

## Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold (WOTWATA) Neighbourhood Plan(NP)

My comments are limited to issues relating to Thorpe Arnold Parish.

This NP totally lacks detailed vision for the next 5,10 to 20 years: it consists of lengthy descriptive texts on the current status and history of the two settlements interspersed with bland consultancy terminology.

During the last 2 years, Thorpe Arnold villagers have strongly expressed concerns about two major issues > a) Improving road safety and b) Inappropriate proposed over-development of the village. These two issues are interrelated.

The Melton BC Environmental policies on the Area of Separation and Flood Plain maintenance between Thorpe Arnold and Thorpe Park must be strongly supported.

Village Car Park attached to the Cemetery: This must be retained in minimize the inconsiderate and inappropriate car parking when non--parishioners use the Village Hall or Church. As the Cemetery is filled by burials in the future, space must be retained for parking in the absence of any other parking provisions. The site boundary of the Car Park and Cemetery should be properly identified as the Thor 1 site impinges on this area. If there is sufficient justification, the adjacent Thor 1 site must be investigated archaeologically before development commences.

### Development.

Thorpe Arnold should be classified as a rural settlement and not a rural hub using the two classification systems used in different Plan versions by Melton BC. In the latest version of the Melton BC local Plan, it states that "Thorpe Arnold has very few services and is identified as a "rural settlement" (Page 83 Appendix ).

The WOTWATA Parish Council and Neighbourhood Planning Group have failed to lobby and influence the re-classification for Thorpe Arnold from a rural hub to a rural settlement.

No data are provided to justify the need for additional housing in Thorpe Arnold. The distribution of additional housing in a rural settlement is questionable given some larger villages have no additional allocations by Melton Borough Council (MBC) e.g., Buckminster and Burton Lazars. Given the Thorpe Arnold village population demographics, the harsh reality is that probably at least 6 houses will become available in the village within 10 years given the current ages of the villagers.

The average price for housing in Thorpe Arnold of £ 619380 is rubbish data (not suspect as stated in the NP submission) and it is grossly misleading.

Design and structure of new housing: As the Village has very mixed housing stock, each planning application must be judged on its' merits, access and location. (I have not found any house with "panties" roofing).

Any development requiring new access to the A607 must have splayed visible access, provide adequate parking (2 cars per house), parking for visitors and turning space for large vehicles such as used for refuse collection and delivery vehicles to avoid parking on the A607. In addition, the speed limits to the East of the Village centre on the A607 should be extended (and reduced) with Vehicle Activated Signs installed. Provision of only footpaths along the A607 towards the Village centre is not acceptable given the speed and volume of traffic, and fails to recognize the safety issues of the blind bend on the A607. Children play areas must be included as the Village has no such areas. Additional widening of the footpath along the Church wall should also be a condition in granting these applications.

Sewage System: The Vacuum system currently installed is unique to Leicestershire and remains occasionally problematic. Severn Trent authority should be consulted as to the adequacy of the system to deal with more housing particularly where the land is lower e.g., in the Thor 1 site

Shops: Thorpe Arnold has none and does not need shops: it will remain largely dependent on shopping elsewhere e.g., Melton. The major changes in shopping patterns with delivery services being provided by all the major supermarkets and internet shopping means that vehicle movements should include estimates of the number of deliveries which will increase.

Village Envelope/ Limits of Development: The Melton 1999 version of the Village Envelope needed corrections as it failed to follow the existing and natural property boundaries. However, the NP pre-submission version of the Limits of Development has been changed in at two aspects without evidence or comment in the Pre-submission NP e.g., extension to the south of Cedar Wood and inclusion of all of the Thor 2 site. The THOR 2 site surrounds farm buildings so this will limit the use for agricultural purposes. Given the latest Melton BC dwelling numbers assigned for the THOR 2 site, which is now an allocated site, the Limit of Development should be reduced accordingly. Have all house owners on the within the original Village Envelope been given the individual opportunity to extend their existing Limits of Development where this is applicable? (I note an email listed to the Lovegrove family as Stakeholders (19.05.17), but am unable to trace evidence/justification presented by the Stakeholders).

Any proposal for extending the Limits of Development must be accompanied by a review by the Borough's Sustainable Housing Land Available Assessment (SHLSS) process and formal Planning Application: after these due processes, decisions can be made for any extensions of the Village's Limits of Development.

Where there is sufficient space e.g., in gardens where the proposed housing density is lower than nationally recommended or in large gardens of approximately 0.5 acres within the Village Envelope/ Limits of Development, planning applications for infilling should be considered.

Local Transport: For the existing villages, public transport is totally inadequate and probably will never be cost effective without subsidies. The suggestion of the issue of two-year bus passes is nonsense. What is needed is some experimental expansion of bus transport between Melton and Thorpe Arnold and Waltham to meet the needs of young people, the senior citizens and the non-car-drivers. This could be supported initially by using some of the Parish Precept as subsidy. Economically it is not viable for the Parish to own and maintain a vehicle, but minibuses could be hired for monthly journeys and late-night transport on an experimental basis.

Schools: Brownlow School is at full capacity, and to suggest primary age children from Thorpe Arnold should attend Grove School is ludicrous. Any further expansion of Brownlow School should be carefully considered given the very deep concerns of local residents living near the School about parking and traffic to and from the school.

Green Spaces: (1) Glaring omission of Melton Golf Club from list. (2) Fig 8. of the NP shows Wold House Garden as Protected Open Space. The house is listed, the garden is private i.e., not defined as protected open space. (3) The Green space at the top of Thorpe Hill should be maintained to keep visible the Road Safety Chevrons.

(4) Twin Lakes: The Twin Lakes site is within the Green belt but it is now an eyesore: better comprehensive landscape screening should be made to mitigate the impacts on open countryside. e.g. as seen in Center Parks. Within the Thorpe Arnold Parish, Twin Lakes continues its' developments within the green belt with apparently few limitations, and has applied for planning

permission for camping sites. This development is putting a strain on Melton Spinney Rd., and provisions should be made for pedestrian pathways from Thorpe Park to the Twin Lakes entrance together with extending the speed limits.

Improving Road Safety is very important to the people of Thorpe Arnold with the blind bend at the top of Thorpe Hill and the junctions of Lag Lane and the A607: this has been clearly shown in the NP consultations and a Village Questionnaire and Meeting. No developments should be allowed until the proposals for road networks around the Village are clearly identified. The severe and important potential effects of the proposed Distributor Roads around Thorpe Arnold are almost totally ignored in the this WOTWATA/NP.

Effects of Distributor Roads: Melton Borough Council indicated in December 2016 that it may take 5 to 10 years for the Eastern and Northern distributor roads to built. The WOTWATA NP/fails to discuss the possible implications of these roads either separately or together. Both roads if built would have to linked to the A607 so the Village would lie within these Distributor Road networks. Although few details are emerging about the route for the Eastern Distributor Road, fewer details are available for the connection from the Northern Distributor Road/Melton Spinney Road to the A607. Relief for village road safety issues cannot be assumed until the details for the routes of the distributor roads are known, and even then traffic problems will increase with the necessary associated construction traffic. Infilling developments associated with Distributor Roads is a common feature, often for economic reasons. There have been 6 to 8 sites examined by the Borough's Sustainable Housing Land Availability Assessment. These SHLAA assessments collectively are for more than 1000 dwellings around the Village. In addition, Jelson Ltd (Developers) have indicated they have 12 ha along Melton Spinney Rd to the north west of the Village which are within the Thorpe Arnold Parish (Appendix c of the WOTWATA/NP submission). The Holdings site is also listed in the latest version of the Melton Plan. There are no discussions of these sites in the WOTWATA/NP.

The WOTWATA/NP fails to discuss any of these important threats from over-development and Distributor roads, fails to prepare comments on outlined routes, fails to lay plans to continually review these issues and inform the Village. The NP takes the soft option of pushing acceptance of a THOR1 development site now, with little vision for the 5 to 10 year plan.

Gareth Evans

Thorpe Arnold

ADDENDUM - Thorpe Arnold: Supplementary comment on Neighbourhood Plan.

A very late change of the Limit of Development was made for land adjacent to Cedar Wood: the change appears to have been made following an email request from the Stakeholder- D Lovegrove on the 19.05.2017 according to the WOTWATA NP submission.

The Land Registry entry LT384466 clearly defines the boundary of this dwelling, and it does not include the area which has now been included within the Limits of Development. This Land Registry entry was listed in 2006 by the Lovegrove family, and remains in place today with no changes (Aug, 2017). There is no current planning permission in place for this property, nor has it been subject of a Sustainable Housing Assessment by Melton BC. There is no evidence provided of any planning application or approval mentioned in the email.

There has been no communication by the Neighbourhood Planning Group about and after this change ( so much for consultations with Villagers). At the very least, all of the property and land owners adjacent to Cedar Wood should have been informed and consulted, before the decision was made. No NPG minutes have been available on the WOTWATA website for several months, so I cannot check who approved this change.

The Stakeholder has been part of the WOTWATA Neighbourhood Planning Group since its' inception, and he has never mentioned this parcel of land at any of the two open village consultations. The land was never included in the Thorpe Arnold Pre-submission plan which presumably he helped to prepare.

This is an important issue of creating possible development without going through due processes whether by Melton BC or the Neighbourhood Planning Group (Compare this with the detailed village discussions about THOR 1 and 2 development sites).

The Limit of Development **must**/should be returned to that indicated in the Pre-Submission Plan. This application to alter the Limit of Development should be subject to inspection external to WOTWATA Parish Council and NPG.

( I am content that the Limit of Development has been adjusted to follow the natural boundary of our property, and the natural and defined boundaries of other village properties. I am also content that my adjoining grass pasture and copse land are not included within the Limits of Development)

**Further comment on Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold (WOTWATA) Final Neighbourhood Plan (NP) : Extension of Limit of Development to the south and east of Cedar Wood, Thorpe Arnold.**

**Please revise the Limit to Development (LTD) line included in the Final NP plan back to correspond to that presented in the pre-submission WOTWATA/NP Plan, and to correspond with New Melton Draft Local Plan (Housing Site allocation; Appendix 4 FC4.1).**

There is a clear intention by the Stakeholder (Lovegrove Family) to develop this greenfield land by making this LTD extension application to the Parish Neighbourhood Planning Group (NPG).

There appear to be no current Planning Applications, nor any record of this land being submitted to the Melton Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment SHLAA 2015/2016, nor Application for Change of Use. The original planning application for Cedar Wood was for a single dwelling, and was made more than 30 years ago.

The NPG have not informed or consulted with Villagers including owners of immediately adjacent properties about this change, at any time including the Consultation period prior to issuing the Pre-Submission NP; in the Pre-Submission NP; the period allowed for comments on Pre-submission NP; the NPG Review period of these comments ; and at the submission and post publication of the submitted Final Plan.

I provide information under the following headings:

Time Line

Existing Boundaries as recorded by the Land Registry and NP

Comments on the Application, Evidence and Approval processes used by the NPG

Access to Cedar Wood and Land, with Road Safety issues.

Lack of communication by the NPG

**Time Line**

End of Pre-consultation Period and Publication of Pre-Submission NP - 5 April 2017

Regulation 14 Consultation period allowing for Public Comments on Pre-Submission Plan,

- 12 April to 23 May, 2017

Email from Stakeholder (D Lovegrove) re LTD for Cedar Wood NPG – 19 May, 2017

Regulation 14 Review of comments by NPG followed by formal approval and Submission to Melton BC  
– 24 May to 26 July, 2017

Email from Martin Lusty (NPG Secretary) to general Parish circulation - 13/08/2017

### **Existing Boundaries (attachments 1 and 2)**

The Land Registry entries made in 2006 indicate a separate close boundary for the dwelling Cedar Wood (LT 384472) and a single area of greenfield land (LT 384466). These separate entries are current and there are NO other boundaries shown within the registered greenfield land.

Both of the Registry entries show pink shaded areas to indicate access for services granted by Mr Adamson of White Gables to Mr Vernon Lovegrove for a period of 21 years from 1972: these permissions no longer apply and expired in 1993. In the registered greenfield land LT384466, an initial or misleading impression is these pink areas around Cedar Wood include the dwelling boundaries but this is not the case. (I am content that my greenfield land and copse (LT 399128) are not within the proposed LTD in the Final NP, and the LTD for White Gables follows its existing boundaries).

Please see Figures 3 in the pre and final NP, also attachments 3 and 4.

### **Comments on the Application, Evidence and Approval processes used by the NPG.**

In Appendix C: Consultation Statement Part 2, Regulation 14 Consultation on the Pre-submission Draft.

- 1) **FOUR days** before the end of the pre Final NP consultation period, the Stakeholder emailed requesting the alteration of the LTD (see Appendix C: Page 59 : Regulatory Stakeholder Response Log. Response Log date and Source dated 19/05/2017.
- 2) Page 21. Appendix C. The response log Consultees (Stakeholder) Representations states: *"The limits of development show in figure 13 cuts back into the grounds of Cedarwood. The planning permission granted was for an area as shown on my sketch (supplied). We feel the line should be drawn as per original granted application (the same as the Neighbouring Property -White Gable)."*
- 3) Page 21. The Response/amendment column states: *"Noted. "The Limits to development are redrawn as proposed."*
- 4) These Appendix C entries for the Cedar Wood (Lovegrove) stakeholders give minimal information to support this extension of LTD i.e., sketch and information.

At no time during this process, have villagers been informed of this LTD change until the publication of the Final Plan in July 26.

In the same Appendix C separate responses to comments by Jelson Homes (page 9), the NPG response states "The Limits to Development allow for housing to meet the housing need of the Parish", and to Buckminster Management (Page 20) the NPG response states "The Limits to Development enable sufficient housing to be built to meet the Parish's overall requirements to meet the Objectively Assessed Need". These two Stakeholders would not have been able to see and comment on the LTDs defined in the Final NP before its publication. So, what can be the reasons for establishing in effect another Development site when others are refused?

Without success, I have tried to obtain relevant information to substantiate the evidence presented and details of the NPG decision justifying the decision on this issue other than presented in Appendix C. This is not an open and transparent process, if the related information is not given and consultations are not made with Villagers. Setting LTDs is a very sensitive and important issue in Neighbourhood Planning.

### Access and Road Safety

If the Application and Approval had been available for inspection by Villagers, then major concerns would have been expressed about the potential implications of this LTD change. Road Safety issues are very important to the Villagers as shown by a Village meeting, the Consultative Session pre draft NP, discussions with the Leicestershire County Council Highways Dept, Highways Forum of Melton BC, County Councillor Byron Rhodes, Borough Councillor Elaine Holmes and others.

No information on potential access requirements associated with this application is given in the Appendix C. Lag Lane is a narrow country lane, and Cedar Wood access is by a Private Road and Cul-de-Sac providing access to 4 properties (Ridgecrest, Field House, Thorpe End and Bracken House) From this roadway, services are provided to an additional property Mowbrae which has a boundary between it and Cedar Wood ), access to other land associated with these properties, and land belonging to another property (Dovecote House). This Private Road is unsuitable for any additional traffic associated with any further development: the visibility when joining from the Cul-de-Sac onto Lag lane is severely impaired by a high fence and adds to Road Safety dangers as Lag Lane is a "rat run".

Alternative access to the proposed inclusion of greenfield land within the extended LTD is currently provided by a field gate which is positioned on the most dangerous, blind and narrow bend on Lag Lane. This access gate or any creation of a new access to the site would be outside the Village LTD, and provided from the narrow Lag Lane which is totally unsuitable for increased traffic flows from an additional development. No access will be permitted through the land of White Gables.

### Lack of communication from the NPG

I have already indicated the lack of NPG communications with Villagers on this particular issue up to the point of Final NP publication. Further more:

In a general email from the NPG Secretary (Martin Lusty) on 13/8/2017 encouraging the submission of comments on the final NTP. The email mentions a reduction of the proposed Thor 2 Development site suggested by Melton BC. This communication still did not take the opportunity to report the Cedar Wood LTD change to villagers.

Separately, the attached responding email to me from the NPG Secretary (attachment 5) shows my last request for additional information.

Additional complications are the Stakeholder for Cedar Wood (David Lovegrove) is a member of the NPG. and the Parish Council Chairperson (Andrea Lovegrove) is a member of the same family living in the same dwelling. The Stakeholder has been a member of the NPG since its' inception, and acted as a Facilitator during the Consultation Days when keen interest in Development sites has been shown by Villagers, so he would be familiar with the NP procedures.

I hope these comments support the reversal of the NPG decision to extend the Limit to Development for Cedar Wood and are subjected to an inspection independent of WOTWATA Parish Council and its NPG.

### **In Summary**

- 1) By making the request to alter the LTD, the Stakeholder is giving notice of an intention develop the land.**
- 2) The Land Registry entries do not show the claimed internal boundary in the greenfield land area, and clearly separates this area from the dwelling.**
- 3) There are no current applications for Planning or Change of Use which can be examined.**
- 4) The NPG has not informed and consulted with Villagers on this issue; this is in very marked contrast to thorough NPG consultations and processes which identified the development sites THOR1 and 2. Villagers (particularly those in immediately adjacent properties) have been severely disadvantaged being unable to examine and comment on the evidence and processes which led to this decision.**
- 5) This decision is not consistent with replies to two other major stakeholders.**

**Please consider these additional comments and those of other Villagers, and revise this Limit of Development (LTD) to that presented in the pre-submission WOTWATA/NP Plan.**