

Fishbourne Village Voice

**Emergency Issue
October 2020**

Your village, Your voice, Your news

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PLEASE USE YOUR VOICE TO SAVE FISHBOURNE

Here We Go Again!

ICENI, on behalf of Fishbourne Developments, have put in an application for a development of 35 houses on Bethwines Farm.

This Special Issue looks at the repeat application from ICENI on behalf of Fishbourne Developments Ltd for 35 homes under the Entry Level Exceptions Site scheme.



Bethwines Farm from Blackboy Lane.

ONCE IT'S GONE, IT'S GONE FOR EVER.

Here is the description in full:

Ref. 20/02303/FUL

Construction of 35 affordable residential dwellings for Land at Bethwines for first-time buyers with associated access, parking, landscaping and associated infrastructure Land at Bethwines Farm and South of Ivy Lodge Blackboy Lane Fishbourne West Sussex.

Earlier this year, when we responded to the first application for 35 homes on this site, you responded with 300+ objections on the Planning Committee's website!

Now you have a chance to beat that total!

When we compiled our Neighbourhood Plan, Bethwines Farm was rejected as a sustainable site for many reasons including:

- It is classified as “Best and Most Versatile Land” and so should not be built on if inferior land is available elsewhere.
- It would increase the flood risk further south in the village
- It would increase traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions
- It would destroy a highly valued landscape
- It would contribute to a later merger of villages (“creeping coalescence”) so that Fishbourne would lose its own identity
- it would put at risk the rich diversity of flora and fauna provided by the farmland, its buildings, its ditches and its Wildlife Margin.
- It could have serious consequences for the distinctive identity and rural setting for the Chichester Harbour AONB and the open countryside between the Harbour and the South Downs National Park.

SO WHY DO THE DEVELOPERS THINK THEY HAVE A GOOD CASE?

For two reasons:

1. The District Council has not yet revised its Local Plan and so all applications are considered under their Interim Policy Statement for Housing which is an advisory document but with no statutory force.
2. The only piece of legislation is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that in these circumstances there is a “presumption in favour of sustainable development” . . .

... OR that’s what developers and the media tend to quote. In fact, the statement goes on to say *“unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.”*

So, our job is to put together as large and as strong a list of objections as we can, supported by clear evidence.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – AND ANSWERS

Q. Will my objection to the earlier application automatically roll over to this new application?

A. No.

Q. Can I just “copy and paste” my earlier objection?

A. Perhaps – and in many cases this will be fine. However, the applications are not exactly the same because they have acted on some of our recommendations (e.g. the drainage unit has been moved away from alongside Blackboy

Lane to the other side of the site). If you want to check whether any changes need to be made to update your response you might find it helpful to look at the maps or the section of the application called “Planning Statement.”

Q. Does my letter/email really count?

A. YES – ABSOLUTELY! It is really important to have as many responses as possible. Yours (however short) may be the one that tips the balance! Nobody will know how strongly you feel about this threat – unless you tell them!

Q. Are we limited to one response per household?

A. No – all members of your household can make individual responses (a good way to boost the final total!)

Q. Is there a cut-off date?

A. YES – All comments and objections should reach the District Council by **Friday 30 OCTOBER 2020**

Q. Does the Parish Council have a policy about Bethwines?

A. YES – The Village Survey of 2013 might it quite clear that the residents were opposed to any house building on Bethwines Farm and Bethwines was excluded from the list of possible sites because it would not be sustainable and would “cause unnecessary irreparable damage and would have an adverse impact that would demonstrably outweigh the advantages.” This was confirmed by Fishbourne Parish Council in September 2018 and later endorsed in the 2018 Village Survey where over 90% considered Bethwines not suitable for potential development.

Q. Do we have any evidence we can refer to about what Fishbourne residents value most about their village?

A. YES – The 400 responses to our Village Survey (2018) showed how much people care about the quality of life in our village. In the question about what people most liked about living in Fishbourne:

- The rural character of the village stands out as the most significant response;
- Maintaining open green spaces received 96% support;
- In answer to “Should any areas be protected from building development?”, Bethwines Farm and Chichester Harbour were the most frequent responses;
- Maintaining a separate village identity scored over 90%;
- Improvements to Fishbourne Roundabout, scored over 90%
- Retention of high-quality farmland scored over 90%

Q. So what are the reasons why so many people are opposed to Building on Bethwines?

- The Iceni application is not plan-led and attempts to override local opinion which excluded the site from the Neighbourhood Plan on the grounds that it was not sustainable and that sustainable sites were available elsewhere.
- Destroying the outstanding views and cloudscapes across the Coastal Plain could in no way be said to “improve the places in which people live their lives”.
- Developing into the Strategic Gap would lead to further development in successive neighbouring parishes and lead to a Chichester- Emsworth Suburbia
- Preserving individual village identity across the Coastal Plain is essential and meets NPPF criterion of avoiding coalescence.
- Use of crop-producing arable land would contradict NPPF which states that Grade 2 farmland should be used only where poorer quality land is not available.
- High water level would render useless schemes for collecting water in SUDS as they would overflow as soon as built.
- Surface water and foul water flooding risks would be exacerbated especially for the lower lying areas in the south of the village who would also be the first to suffer from the effects of climate change and coastal change.
- A significant increase in motorists would render the rat-runs more dangerous and would increase the delay caused by Fishbourne roundabout
- Lack of employment possibilities in Fishbourne would have a disproportionate effect on home-to-work travel which would add to congestion and higher levels of pollution.
- Further increase in population would risk greater recreational disturbance at Chichester Harbour AONB and wild-life protection areas.
- Planning permission for one parcel of Bethwines Land would result in the whole farm being developed for housing and not provide adequate infrastructure for any further development on the site.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR RESPONSE

There are various approaches to writing an objection. It can be very formal with points numbered and references to evidence; or it can be a more open expression of your thoughts and feelings; or you can just write it from your heart; or it could even be a poem!

There's no age limit.

Whatever approach you use, you need to submit your response no later than **FRIDAY 30 October 2020** and remember to include the case number: **20/02303/FUL**

You can: respond online via the CDC Planning Portal
<https://www.chichester.gov.uk/viewplanningapplications>

OR

e-mail it to: dcplanning@chichester.gov.uk

OR

send it by post to: Chichester District Council
East Pallant House
1 East Pallant
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 1TY

FISHBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

PARISH CLERK Lucy Wright, Fishbourne Parish Council, The Fishbourne Centre, Blackboy Lane, Fishbourne, PO18 8BE
Tel. 01243 788563 parishclerk@fishbourne-pc.gov.uk www.fishbourne-pc.gov.uk

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