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Subject: response to local plan review options consultation regarding Culmstock village
Date: 23 March 2014 12:16
To: planningconsultation@middevon.gov.uk
Cc: susan.squire@virgin.net

Attention Mr. Guscott

Dear Sir,

Further to your presentation, regarding the Mid Devon District Council Local Plan Review 2014 - 2033, with the Culmstock Parish Council, and parishioners last tuesday 18th March, we are responding to points raised at the meeting.

We are opposed to the scale and location of the majority of proposed developments within the village for the following reasons:

We are particularly opposed to the scale and location of the site earmarked for market housing development to the south of Fore Street. The impact if such a development were to go ahead would be detrimental to existing dwellings some of which are listed and form a significant part of the historical heart of the village, including the church. The village already has problems relating to drainage and sewage situated as it is on the edge of the flood plain, the development would inevitably exacerbate this situation with particular relevance to houses on Fore Street which would be lower than the proposed development.

The main thoroughfare through the village to the A38 and M5 necessitates crossing the ancient narrow bridge which already carries a significant amount of heavy traffic. It is constantly being repaired and it is inconceivable to imagine a large increase in traffic that the number of new dwellings would cause, (upward of 100 extra vehicles from this one site alone). There are no pavements in this part of Culmstock and the village is becoming more and more popular with walkers and cyclists who visit because it is within an area of 'Outstanding Natural Beauty'.

The local primary school is almost up to capacity and would be unable to accommodate many extra pupils. Again the issue of road safety is of great concern should the population and traffic increase as greatly as the plans would suggest. The school is on the road into the village but also at the end of Hunters Hill where another significant development is proposed. The increase in traffic here would pose a large problem for people delivering and collecting children who would be mixed up with traffic coming down Hunters Hill to drive through the village or to access the A38. The playing field and children's park is also situated up Hunters Hill.

We consider development at Highfields could impact less on the village if housing development is contained, particularly from a traffic point of view. While affordable housing may be a welcome addition market housing, situated as it would be near the Culmstock Beacon, would in no way enhance the appeal of the village. We have no objection to the small area planned for development at Linhay Close.

Culmstock is an increasingly rare example of an unspoilt Devon village. The environment and biodiversity which government has gone some way to preserving in the AONB will inevitably be damaged by the proposed scale of development and proximity in Culmstock. The loss of heritage would immeasurably damage this part of the Blackdown Hills.

We would appreciate your serious consideration of our points

Yours Faithfully