

Vistry Homes (Tenterden) Steering Committee Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 4th March 2024

Present:

Vistry Homes: Paul Dadswell

SEC Newgate: William Neale

Kent County Council: Cllr. Mike Hill

Ashford Borough Council: Cllr. Ken Mulholland (Tenterden North Ward)

Tenterden Town Council: Cllr. Kayleigh Brunger-Randall & Claire Gilbert (Deputy Town Clerk)

Tenterden Community Land Trust: Mark Ellender

Tenterden Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee, Tenterden & District Residents Association and Tenterden Wildlife: Siggs Nepp

Limes Land Protection Group: Samantha Reed

Tenterden Climate Action Advisory Group: John Crawford

Tenterden & District Chamber of Commerce: Lance Hopley

Bakerwell Ecology: Donna Popplewell & Lucy Price

1. New Members Introduction

New members John Crawford and Lance Hopley were welcomed to the meeting.

2. Briefing from Bakerwell Ecology

Donna Popplewell reported that the first part of the trapping would take place in the area of the access, the pavilion and sports pitches in 2024; the second would be the housing area to follow, likely in 2025. Vistry have obtained a Licence from Natural England for the trapping of the pavilion and pitches which sets out the methodology and trapping requirements. A licence will be applied for, for the residential area once Reserved Matters consent has been granted.

Before works start on the first phase, Bakerwell will liaise with the contractors and set up a 'tool box talk', which will involve talking through the species and other wildlife on site including trees, installation of fencing, and enhancement for relocation. At each stage of the works, Bakerwell will be in attendance to check on how the work is being carried out. The two receptor areas are located to the North of the ponds and to the centre of the site for Great Crested Newts alone, another receptor area will be located on the Western boundary for other reptiles. These receptor areas are only temporary whilst the relocation away from work areas takes place.

Donna reported that shallow pits will be dug into the ground to provide the perfect resting places for Great Crested Newts during hibernation and will include log piles. During this process, some areas may look messy, but they are deliberate works to assist in the process.

Herptile style fencing will be installed to allow reptiles to fall into the areas, but not fall out. The same will be installed in the construction zone, so that

reptiles can fall out of the area, but not get back in. Pitfall traps will be installed and also carpet tiles, etc which will help them get into the trap sites. Traps will be checked on a daily basis and moved into separate buckets. The translocation can take anywhere from 45-60 days and 5 clear days are required before trapping can cease. Once this process has been carried out, construction works can start.

Siggi Nepp asked if the trapping would be for all amphibians and not just Great Crested Newts; Donna confirmed that it would include others.

Sam Reed enquired as to how big the buckets were and raised her concerns over the amount of rain there has been recently and would there be something in place to avoid the amphibians drowning. Donna confirmed that the buckets were the normal size and there would be holes in the bottom to accommodate the release of water as well as floating islands for refuge.

Cllr. Kayleigh Brunger-Randall requested that having posters on the fence lines so that the public know what is going on was mentioned at the last meeting and suggested that images of the buckets are also included to keep the public fully informed. Donna confirmed that the signage could be installed.

Sam reported that on the ABC planning portal, archaeological documents have been uploaded showing digs and trial pits near to the ponds. Sam wanted to know how it would interact with ecological mitigation as she was concerned about the timeline. Paul reported that the documents will be withdrawn from the portal as they had been uploaded too soon and are still being finalised. The archaeological condition discharge will run whilst the ecology trapping is carried out but works will not start until the trapping has finished to ensure no harm to ecology. As with the ecology, archaeological works will only take place to the access, pitches and pavilion areas in 2024, with the residential area to be progressed in 2025.

Cllr. Ken Mulholland reported that a badger set had been newly found on the site and asked whether it will be protected. Donna reported that they had not found any evidence of badgers although when they looked at all the holes and spaces, some were filled with water at the time. Donna agreed to keep monitoring not only the reported badger set, but also the whole site. Donna did suggest that the badgers might be located in a garden nearby or in the ancient woodland, but they will keep checking. If a set does appear, then they would be looking to protect or relocate the set.

With regard to the badgers, Paul reported that they might need to sensitively clear some of the scrub to investigate what might be living or hiding in it; this process would be cleared via consultation with Bakerwell. The clearance would be minimal and then once done, it would be fenced off.

Kayleigh asked if a press/social media release could be done so that residents know what is going on at the site, as this would avoid any speculation. Paul agreed to liaise with Donna and Lucy and then forward the information to the Committee for publication.

3. Vistry Homes

- (a) Project Progress Update. Paul reported that he was hoping to be able to update the Steering Committee at the meeting, however, the project has been delayed by a month due to having to replace their engineer. Vistry were hoping to move forward from next week, so it is hoped that at the next meeting, the coloured layout plan would be ready. The next meeting would be a site meeting and would take place towards the end of March/early April with an updated site layout to discuss.
- (b) Upcoming Site Activity. Paul reported that they need to get the ecology fencing installed and this will take place over the next few weeks. Vistry will be liaising with Donna and Lucy to make sure all elements are in place. Paul agreed to update the Committee with the start date.

4. Questions/Open Forum

- (i) Ken reported that Albert Poole and Sam Reed had submitted to Vistry a list of questions but had not received an answer to date. It was suggested that rather than arrange a meeting with Albert, Paul would work his way through the questions and then circulate both the questions and answers back to everyone for transparency. Paul stated that he might not be able to give firm answers to some of the questions but would make a start.
- (ii) Sam made the request that when the next meeting takes place as a site visit, that both she and Albert could be in attendance as both specialise in different areas, i.e. ecology, trees and infrastructure. Paul confirmed that this would be acceptable and estimated that the site visit will take around two hours.
- (iii) John Crawford asked what the revised plan will show and will it include the layout, location of the dwellings and ratio of houses, etc. Paul confirmed that the plan will include the layout of everything that would be needed in the application for Reserved Matters consent, including landscaping. There will also be a schedule of accommodation and where the proposed affordable housing will be located. John also wanted to find out where the bungalows would be located as the houses along Appledore Road that back onto the site might find bungalows less intrusive. Paul confirmed that currently the bungalows are located more centrally on the development, but he would bear in mind the comments; it was noted that there are large buffers to protect privacy and that the Reserved Matters application does need to align broadly with the parameters set at outline stage.

- (iv) Cllr. Mike Hill requested clarification as to whether there would be any visual difference in the house styles as he had the impression from the previous minutes that they would be the same. Paul confirmed that there will be different character areas across the site, which include different materials and styles, however, you would not be able to differentiate between affordable housing and full price properties; they would be tenure blind.
- (v) Sam asked whether any progress had been made regarding the drainage and SUDS on site, as given the amount of rain recently it was evident that the land does flood. Paul reported that an engineer had looked at a solution, with existing ditches needing to be kept separate to the drainage system on site, which will then run off into the rest of the network. There will be several attenuation basins built, broadly in the locations shown at Outline stage but Vistry are currently working up the detail of this. Paul agreed to talk through the issue during the site visit.
- (vi) Sam made reference to the Drove Road on the site and stated that in the archaeological plan that is currently on the ABC portal, two of the trial pits are either at the severed end or next to the Road, therefore she was concerned about the impact any works might have on the Road. Paul reassured Sam that the trial pitch is going to show what is in the ground, but they will proceed with caution. The trenching does need to take place, but he will make the consultant aware of the concern. Sam reported that there is a 2019 report available which identifies the Drove Road.
- (vii) Mike reported that he has been impressed with the controlled parking zones in the Tent1 development and would the same idea be adopted for the site. Paul was open to controlled parking but wanted to adopt a passive way of tackling the issue through the narrowing and curving the road, rather than having painted lines in the first instance, noting that the main circular route is likely to ultimately be adopted by KCC and so KCC would need to agree to any approach taken as well. Visitor parking has been incorporated into the plan. It was suggested that as the main part of the road on the development will eventually be adopted by KCC, controlled parking could be revisited should there be any issues.
- (viii) Kayleigh also commented on parking and stated that the Tent1 controlled measures work really well, and also raised her concern that with the houses sited near the football pitches and pavilion, there could be overspill into the residential areas. Paul stated that each property would have their own parking, but there would also be visitor parking available.

- (ix) John, who was representing the Town Council's Climate Action Advisory Group, reported that a Climate Action checklist had been produced and this includes promoting active travel and how people can travel across the town in non-vehicular way. John indicated that he would like to hold detailed discussions with Vistry about the checklist and active travel, as in the site plan there are various footpaths. Paul reported that with regard to the travel links, Vistry can propose routes, however, they are limited to works within the development. With regard to sustainability, Paul did review the Climate Action checklist and Vistry were already incorporating many of points within the development. Paul stated that Vistry already have a higher standard of measures in place in comparison to other developers. It was noted that if Paul does meet with John, the notes would be shared for transparency.
- (x) Lance Hopley, representative of the Tenterden & District Chamber of Commerce, enquired as to how much more the population will increase through the Vistry development. Paul reported that the figure would be an assumption based on the size of the houses, but he could provide an estimate and report back.

Lance also asked whether anything had been formally decided with the pavilion and pitches and has there been any dialogue with Tenterden Town Football Club on who will be taking on the maintenance. Paul reported that there was no update at present. The plans have been formalised and approved, but the internal details on heating, pitches, etc. sit outside of planning and are currently being worked out. Vistry would ideally like to bring on board a management company or other body to run the facilities rather than Vistry retaining responsibility, but again these details are still to be worked on. They are looking at bringing on a partner to run those areas including maintenance, but the backstop is Vistry. Lance reported that the Football Team does need to be consulted; Paul stated that Richard Grady is liaising with various bodies so will ensure he also talks to the football clubs.

- (xi) Sam commented on the perimeter fence and stated that many of the residents did not want a formal footpath as it will affect their privacy; the proposed path is closer than the current path. It was noted that the plans show there is more tree coverage and vegetation to obscure those walking past, but this is not the case as it's a canopy rather depth of trees. Paul agreed to look at this further but stated that it was a balancing act and they do need to consider all views given that people might want to walk the perimeter of the site.
- (xii) John mentioned previous discussions regarding a company being sought to manage the sports facilities and country park and maybe them having to do this for perpetuity. John asked whether Vistry had

produced a funding model and how it might impact financially on the development's residents. Paul confirmed that there would be no impact on the residents as the maintenance agreed as part of the Section 106 contributions is divided into three sections, pavilion, pitches and country park. The next level of investigations is to see if the money goes far enough, then Vistry would have to look at whether they need to provide more funds or take on the maintenance and manage it themselves. Future residents would only pay towards the maintenance of the residential areas of the site, not the other areas which would be looked after by a separate management company. It is hoped that the pavilion will bring in funds, which would feed into any ongoing finances to offset expenditure. Paul reported that ABC will need to approve the arrangements as per the S106.

- (xiii) Ken supported the statement of involving the Tenterden Town Football Team in any discussions regarding the adult pitch and any notes should be shared for transparency. It is imperative that the team are involved as there needs to be a willingness to use the pitches and make sure that they are appropriate and fit for purpose. Paul stated that he had thought discussions were ongoing with the football team and confirmed that one of the pitches will be made to the FA's standard. It was noted that the other pitches would not be the same specification.

- (xiv) Siggie requested that the management of the residential area green spaces is less manicured, and a wilding approach adopted. This would make the site look very different from the Tent1 development and would work better for Vistry to help differentiate the development. Paul stated that this was their intention and will incorporate this plan into the instructions to a management company, as well as including Donna's input. It was noted that the plan would not be produced for at least a couple of years.

5. Any Other Business

None.

6. Date of Next Meeting

Date to be confirmed for the Site meeting.