up on retail but we have a strategy to resolve that. Dulcedo has been a great success story where we assisted them with financial assistance. We hope to do the same with other retailers. Regarding the Health Facility we have been working with the NHS and County and City councillors to try and get that occupied with an NHS primary care tenant since before we completed the Unit, which is about five years ago now. Our latest conversation with the NHS is that they are undertaking a stock take of their facilities, which is disappointing as we are unable to progress further on our discussions at the moment. That has been communicated through various

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councillors. We have the Storey's Field Centre as well which is a joint venture with the City Council, and that continues to be very successful. I'm sure colleagues will agree that as we get more residents coming in – less than half of the 1,000 consented market homes are occupied – we will see greater numbers of residents living on the site to help with that activation.

Cllr Murphy There are three points there: one is the NHS. It is difficult to get the NHS engaged, but without it Eddington will be like Bar Hill, with inadequate GP provision. It is vital and there has to be some way of unblocking this. Secondly as far as the Storey's Field Centre is concerned, it is not very community-oriented because it's too expensive, and doesn't have a piano. Thirdly there is an issue for Girton – in terms of the school. Because postgraduates arrive at different times of the year they aren't in Cambridge at the relevant time when schools do their allocation, so they will tend to not go to school in Eddington and will find a space in Girton which means that I receive emails about dangerous crossings. So I think that there needs to be some real thought about how the school operates – a school which has an annualised recruitment and signup system should actually be fed by people who come to live at odd times of the year in Eddington. My final point is there should be recognition – I don't know how this could be achieved – that it is dangerous crossing the road and we need to make it safer.

MJ Thank you for each of those points. On the NHS I'm happy to loop you into our conversations with Council colleagues, so that communication is clear and there is a partnership working to solve that issue. That is a very interesting point on the School that I've not heard raised before in terms of timing during the year for occupation and we will pass that on and see how that can be considered. We are very aware of the positive community benefit of bringing the School forward early and over-providing forms of entry, but it has led to this strange situation where we don't have a significant child population on Eddington yet to fill the school. Many are coming from Girton and we have heard concern about the impact of that in the local school. In the fullness of time we hope to see the vast majority of uptake from residents in Eddington. But in the meantime we need to look at what can be done to mitigate those issues, in particular with people travelling.

PM At Storey's Field Centre, we are almost at full capacity for community events and a number of those are amateur musicians. We have two choirs, a string quartet, a wind ensemble, a saxophone quartet, all rehearsing here on a regular or ad hoc basis. I haven't heard any feedback about the hall not been suitable for amateur musicians. I appreciate we don't have a piano but we haven't the room for it. I would be very happy to arrange a chat with Cllr Murphy and to listen to her comments further.

SM Regarding the retail units, what businesses are you currently engaged with, and how far away are you from getting someone in?

MJ It's hard to say how far we are away without contracts being signed, but there are a number of promising leads that we hope to bring in. The focus is on independent retailers that will provide a benefit to the community. Businesses are recovering from COVID and cashflow circumstances but we have incentives available for the units. Active discussions are taking place with a cycle shop and florist. Once the NHS path is clear we hope to introduce a pharmacy as well. If anyone has suggestions for alternative retail uses or individual retailers who they think would be interested in the site, we would be very grateful if you could forward those on.

Cllr Garvie I understand the Ridgeway may be closed/partially closed. Could it stay open as it effects the children going to school?

MJ I can't give an assurance now but it is our intention that it stays open for the vast majority of the time for the period of development.

4. Presentation BY DEVELOPER, DURKAN FOR LAND PARCELS M4/M5

RE gave a presentation of the land parcels for M4 and M5. Richard gave a presentation outlining scheme, site location, design, access, play, green spaces. The Group were invited to ask questions.

SM What safeguards are you putting in place that will prevent anyone purchasing the properties backing onto the properties on Huntingdon Road, from adding extension and thus reducing the 20m boundary gap? Does

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that also prevent them from putting little studios in the garden for example that are not attached to the property?

RE Whenever a new build is approved it's always attached with a condition that the residents don't benefit from permitted development rights in the same way as owners of older properties do. If anybody does want to add an extension they would need to apply to the Planning Commission and that is the point where the Local Authority will say, "No, it's in breach of the planning application that was approved when this Plan was first proposed". They shouldn't be able to do it without going through the proper measures, and that would offer opportunity for all the residents along Huntingdon Road to object to any extensions if they don't feel that they are appropriate. **KR:** 'permitted development' covers a whole host of aspects. It covers outbuildings where people can put studios. So that is something the Council can also apply and say that they cannot put in any outbuildings or even make alterations to roofs.

MJ What you have alluded to there is the proliferation of luxury sheds for homeworking - how are your designers dealing with the homeworking trend?

RE All of the houses have dedicated study/working from home spaces in them, including all of the homes that will exist along the tertiary street.

BD You used the term 'semi-private' in relation to some parts of the development area, can you expand on that please?

RE Yes the two residential courtyards are semi-private in the sense that only the residents surrounding those spaces will have access to them. Everything else is open to the public, so the Copse area, the linear parks and meandering along the nature trail along that tertiary street are open to all.

BD You've described a 20-metre buffer zone. The conversation that we've just had about home offices – none of that can impinge on an area, which is sacrosanct – is that correct?

RE From an application point of view we could not include anything in that zone, therefore we haven't. As Kim was alluding to, it's in the Council's gift as to what they approve at a later date, but certainly we will not be seeking it, and as part of the approval in 2013, that was a sacrosanct 20m which we have not tried to encroach on in any way.

BD The new owners can't encroach on that in any way whatsoever?

RE and KR No.

BD At the last meeting there was talk about 'densifying' in future developments presumably because there is a not-insignificant financial pressure in relation to these high-specification developments. Is this an area which could be described as being densified?

RE When we were chosen as the preferred partner by the University, we had 175 homes, so throughout the design process we have actually become less dense. What we've sought to do is be efficient, but at the same time maintain a lot of open space and mature landscape, and in the process of doing that we have removed density from the Scheme.

BD Finally, you talked about a rich mix of accommodation in M4/M5, and you mentioned the term 'starter flats'. Does that imply affordability?

RE The Scheme is 100 per cent private sale but we have homes which are at the threshold of size, so on a price-per-square-foot basis they will be significantly more affordable than the larger homes on the site. We've tried to get a real mix of sizes of home, so that people have the opportunity to buy what's right for them.

Cllr Garvie Regarding flooding – is there anything that has been done to help with drainage and excessive rainwater?

RE A drainage engineer is developing a sustainable drainage strategy. We have a number of attenuation tanks, attenuation basins, rain gardens, and permeable paving, all to ensure that during flooding events the site is robust and can deal with water coming from the sky, and water from residences.

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Cllr Garvie Is the boundary with the Huntingdon Road houses going to be a six-foot wall?

RE There is a significant hedge and trees along that boundary which doesn't look penetrable at all. I think it's a case of maintaining what's there, and if there are any areas which need to be built up we can use a six-foot high timber fence, but that would be a last resort.

AW What is your predicted timescale for this?

BB We are looking to submit a planning application in October, we are hoping that will get to Committee by late January/February, if that is approved then we will start on site on March/April time next year. The first six months will be concentrated on the secondary street, and Haul Road which comes in from the south, which links up with Eddington Avenue below the cricket pitch. The actual work onsite, which will be the site estate roads, will commence around September/October next year.

Post-meeting note The consultation email address for people wishing to email questions or comments on M4/M5 is eddington@durkan.co.uk

5. AOB

Cllr Murphy I've been asking University Estates about the lighting on the Ridgeway Path. It's something of concern to residents, but also Girton College. There are lots of students there who are genuinely fearful because in the dark many have had bad experiences. I would be grateful to have an update about what's been done about the lighting and then when is the proposal to close it, because I think that is something that we are going to have to socialise with residents?

MJ The lighting is an issue that we are very much aware of, Girton being part of the University family, has raised that with us. The path has been built to the standard specification for that type of path, but we acknowledge that there is a bit of a unique user scenario with university students, and also school students on winter mornings. We are looking at what we can do. There is no primary electrical infrastructure there at the moment so it is difficult. We are looking at what we can do as an interim measure and then also how we can partner with developers to see what we can do with them to try and support some lighting during the winter months. I'm happy to talk to you about it in more detail, and also regarding the closure dates, which will be as short as possible.

BD You spoke earlier about the importance of Chestnut Avenue, which I would entirely agree with. It's in a poor state and there's no lighting. Is there any plan to improve the surfacing of that important artery?

MJ We don't have plans at the moment to do any lighting further than the Ridgeway between the two Girton Campuses. We will have to have a look at the surfacing but there aren't plans in the interim to make improvements until development comes along adjacent to it. With Durkan M4 and M5 we will be putting in street infrastructure to the northern edge only.

6. NEXT MEETING

BW We will be in touch in the future about the next meeting. Thank you for joining us and for being part of our consultation to support Durkan on land parcels M4 and M5.