

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

---

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Planning Committee	9 June 2021
<b>AUTHOR/S:</b>	Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development	

---

<b>Application Number:</b>	21/00512/FUL
<b>Parish:</b>	Bassingbourn-cum-Kneesworth
<b>Proposal:</b>	Change of use to a village hall including social activities and as a base for the parish council. Ancillary uses include as a community library and for health, education and indoor exercise
<b>Site address:</b>	The Limes Community Centre, High Street, Bassingbourn Cum Kneesworth
<b>Applicant:</b>	Mrs Valerie Tookey, Bassingbourn-cum-Kneesworth Parish Council
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Approval
<b>Key material considerations:</b>	Principle of Development Highway safety and parking provision Residential amenity
<b>Committee Site Visit:</b>	None
<b>Departure Application:</b>	No
<b>Presenting Officer:</b>	Richard Fitzjohn (Senior Planning Officer)
<b>Application brought to Committee because:</b>	The application is for a minor development relating to land owned by South Cambridgeshire District Council and a representation has been received against the proposal
<b>Date by which decision due:</b>	12 June 2021

### Executive Summary

1. The approved use of the building is a communal facility for sheltered housing residents, though it is understood that the building has also been used for a number of years as a community library and for hire to a variety of village groups including the Parish Council for meetings. The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of the building to a village hall, which would provide social activities, a base for the Parish Council, and ancillary uses as a community library and for health, education and indoor exercise.

2. Officers consider that the principle of development within the established development framework is acceptable and that the proposed development would have acceptable impacts in respect of residential amenity and highway safety and parking provision. However, an objection has been received from the Local Highway Authority stating that the application is not supported by sufficient highways or transport information to demonstrate that the proposed development would not be prejudicial to the satisfactory functioning of the highway.
3. Officers consider that, subject to conditions, the proposed development accords with national and local planning policies and guidance.
4. The application is before Planning Committee as the application is for a minor development relating to land owned by South Cambridgeshire District Council and a representation has been received against the proposal.

### **Site and Surroundings**

5. The site is located within the development framework and conservation area of Bassingbourn Cum Kneesworth. The established planning use of the site is as communal facilities in association with The Limes Sheltered Housing Estate.

### **Planning History**

6. S/0317/95/F - Change of use of school to communal facilities – Approved 8th March 1995.

### **Planning Policies**

#### **7. National Guidance**

National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF)  
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)  
National Design Guide (NDG)

#### **8. South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018**

S/3 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
S/7 Development Frameworks  
HQ/1 Design Principles  
NH/14 Heritage Assets  
SC/10 Noise Pollution  
TI/2 Planning for Sustainable Travel  
TI/3 Parking Provision

#### **9. South Cambridgeshire Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)**

Sustainable Design and Construction – Adopted January 2020  
District Design Guide – Adopted 2010

## **Consultations**

### **10. County Councillor, Melbourn and Bassingbourn Division, Susan van de Ven:**

"I would like to offer my strongest support for this planning application, The Limes Communal Rooms Bassingbourn, change of use to a village hall and as a base for the parish council.

Bassingbourn is a large village with primary and secondary schools, health and dental services, shops and pub, and a relatively good bus service – but notable for the absence of a village hall. This planning application offers a unique opportunity for a village hall in a proven optimum village centre location.

Some years ago, when the Melbourn Library Access Point was housed in an end-of-life portacabin on the Melbourn Village College site, consideration of a new site took on board learning from the successful example of Bassingbourn. It was well known that the move of the Bassingbourn Library Access Point from the Village College to the Limes Communal Room, in a prime High Street location, had been the catalyst for a significant uptake in use. This was a key factor in the choice of location for the Melbourn LAP at a new Melbourn Hub, in a walkable and visible High St location. The Melbourn LAP has gone from strength to strength and has helped to form part of a vibrant new community centre – something ready to be replicated in Bassingbourn, and it has been good to see continuous sharing of ideas and experience between the villages.

The proposal for the addition of a parish council office makes eminent sense and will help make the parish council accessible to the public, and offer much needed space to a busy parish council serving a large community. Again, this follows examples of success elsewhere, including Melbourn and Gamlingay.

Bassingbourn has a strong walking and cycling culture, as evidence by a recent village cycling survey and by a particularly energetic campaigns to promote walking to school. Most recently this has been supported by the County Council's Emergency Active Travel Fund bid. The village bus service, only this month established on a commercial basis and with the a stop restored for its North End neighbourhood, once again provide a direct public transport link to the proposed site. Indeed, the trend in all parts of the village is to discourage car use in favour of active and sustainable transport, good for the environment and very much in keeping with the County Council's Public Health campaign for active travel.

It is difficult to see another equally good opportunity for a village hall for Bassingbourn, and I hope very much that this opportunity will be seized. There will be much work ahead but there is an obvious head of steam and a strong sense of interest and commitment from the community to see the project to fruition.

### **11. Bassingbourn-cum-Kneesworth Parish Council:**

Support the application.

### **12. Conservation Officer:**

There are no material conservation issues with this proposal.

### **13. Local Highway Authority (Comments received 28.05.2021):**

The Highway Authority requests that the above planning application be refused in its present format for the following reasons:

The application is not supported by sufficient highways or transport information to demonstrate that the proposed development would not be prejudicial to the satisfactory functioning of the highway.

1) The surveys submitted do not show the location of the parked vehicles within the public adoptable highway to ascertain the volume of on street vehicle parking by residents at present. This was requested within the previous highway comments.

2) The Local Highway Authority is unable to take the following locations into consideration as these areas are not adopted public highway and no evidence has been made available within the submitted information to confirm that the applicant has permission from the land owner that the parking areas would be available for The Lime Community Centre at all times and in perpetuity - Location 2 Limes Rear 4 spaces, Location 3 Car park rear Spring Lane 20 spaces and Location 4 Surgery 4 spaces.

3) The application is not supported by sufficient transport information to demonstrate that the proposed development would not be prejudicial to the satisfactory functioning of the highway. Within the submitted information Appendix 2 – shows a 1km radius (as the crow flies) of The Limes (expected new users). The Local Highway Authority requires that Lambeth Methodology Surveys be utilised in this situation due to the proposal requiring a total reliance upon on street parking. For example a 200 metre walk from site parking survey – this is the agreed one minute walk for residents or visitors parked vehicles and not 1km as shown.

Request that information showing the above requirements is submitted to the Local Highway Authority for approval prior to determination of the application.

**Local Highway Authority (Comments received 26.03.2021):**

Recommend refusal of the application for the following reason:

- The application is not supported by sufficient highways or transport information to demonstrate the proposed development would not be prejudicial to the satisfactory functioning of the highway.

The Local Highway Authority requested extended parking surveys are carried out within the surrounding area and that the surveys show the location of the parked vehicles within the adopted public highway to ascertain the volume of on street vehicle parking by residents at present.

The Local Highway Authority stated that further consideration would be given to the proposal upon receipt of a Transport report, which will generally include an appraisal of existing conditions and the proposed development.

**14. Environmental Health:**

No comments to make.

**REPRESENTATIONS**

15. Neighbours / third parties - 28 representations received, all in support of the application for the following summarised reasons:

- Support the change of use.
- Central position in village aids sustainable travel and carbon neutral aims.
- The building is an asset to good health and wellbeing of the community.
- The building already accommodates a number of local events and groups.
- There is a need for this type of amenity / asset in the village.
- The building is important due to its history and the proposal will make good use of it.
- Great opportunity for village.
- There is nowhere else in the village to run activities. The proposed change of use could offer parishioners more.
- The proposal would enable The Limes to move forward as a genuine community asset and under stewardship of the Parish Council.
- The proposal will safeguard the community library which is a well used and important community resource.
- The village will benefit from communal space for local people and cut down on travel.

## **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

16. The key considerations relevant to the proposal relate to the principle of development, highway impacts and parking provision, and residential amenity impacts.

### **Principle of Development**

17. The approved use of the building is a communal facility for sheltered housing residents and has also been used for a number of years as a community library and for hire to a variety of village groups including the Parish Council for meetings.
18. The most recent permitted use established through a planning permission was for 'Change of use of school to communal facilities', approved by planning permission S/0317/95/F on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1995.
19. Condition 2 of planning permission S/0317/95/F states:  
*"Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that order), the premises shall be used for communal facilities in association with The Limes Sheltered Housing Estate and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Class D1 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking or re-enacting that order). (Reason – To protect the amenities of adjoining residents and to safeguard the character of the area)."*
20. The proposed use sought is as a village hall including social activities and as a base for the Parish Council, with ancillary uses as a community library and for health, education and indoor exercise.
21. Policy SC/3 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 relates to development proposals which would result in the loss of village services and facilities including buildings which provide community meeting places. The existing building is considered to fall within that category. The policy states that planning permission will be refused for proposals which would result in the loss of a village service, where such loss would

cause an unacceptable reduction in the level of community or service provision in the locality.

22. It is considered that the proposed change of use would provide a very significant contribution to the social amenity of the wider local population, providing a venue where a range of meetings and activities are provided for the local community and which can be hired out for community and other events. It is considered that the proposal would not result in the loss of a community facility, but instead would provide an alternative community facility which could be more widely used by the local community. It is therefore considered that the proposed change of use accords with policy SC/3 of the Local Plan and the principle of development is acceptable.

### **Highway safety and parking provision**

23. Policy TI/2 of the Local Plan states that development must be located and designed to reduce the need to travel, particularly by car, and promote sustainable travel appropriate to its location, and that planning permission will only be granted for development likely to give rise to increased travel demands, where the site has (or will attain) sufficient integration and accessibility by walking, cycling or public and community transport.
24. Policy TI/3 of the Local Plan states that car parking provision should be provided through a design-led approach in accordance with the Council's indicative standards and that cycle parking should be provided to at least the minimum standards. In respect of the proposed use, the Council's indicative standards are:- 1 car parking space per 4 seats or per 8m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace, and 1 cycle parking space per 3 seats.
25. Furthermore, policy TI/3 states that car parking provision will take into consideration the site location, type and mix of uses, car ownership levels, availability of local services, facilities and public transport, and highway and user safety issues, as well as ensuring appropriate parking for people with impaired mobility.
26. The Local Highway Authority considers that the application is not supported by sufficient highways or transport information to demonstrate that the proposed development would not be prejudicial to the satisfactory functioning of the highway.
27. The Local Highway Authority's original consultation comments recommended refusal of the application for the following reason:
  - The application is not supported by sufficient highways or transport information to demonstrate the proposed development would not be prejudicial to the satisfactory functioning of the highway.
28. The Local Highway Authority's original consultation comments also requested extended parking surveys be carried out within the surrounding area and that the surveys show the location of the parked vehicles within the adopted public highway to ascertain the volume of on street vehicle parking by residents at present. The Local Highway Authority stated that further consideration would be given to the proposal upon receipt of a Transport report, which will generally include an appraisal of existing conditions and the proposed development.
29. The applicant has since carried out, and submitted to the Local Planning Authority, an extended parking survey and Transport Report which attempts to address the objection raised by the Local Highway Authority. These documents were accepted by the Local

Planning Authority and re-consulted with the Local Highway Authority during the course of this application.

30. The extended parking survey provides sample parking data for 7 different locations within the nearby surrounding area to the application site; the locations were to the front of The Limes, to the rear of The Limes, car park at the rear of Spring Lane, the Surgery, Knutsford Road (near High Street), Knutsford Road (adjacent to small green) and Spring Lane (opposite Elbourn Trust). The sample parking data has been collected on different days during the period of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 8<sup>th</sup> May 2021. The sample parking data was collected between 07:00-0800am over 11 days, between 12:00-14:00pm over 15 days, and between 21:00-22:00pm over 9 days.
31. The Transport Report provides an appraisal of existing conditions and the proposed development. This document provides information from the applicant regarding which existing activities within the building would continue and which new activities would likely take place if planning permission was to be granted for the change of use. The Transport Report also estimates, based on the likely type and frequency of activities to take place, the likely traffic increase generated by the proposed change of use. The applicants' Transport Report estimates that the proposed change of use would likely result in an increase in localised traffic by between 0.29% and 0.60%.
32. Following re-consultation with the Local Highway Authority, where the extended parking survey and Transport Report were considered, the Local Highway Authority maintains their objection to the application on the basis that they consider the application is not supported by sufficient highways or transport information to demonstrate the proposed development would not be prejudicial to the satisfactory functioning of the highway. The reasons for this, as given by the Local Highway Authority, are summarised below:
  - The surveys submitted do not show the location of the parked vehicles within the public adoptable highway to ascertain the volume of on street vehicle parking by residents at present.
  - The Local Highway Authority is unable to take the following locations into consideration as these areas are not adopted public highway and no evidence has been made available within the submitted information to confirm that the applicant has permission from the land owner that the parking areas would be available for The Lime Community Centre at all times and in perpetuity:- Location 2 (4 spaces at the rear of The Limes), Location 3 (20 spaces at car park rear of Spring Lane) and Location 4 (4 spaces at the Surgery).
  - The application is not supported by sufficient transport information to demonstrate that the proposed development would not be prejudicial to the satisfactory functioning of the highway. Within the submitted information Appendix 2 – shows a 1km radius (as the crow flies) of The Limes (expected new users). The Local Highway Authority requires that Lambeth Methodology Surveys be utilised in this situation due to the proposal requiring a total reliance upon on street parking. For example a 200 metre walk from site parking survey – this is the agreed one minute walk for residents or visitors parked vehicles and not 1km as shown.
33. However, the Limes is located centrally within the village and will provide a small local facility for the community. Due to its central location and proposed use, it is considered that a significant proportion of users of the building would travel by sustainable forms, i.e. walking or cycling. Furthermore, the proposed change of use would result in activities taking place within it which are similar in nature to those which already take

place in the building, therefore the proposed change of use is unlikely to result in a significant increase in travel demand beyond the existing and historic use, as highlighted within the applicants' Transport Report. Officers therefore do not consider that the additional information requested by the Local Highway Authority is a reasonable and necessary requirement for planning permission to be granted. Officers consider that the likely increase in localised traffic generation (estimated to be between 0.29% and 0.60%) and the increase in on-street parking, which would result from the proposed development, would have a very modest impact which would not be prejudicial to the satisfactory functioning of the highway, contrary to the view of the Local Highway Authority.

34. It is therefore considered that the proposed change of use promotes sustainable travel and would not result in any significant increase in on-street parking, whilst any impacts could be appropriately managed through compliance with the submitted Travel Plan which could be secured by a planning condition, in accordance with policies TI/2 and TI/3 of the Local Plan.

### **Residential Amenity**

35. Policy HQ/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 requires proposals to protect the health and amenity of occupiers and surrounding uses from development which would create unacceptable impacts such as noise. Furthermore, policy SC/10 of the Local Plan states that planning permission will not be granted for development which has an unacceptable adverse impact on the indoor and outdoor acoustic environment of existing development.
36. The proposed change of use would result in activities taking place within it which are predominantly similar in nature to those which already take place in the building, though it is likely to result in the building being used for some events which could result in increase levels of noise and disturbance such as wedding receptions. However, the small size of the building restricts numbers of such event to approximately 35 people which would minimise the number and noise / disturbance impacts of such events likely to occur.
37. The application is supported by an 'Operational Noise Minimization Management Plan'. This plan includes a number of measures to minimise noise impacts which would result from the proposed use, including automatic door closers, doors and windows to remain closed during events, notices displayed within the building to advise users of the building to be mindful of neighbours, an allocated person responsible for ensuring compliance with the noise management plan, and hiring agreement terms and conditions which prevent noise and nuisance to neighbours. The 'Operational Noise Minimization Management Plan' also states that informal monitoring of noise will take place and a complaints procedure will be put in place.
38. Subject to conditions requiring accordance with the an 'Operational Noise Minimization Management Plan', providing appropriate noise mitigation measures such as keeping windows and doors closed during events with amplified noise, and restricting hours of events taking place, it is considered that the proposed use of the building would be acceptable and would not result in any significant adverse impacts to the residential amenity of neighbouring properties through noise and disturbance, in accordance with policies SC/10 and HQ/1 of the Local Plan.

### **Other matters**



39. The proposal is for change of use only and does not include any external alterations to the building. The proposal would therefore not result in any harm to the character and appearance of the area, and would not result in any harm to the conservation area as agreed by the Conservation Officer consultation response. The proposal therefore has acceptable visual amenity and heritage impacts, in accordance with policies HQ/1 and NH/14 of the Local Plan.

### **Conclusion**

40. Having regard to applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material considerations into account, it is considered that planning permission should be granted in this instance.

### **Recommendation**

41. That planning permission be granted subject to appropriate planning conditions:

#### **Conditions**

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

- Location Plan (received 23.03.2021)
- The Limes/Old School Travel Plan (received 05.02.2021)
- Operational Noise Minimization Management Plan (Received 05.02.2021)

Reason: In the interests of good planning, for the avoidance of doubt and to facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 3) No events shall take place within the building between the hours of 23:30 hours and 07:00 hours.

Reason - To protect the occupiers of adjoining dwellings from the effect of noise, in accordance with policies SC/10 and HQ/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018.

- 4) The use of the building hereby approved shall adhere to the 'Operational Noise Minimization Management Plan' submitted with the application at all times.

Reason - To protect the occupiers of adjoining dwellings from the effect of noise, in accordance with policies SC/10 and HQ/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018.

- 5) Any use of the building hereby approved, where a means of noise amplification is used, shall take place with all external doors and windows of the building closed and no amplified noise shall take place between 23:00 hours and 07:00 hours.

Reason - To protect the occupiers of adjoining dwellings from the effect of noise in accordance with policies SC/10 and HQ/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018.

- 6) The 'Limes/Old School Travel Plan' shall be implemented and monitored as approved upon first occupation of the use of the building hereby approved and thereafter 12 monthly reviews shall take place, details of which shall be available for inspection by the Local Planning Authority within 7 days of request.

Reason: In the interests of encouraging sustainable travel to and from the site, in accordance with policies TI/2 and TI/3 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018.