

TRIMLEY ST. MARTIN PARISH COUNCIL

'A Long Term Vision for Felixstowe, Walton and the Trimleys' produced by Trinity College

This submission was approved at a full Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 7th October 2003

The Trimley St. Martin Parish Council submits the following as its response to the document 'A Long Term Vision for Felixstowe, Walton and the Trimleys' produced by Trinity College, Cambridge owners of the Trimley Estate which covers much of the area of Trimley St. Martin.

This response is not only specific to the proposals in the 'Vision' to Trimley St. Martin but also refers to general points and those areas where, in the Council's opinion, reference should be made because those particular proposals will have a bearing on the residents of Trimley St. Martin. Examples of these are the new access from Walton to the A14 Dock Spur roundabout, improvements to that roundabout, proposals for the area between Walton and Trimley St. Mary used by Trimley St. Martin schoolchildren attending the Orwell High School and proposals for moving the railway station from its present location in Trimley St. Mary to a new position also in Trimley St. Mary.

In framing this response to the Trinity College 'Vision' the Council has again looked at its own submission to you in October 2001 entitled Revision of Suffolk Coastal District Council's Local Plan and its revision in 2002 after the Annual Parish Meeting of that year, (a copy of that submission is shown at appendix (a). It has gauged what it considers was the overwhelming opposition to Trinity's 'Vision' that resulted from a meeting organised by Bidwells on behalf of Trinity College at the Memorial Hall on 9th August, it has analysed the written comments made by parishioners to the Council after that meeting, and has taken into account what continues to be the overwhelming opposition to the 'Vision' expressed at the parish council meeting of 1st September and again at the public meeting arranged by the Council at the Memorial Hall on 16th September where unanimous opposition to the 'Vision' was obvious and recorded.

It remains the Council's view however that the submission of 2002 represents what it considers to be appropriate measures for the planning authority to take into account when the Local Plan is being reviewed. Those views obviously have a bearing on, and are tied in with this response.

Those provisions in the current Local Plan on the environment generally and the high value it places in environmental terms on the land hereabouts, its opposition to any undesirable development and the separation of Trimley St. Martin from its neighbours must be restated as must the provisions about its opposition to another access road to the Port of Felixstowe across open country through Trimley St. Martin.

The Council will oppose any development that straddles the existing parish boundaries. The integrity of the existing parish boundary with Trimley St. Mary must be recognised and there should be a clear demarcation in any development proposals to indicate where one parish ends and the other begins. The Trinity 'Vision' for Church Lane and Gun Lane would make a clear cut demarcation difficult, if not impossible, to achieve.

The Trinity 'Vision' states that the two parish councils will remain. But that is not for Trinity College to say. Others (possibly at the next review of parish boundaries) might see no reason for the separation of the Trimleys if a clear and easily understood boundary is not apparent.

The revised Local Plan must clearly state that the areas beyond the A14 to the north east and the area beyond the Ipswich – Felixstowe railway line to the south west are not to be breached by any development of the village that may be envisaged in the

revision of the Local Plan and that the easing of the physical limits, that the Council seeks to allow some development, is subject to that.

The Council is still in favour of measures to achieve the general points set out in the Council's submission of 2002 and relating to:

- Provision of some employment opportunities consistent with the current residential use and character of the village,
- Redundant agricultural properties should be derestricted to allow their wider use,
- Arrangements along the Trimley High Road to allow better parking arrangements to residents without off street parking,
- The establishment of a village centre and the provision of a sizeable village green with additions to, and improvements of, public rights of way from the village to the River Orwell.
- The need for, and the indication of an area suitable for, recreational facilities must be provided and be of sufficient size for ball and other games to be enjoyed by the whole community. Village children now, as part of a long running agreement, have access to play equipment situated at the rear of licensed premises which is totally out of keeping with current thinking on child safety policies

It is however the scale of the proposed future housing provision that is the greatest worry for the community and it is this that is at the heart of the Council objection to the 'Vision'. A huge estate for that is what it will eventually turn out to be, dominating the whole area with the number of houses, flats and other dwellings 'pepper potted' throughout the village will rightfully, in the minds of the present residents, completely overwhelm the village and bring with it a host of estate generated, and other problems that happily the village is not at present subjected to. The chances of a real mixed housing development is unlikely to be achieved because islands of attractive properties will not be built unless a ready market for them is apparent and the Council is of the opinion that their positioning amongst the great mass of housing will stop this happening.

The projected road system suggests one way systems, ghost islands, pinch points, raised roadway sections and a proliferation of mini roundabouts. All these are useful road safety solutions in urban areas – but not in a village of the character of Trimley St. Martin. These suggestions which will be necessary if the village becomes the built up urban area as envisaged by Trinity's proposals, seem to have nothing to do with enhancing the local community's enjoyment of their surroundings but everything to do with getting as many houses, flats and other dwelling types into the village as possible. The current use of the open aspects of the land that the inhabitants enjoy and have become accustomed to will be gone forever as being secondary to their value as land for building purposes.

The overriding feel of the village is, and should continue to be, exactly that – a village which should evolve as villages have in the past by a bit here and a bit there. There were no master plans for villages that are now regarded as gems and which are properly subjected to stringent controls by local planning authorities and others to keep their village characteristics. The Trinity 'Vision' if allowed would, even though it is said to be a long way off, give the residents a sense of a creeping, and the likelihood of an accelerating, urbanisation consuming their surroundings and the character of the place which the present community has developed, enjoy to date and want to preserve into the future. Trimley St. Martin is far enough away from the most populated areas on the peninsula to be treated in a different way to others closer and more built up communities.

The time now is for some development but not for such a master plan on the scale envisaged by Trinity College. Future Local Plan revisions will be the time and place to consider if, as a result of the passing of time, proposals now envisaged are practicable, necessary or possible. Now is the time for some modest development but it is not the time to incorporate or even consider the scale of the proposals set out in the Trinity 'Vision' when looking at the revision of the Local Plan. Trimley St. Martin now has 870 dwelling units and even without knowing what type, and how many dwellings the 'Vision' is capable of producing that 870 would, at the very best be doubled, could be trebled and even more. The population, now about 2000, will rocket to perhaps 5000 or 6000 and the pressure on those bodies providing the essential services to maintain the present quality of the infrastructure will be immense. The present Barretts Estate completed in the late 70s/early 80s produced 304 new properties. That would be considered a small development if compared with what the Trinity 'Vision' has in mind.

Some modest development policies for the village should be incorporated in the new Local Plan now – then assessed at a suitable future date – and then, and only then, consideration be given to what might be appropriate taking into account the prevailing economic and other conditions that might then apply.

It is therefore the Council's considered view that it opposes and objects most strongly to the following in Trinity's 'Vision':

1. The massive scale of the housing proposals. This even though it is said to be in the future would so overwhelm the village that it would become unrecognisable
2. Any type of development that straddles and blurs the line of the boundary between the Trimley villages,
3. There is no need for this master plan looking as it does 20 years or so into the future. The planning authority should give itself the flexibility in periodic Local Plan reviews to make changes as things develop and not be tied into long term commitments that may stifle or blight the towns and parishes in its district.
4. As far as the proposals for traffic are concerned the Council rejects the idea that the proliferation of roads shown in the 'Vision' are there simply to allow better movement within the village. It is clear that even those with a limited knowledge of the area will see at once that the roads as suggested are the modern way of cramming in the maximum number of dwellings onto the land.
5. The assumptions about the need for the 'Vision' the Council sees as a misplaced concern of Trinity College about the needs of the community as far as the environment and its well being are concerned. Both the environment and the community's well being will be much better expressed and served by not wanting to build hundreds of houses in the village and thus altering its character for ever.

The Council does however agree that further consideration and support be given to the following in the revision of the Local Plan:

1. The amendment of the physical limits to allow some limited housing development. The physical limits are now drawn so tightly within the village as to make any modest development impossible.
2. Measures to achieve another access to the A14 from Walton and the improvement to the Dock Spur roundabout. The Council sees this as essential, not only on a parish level but as necessary on a district, county, regional and

even international level. Dock generated traffic can only increase with the developments current and ongoing at the Port.

The Council hopes the planning authority will give due weight to this response to Trinity's 'Vision'. It is based on what, in the Council's view, are reasonable expectations of what it wants from a revised Local Plan given the character of the village and its assessment of the reactions of the community living here. The Council realises that in drawing up the revised Local Plan you will be faced with difficult choices especially constraints and targets imposed by other bodies but it hopes that you will be able to satisfy the reasonable aspirations of the local community set out above.

At the appropriate time the above together with the views expressed in the Council's document Revision of Suffolk Coastal District Council's Local Plan of 2002 will form the basis of the Council's submission when consultation is invited and will be the basis of what the Council will then argue at any Public Inquiry into the Plan if necessary.

The Council made reference in its 2001 submission to you about consultation with local councils and this subject is now again to the fore. We know that the local Plan is being reviewed but we are not aware of the restraints that the planning authority are under. For instance Government guidance on the best use of land takes away some of the powers of the planners; the number of houses that districts have to make provision for; affordable housing ratios and the ability to grant planning provision for such developments outside the physical limits; time tables for Local Plan revisions and the like. Updates of these and similar matters from time to time would help local councils in its dealings with the public.

The Council seeks an early discussion with the planning authority on the Trinity 'Vision' or the Council's views sent to you in 2002 or any other matter relating to Trimley St. Martin as you proceed with your revision of the Local Plan.

Revision of Suffolk Coastal District Council's Local Plan submission by Trimley St Martin Parish Council to Suffolk Coastal District Council - Dec 2002

Introduction

The Council has been considering the provisions of the local Plan as it affects Trimley St. Martin and whilst it continues to support much of the Plan's contents there are now sections that need addressing and bringing up to date to reflect the needs of the parishioners.

In general the Council feels that there is now a need, after about 12 years of virtually no growth, to recognise the need for some additional housing to help particularly those younger parishioners now seeking to set up homes of their own at prices that are more affordable. The Council does not want to see a migration of its young people from the village and the members consider that the provision of affordable housing will help to counter this.

There is also a need for additional sheltered housing for the elderly now that private provision for the care of the elderly is being reduced.

The Council want to see areas designated in the revised Local Plan for affordable and sheltered housing. It also wants to see a provision for some general housing too. In any house building applications a balance of all types of houses must be achieved to satisfy all needs.

Current Local Plan Policies

Those policies in the current Plan protecting the environment, restricting undesirable development, retaining the village status of Trimley St. Martin and its separation from its neighbours are generally acceptable, although some minor amendments now seem sensible.

Design - The Policies for good design should be set out in any revision of the Local Plan, In any proposals for development new buildings must incorporate the latest building materials, the latest heating arrangements and be as environmentally friendly as possible. Provision for the parking of motorcars must be off road and within the curtilage of the buildings being erected. The use of parking compounds has proved unsatisfactory and should not be considered in the future.

LP25 The restriction on estate type development is broadly acceptable but some infilling and small groupings of new housing will be needed to answer the local need for housing, particularly of the affordable type.

LP27 The present areas for infilling and small groups are restricted to within the current physical limits boundary except for local needs housing. The council's view is that many of the children that moved into Trimley St. Martin when the Barratt estate was developed in the 1970's and 1980's are now adult, employed locally and wanting to set up their own homes but are frustrated, not only by the price of existing houses but by the shortage of affordable houses being built. There is therefore pressure for local needs housing in the village.

LP150 and LP154 The policy to keep Trimley St. Martin as a village separate from Felixstowe and Trimley St. Mary should be enshrined into any revision of the Local Plan. Whilst it is becoming the practice to work together with its neighbours, particularly Trimley St. Mary, the Council is adamant that the two Trimley parish councils and the Felixstowe Town Council should be separate authorities for some of the reasons stated in the current Plan - they are:

- to protect their individual character, and to
- maintain the open character of the land, which separates them from each other and from Felixstowe.

LP153 This Policy recognising the need for another access road to the Port of Felixstowe should remain unaltered. Despite many assurances from the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Company that it has no intention of putting an access road across open countryside in Trimley St. Martin the Council feels that any third access to the Port should be within existing physical limits and not across areas of open landscape. The current Policy must be carried forward into the new Local Plan to reassure the Council that the district council will support this.

LP156 Except for the development allowed under the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Act 1988 (now underway) the District Council will resist any further development west of the Dock Spur rail link and south of the physical limits of Trimley villages in order to safeguard the landscape of the Orwell Estuary in general and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in particular. That too needs restating.

Any proposals for the parking of lorries overnight outside the confines of the Port in Trimley St. Martin, put forward, at one time, should be refused. The Council would like to see areas set aside on the Felixstowe peninsula to which the police direct lorries when accidents or inclement weather close the A14 or the Port of Felixstowe. Such areas should help ensure the free movement of private vehicles but prevent lorries clogging up the Trimley villages and parts of Felixstowe.

LP190 and LPI96a Felixstowe Urban Fringe. The Trimley St. Martin Parish Council view the area north of the A14 as being of the highest environmental value that should be free of inappropriate development and that area includes the area within the Felixstowe and Trimley St. Mary parishes with common boundaries. The Policies recognising the vulnerability of this area and its attractiveness particularly for residential developments should certainly continue and the need for the closest scrutiny and the cumulative affect of any small-scale proposals should, if anything, be strengthened. Work now being undertaken to create community woodlands from The Grove to the Trimley 'Pits' should be encouraged by planning controls and extended into Trimley St. Martin for community leisure use.

Physical Limits

The Council's view is that the way the current physical limits are drawn leaves nowhere for future development to take place and it therefore asks for the easing of the physical limits for some growth to take place in the village. The Council's view, however, is that any amendments to the physical limits should in no circumstances take the line in a northerly direction beyond the A14 trunk road or south beyond the Felixstowe - Ipswich Railway Line. However, within those parameters, some easing of the physical limits should be considered.

General Points

General Development. - Trimley St. Martin Parish Council seek to encourage developments that will result in improved employment opportunities for local people in as far as that is compatible with the residential enjoyment of the village.

Apart from the above general points there are individual Policies that need amending and measures taken to alleviate particular problems as well as the need for new Policies.

Use of redundant agricultural properties - The Council considers that some easing of the restrictions on the use of redundant agricultural buildings would now be appropriate to allow occupation by a wider range of occupiers e.g. local craftsmen, holiday occupations etc.

Parking arrangements along Trimley High Road should be improved. Parking standards should not be reduced in any way and the present consultation paper suggesting lower standards countywide should be scrapped. To accept the county wide proposals put forward will result in the streets becoming more cluttered than now and parking areas within residential developments areas becoming dumping grounds for unserviceable cars, caravans and other sundry rubbish. .

Within a revised Local Plan provision should be made for a village centre. The Council fear that without a recognisable centre the future of the village, as a village, is in doubt. The Council feel strongly on this point and it wants to see the establishment of a sizeable village green. This should be such that rights of way run from and to the green so that access to the countryside is improved particularly from the village to the River Orwell. Any buildings around a proposed village green to be such that the character of any green created is not spoilt.

In considering planning applications the protection of the existing rights of way should be carefully protected and any new rights arising from development or diversion must meet the current British Standards as to access for the disabled and be landscaped and not simply narrow paths between houses or other buildings.

Recreational facilities - there is a need for recreational facilities in the village. Trimley St. Martin does not have a recreation ground and the local children only have access to play equipment as a result of agreements with the Trimley Sports and Social Club. That arrangement is most unsatisfactory since the children play at the rear of licensed premises. Suffolk Coastal's recent review of play areas highlights the inadequacy of the present facilities in Trimley St. Martin.

Safety in villages should be an essential consideration in planning applications. Older village streets are narrow, winding and many have visibility problems. New developments should bear this in mind. Traffic regulations can help but so too can the planning system.

Local Primary School - Future Local Plans should, and no doubt will, take into account the pressure of school places resulting from any enlargement of the population resulting from development.

Landscaping - In all appropriate planning applications conditions should be sought to strengthen the provision of adequate landscaping not only from a visual point of view but also as noise buffers from the A14.

Conclusion The Council has considered carefully what, in its view, are the needs of the village and how

some of those needs can be satisfied by the planning process. The present physical limits make it impossible for any development within them and they should be considerably eased. Therefore in all significant, or appropriate, planning applications to develop, the possibility of requiring conditions for a village centre; access to the countryside and river; play equipment facilities for children, recreation facilities for older children, teenagers and adults should be regarded as necessary.

There is a perception that observations and recommendations by parish councils do not carry enough weight in the consultation arrangements. Often the local knowledge seems to count for very little. Where planning guidance is issued by central government, parish councils should be kept informed of that guidance so that constraints put on planning authorities are known to local councils as they are consulted on planning applications.

The Council would welcome the opportunity of discussing in detail the views expressed above with SCDC officials particularly the designation of areas to accommodate what are considered to be current village needs and how they can be met.

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