



EYE TOWN COUNCIL

C/o Eye Volunteer Bureau 20 Broad Street, Eye, Suffolk, IP23 7AF

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Town Clerk: Wendy Alcock

24 September 2019

Dear Resident

PADDOCK HOUSE – A WAY AHEAD

The Paddock House site has remained derelict for too long. Apart from the security fence providing a wonderful gallery for the Primary School children's art, the site is an eyesore for local residents and visitors to the Town.

The reasons for the site being left undeveloped are widely known. The District Council bought Paddock House from the County Council in 2016 with the intention of developing the whole site to provide over 20 affordable homes. This plan was not made known to councillors and local residents, increasing people's concern about the future of the site and the possible threat to the green space and protected tree on the Church Street frontage.

Mid Suffolk District Council was pressed to reveal its intention for the site and a year after its purchase held a public consultation event at the Community Centre. The consultation presented two options, both of which proposed the development of the whole site with the building line brought to the pavement of Church Street. This would have resulted in the loss of the green space. These proposals were not well received and have not been actively progressed by the District Council, although they remain 'on the table' until and unless replaced by an alternative.

A Neighbourhood Plan for Eye has been drafted by Eye Town Council and is currently being assessed by the independent Inspector, prior to a referendum of the people of Eye. Following consultation with local residents, including a survey assessing preferences for the Paddock House site, the Neighbourhood Plan proposed a mixed development of 12 market and affordable homes with the preservation of the green space. This proposal is clearly at odds with the District Council's proposal. The District Council has calculated that the Neighbourhood Plan proposal would result in a loss to the District Council of over a million pounds.

The Eye District Councillor and Eye Town Councillors have been working with Mid Suffolk DC to find the best compromise between the financial needs of the District Council and local aspirations. We have set the minimum requirements to be preservation of the green space and high quality of design and construction. Meeting these requirements will mean that the District Council will not recover its costs in purchasing and developing the site. Both District and Town Council agree that the site should be used to provide affordable homes and that we would like the majority of these to be on a shared ownership basis. We believe that this will give an opportunity to young families and an encouragement for some of our younger residents to stay in the area.

Extensive discussions between the Town and District Council have resulted in a proposal which we believe offers a basis for agreement.

In outline the proposal is:

- The green space is preserved +/- 1 metre
- 16 homes of quality design and construction
- 10 homes to be shared ownership; 6 to be affordable rented
- The green space to be designed and managed by Eye

This proposal means that the District Council will not recover its costs in purchasing and developing the site. Our argument has been that any loss is in fact an investment in Eye providing a vital green space for public use in the heart of the Town and preserving the character of the conservation area.

Highways regulations mean that it is not possible to preserve the current informal parking arrangements around the site although the overall provision of parking in Eye is addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan. The Town and District Councils are looking to improve parking provision in the Church Street/Wellington Road area. However, progress with the Paddock House site cannot be dependent on this.

It must be borne in mind that the site is owned by the District Council and it could either submit a planning application for its original scheme, or sell the land to a developer

This outline proposal represents a considerable improvement on the current MSDC plan and we hope it will be supported by residents.

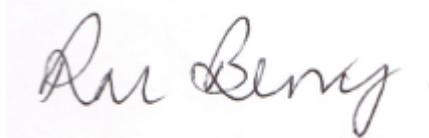
This proposal will be discussed at the Eye Town Council meeting on the 18th September.

Cllr Peter Gould



Mid Suffolk District Councillor
Eye Town Councillor

Cllr Richard Berry



Eye Town Councillor
Chair of Planning