

Presentation from Sue Heath, Representative of Electors who called the meeting & Love Portreath CAN. Parish meeting of Electors 18/09/2023

Good Evening,

My name is Sue, I was asked by Love Portreath to help them research this proposal and pull all the information together as I used to work in the planning sector I did explain that my qualifications in planning and planning law were from the dark ages and therefore very out of date. But I agreed to help. ...I'm going start with a quick recap the history of the Site...move on to right homes in right places...then look at why community matters and why democracy matters.

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The site was the location of the barracks, messes and offices of the WAAF personnel working at the nearby Portreath fighter and bomber airfield during the Second World War.

After the war the site passed from the RAF to Kerrier Council, then Cornwall Council and in 2017 was formally devolved from Cornwall Council to Portreath Parish for the sum of a pound.

A planning application for change of use was proposed and passed in December 2016 to create an ecological educational area. This comprehensive plan included creating a pond, bird hides and walkways with the intention of increasing both the habitats and biodiversity of the site.

In August 2018, the Portreath Parish Council decided that, while safe access for neighbours would be maintained, moving forward the site was to be left as it was and no works were to commence until all other current council projects were completed.

The planning application then lapsed in December 2019.

In September 2021, affordable housing was first mentioned in connection with the WAAF site, CC David Crabtree informed PC that he had been in contact with the affordable housing team at Cornwall Council and asked for the details of the location and size of the land to be passed to them for the consideration of suitability of location for construction of affordable housing.

By November a developer had already expressed interest.

In December Coastline Housing etc made a presentation to the PC.

Now the proposal.....

When I started looking at recent planning documents I found a thread running through, and that's what partly want to explore tonight.

The Right homes in the, right places....in 2017 the Government launched a consultation " Planning for the right homes in the right places' In the consultation document Sajid Javid notes:

Nobody likes indiscriminate, unplanned and unwelcome development. But most of us are willing to welcome new homes if they're well designed, built IN THE RIGHT PLACES and ARE PLANNED WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

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So, right homes.... most people agree that affordable housing is needed. I have been staying in Kent at my daughter's for the weekend....the same debate is taking place in their town..... there is clearly a national housing crisis and, the issues are complex . When we circulate our report to coincide with the planning application going live, you will be able to read an overview by Terry about the complexity of this issue. In Cornwall the problem is further compounded by second homes (and we have been grateful for input from firstnotsecondhomes@gmail.com.) airbnb switching, the fact that net migration in Cornwall is the highest in the country, and greater disparity of wages in relation to house prices. There clearly does need to be a discussion about this.

What about in this Parish

When the Portreath Neighbourhood Development Plan(NDP) was written no specific provision for affordable housing was made, housing need was assessed and as Portreath had achieved

its target to 2030. It was decided instead to use infill and rounding off in the settlements. In the initial survey carried out to shape NDP policies, 99% of 300 respondents expressed protecting the environment as a priority and 90% as a very strong priority. This was opposed to 21% who prioritised affordable housing. Affordable Housing at the WAAF site was not raised during the preparation of the NDP. (Heather) In fact, it would appear from the PC minutes that the idea for affordable housing on the WAAF site came out of discussion for uses for the site rather than a reaction to a well documented housing need.

But right homes in the right place??As a planner I was quite surprised that there was no site map , quite a few people seemed to have no idea where the WAAF site was,

(HOLD MAP UP)

so you can see where Portreath is... where the WAAF site is practically on the parish boundary. Probably 1.75 miles from Portreath, services and amenities
Portreath has shops, pubs , coffee shops school ,church etc. Community services... clubs
By contrast the nearest pub to Cambrose is here at Bridge

When we moved to Cornwall, my parents moved to Portreath.... they loved this village. My father's eyesight wasn't good so he had given up driving, but they could walk to the shops, the beach, the cafes, the coffee mornings at the church and the bus stop to get to supermarkets. They would meet people to chat to on the way to the shops or the bus stop, they were known in the village (hopefully fondly) and people would ask how they were. In short, they were part of a community.

AND COMMUNITY MATTERS

So Is Cambrose a community

At the Portreath Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) meeting on 16th September 2019 the minutes state that Cambrose had been excluded as a settlement (and therefore not considered suitable for development) following conversations with residents who did not identify it as a settlement noting that there aren't any services there. That is still the view of residents I have spoken to who live in Cambrose.

The Cambrose area was historically mainly agricultural; an area of scattered farms, smallholdings and miner's cottages with no centre and no services. Although there is a greater density of scattered dwellings

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along the main road. Cambrose is seen as part of the scatter of dwellings across the whole area, not as a village WITH NO COHERENT SENSE OF COMMUNITY.

NDP scatter map.

Cambrose was not therefore considered as a settlement by the NDP, but a further review of this was undertaken, James Evans, Planning Consultant and author of the NDP concluded that he did not feel Cambrose should be introduced as a settlement for new building. His advice was that this land did not align with the criteria for inclusion in the development boundary and therefore should not be included. He also quotes a planning appeal where development is refused, when the inspector states... Cambrose is a loose collection of houses in a rural area, and secondly because development would extend built development into what currently looks like open countryside. (This report was considered and approved by the Parish council.)

With no coherent sense of community and no services, surely the question should be asked whether this is a suitable place for an affordable Housing.

There is also the question of access from the site. There was Much discussion at the Q and A session in July about the location of the bus stop. The nearest bus stop for buses to Portreath or Redruth is located at Bridge... this would need to be accessed along the Tramway as the main road has no pavements and any walk along it would be challenging and probably dangerous,

The tramway if. Okay for walks from primary school once a term, or for a walk on a summers evening from a holiday cottage , and fine to take the dog for a walk but not to access a bus. Or for a drink in a pub. The tramway is not a pavement, it is often muddy, the surface is uneven , it is not lit and mobile phone connexion is often patchy.

The only bus that travels directly past the site is to Truro College during term time., this leaves at 8.03 via Wheal Rose, Corrier and Chiverton C ross and arrives at 8.55 And returns at 16.35 arriving 17.16 Great for students but not a lot of help for residents.

Coastline have said that they will consult Go Bus to check viability and demand to see if existing services could be amended to pass the site but have agreed that this might not be possible.

.In a study by age UK it was found that access to public transport was a one of the biggest challenges for those who live in rural areas and in a recent article by the Telegraph regarding living in rural areas it states that it is truly impossible to survive without a car.

The lack of connectivity would result in residents having to rely on car ownership to access services, the local community and jobs. For those households with more than one adult the need for a second car is likely high...however having to run multiple vehicles would be a major economic burden placed on those who require affordable housing As Sue from Illogan pointed out at the July meeting, residents may well not even be able to afford to tax and mot their cars. A recognised significant link between rural areas and increased poverty due to the increased cost of accessing services and jobs exists...something that this site with its poor connectivity would only exacerbate.

DEMORACY MATTERS

The other thing, my mother loved about village life was knowing all that is going on...Good and bad! Probably particularly the bad.

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And yet so few people knew about this agreement. It seems that there was no public involvement in decision making. There was no public consultation before the agreement was signed. And then it seemed that it was the responsibility of the developers to arrange a consultation. Jon Smith, the chair of the Community Land Trust in Roseland states that "Planning is always a contentious issue close to people's hearts so THE NEED TO ENSURE RESIDENTS UNDERSTAND WHAT IS HAPPENING IS VITAL

It seemed that many of the 50 members of public present at the Parish Council meeting on 31st July had no idea an agreement had been signed

Yes...minutes are on web site, PC Facebook page parish notice boards but that feels more like passive communication and not proactive, seeking public involvement.

Savid Javid 's quote again.... most of us are willing to welcome new homes if they are built in the right place and ARE PLANNED WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

The NDP in contrast followed a robust plan of consultation. Go Collaborate commented regarding the NDP that "creating an NDP is no mean feat, the process needs to be thorough and NEEDS TO ENSURE THAT ALL VOICES ARE HEARD IN THE COMMUNITY. "

The NDP provides a COMMUNITY SHAPED AND OWNED PLANNING FRAMEWORK, for all future planning applications and decisions. It was formally adopted into the Cornwall Council planning process on 21st July 2023 following an overwhelming public vote by parishioners...84.5%

The NDP was proactive...it was commended by Cornwall Council for its consultation. It was considered and approved by the Parish Council.

DEMOCRACY MATTERS.

At the Jul 31st Meeting, Sara asked the Coastline representative whether in her heart of hearts she thought this development was good for the community...Ms Hayman answered that she thought(hand on heart) it was exciting for the parish

I can say, hand on heart after 2 months of studying this proposal that in my view, the WAAF site is not the right place for affordable housing..

Hold up poster.....

Right homes

Community matters

Democracy matters

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING.