

North Petherton Annual Town Meeting

Held on 27 April 2024 starting at 19:30hrs in the Small Hall, Fore Street, North Petherton, TA6 6QA

There were 28 electors present.

The Mayor, Councillor Phillip Spencer, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Lucinda Spelman-Ives and Mr Richard Ives

2. Welcome & Opening Remarks – Councillor Phillip Spencer, Mayor

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and asked people to be constructive and not make personal comments about others.

3. Minutes of the 2023 Annual Town Meeting

The minutes of the 2023 Annual Town Meeting were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Presentation – West of England Developments Ltd

Chris Winter from West of England Developments Ltd spoke about The Park Lane Development Project.

The following information was included in what Mr Winter said:

- A planning application will only be put forward if it is possible to offer more than residential development.
- At a very early stage of the project discussions revealed a need for community benefit to be part of any planning application
- Consultation with a number of groups – including youth organisations and sports clubs and local statutory organisations and service providers identified a number of community needs
- One of the perceived needs was for a new doctors surgery as the existing premises have very limited capacity. It is understood that a meeting has taken place with the leader of Somerset Council, North Petherton Planning action group, and the Practice Manager from the Drs Surgery and the NHS will be researching and seeking evidence as to whether or not there is need for additional GP and health provision situated in North Petherton. Staffing and other viability issues are matters for the NHS to consider; if the NHS reaches a conclusion that new provision is required the developer will gift the land for a surgery within the application site.
- There are currently over 7000 people registered with the existing doctors surgery. It is believed that an NHS model for a building to serve the anticipated number of patients would require a site area of approx. 1

acre – - this would provide a similar facility to the one in Creech St Michael.

- It is understood that the NHS has been looking for a suitable site in north Petherton for over 10 years.
- The developer would provide both the land and a building for a Scout hut as part of the community benefit to be provided as part of the development.
- Until the community need evidence / viability is available from the NHS there will be very little further work done on a site design.
- The developer is not in a hurry to proceed with an application and will only proceed if it is possible to get the right pieces in the right place and offer benefits to the community as well as new housing.
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The Mayor invited comments on what had been said, matters raised included:

- The number of houses built would be approx. 60 over 2 fields (from A38 to the motorway) of which would be 30% social housing.
- In the past 3 years there has been no negotiation with developers leading to NHS provision in the South West.
- Any negotiating by Somerset Council needs to be hard, too often land allocated for community use reverts back to developer and is then used for more housing.
- The site includes a route previously identified as a bypass, -what vehicular route can be provided if there is a blockage in North Petherton?
- Accessibility to and from the site will be addressed at the master planning stage
- Could a pedestrian crossing be provided e.g. crossing the main road?
- Why is a new access road required, it would surely be better to use what is already there; The developer representative explained there were certain visibility criteria that had to be met.
- The football field idea has been removed from the site design.
- Traffic congestion will be caused by people visiting the suggested doctors surgery; it is naive to think people will walk to the surgery - there needs to be an allowance for car use. The developer representative explained there would be a traffic plan as part of the application which would include estimated use generated by a surgery.

5. Open Forum.

Registered Local Government Electors of the area covered by North Petherton Town Council were invited to raise issues about things which affect the town.

No matters had been emailed to the Town Clerk.

Issues raised by meeting attendees included:

- Would it be possible to have a pedestrian crossing Parker's Field end of North Petherton?

- The pavements along Bridgwater Road into the centre of North Petherton have hedges overgrowing the pavement making it difficult to use especially for people with prams, pushchairs and wheelchairs or mobility scooters.
- Proposed 20mph zone – Somerset Council will be sending an email to all respondents; there is likely to be further consultation including a public meeting.
- Parking on pavements is a problem throughout the area covered by the Town Council.
- 3 Leylandii in Baymead Lane are causing concern to residents, no-one appears to own the land they are planted on.

The meeting closed at 20:25hrs

Agreed