



Rockland St Mary with Hellington Parish Council

Monica Armstrong
Clerk to the Parish Council
135 The Street
Rockland St Mary
Norfolk NR14 7HL
Email rocklandparishclerk@gmail.com

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Email GNLP@norfolk.gov.uk

Copy also posted on the Greater Norwich Local Plan “Have Your Say”

Rockland St Mary with Hellington Parish Council response to GNLP call for sites
ref: 2070; 2007, 2061, 2064, 2063.

Site ref 2070 (The Oaks)

This site lies outside the development boundary and is remote from any of the services in Rockland St Mary. The road lies between the villages of Rockland St Mary and Bramerton and being a ‘through-route’ is not subject to a 30mph speed restriction. This would make exiting (or entering) the site hazardous. Parts of the road along this stretch are so narrow that when the number 85 bus makes its pick-up or drop off, any car coming from the opposite direction has to stop. Equally, large lorries or farm vehicles using this stretch of road require vehicles travelling towards them to stop to one side to let them pass. There is no footpath which makes the long walk dangerous to access the few services available such as the GP, primary school and shop. These services are accessible realistically *only* by using a car or a bicycle. Public transport is extremely limited, and the number 85 bus makes just one single journey to Norwich between the peak morning time of 7am to 9am. This severely limits employment opportunities as a car is almost essential to be able to access employment. There is no suitable access to the site.

The Parish Council does not consider this site suitable for development.

Site ref 2007 (next to Eel Catcher Close)

The site lies outside the development boundary and to the edge of the eastern side of the village. The site is at the brow of a hill where site lines are restricted. A request for planning permission to erect a house on the land opposite was refused in 2017 due to the dangers of entry onto the road. The road is part of a national cycle route, heavily used by cyclists each day. It is also much used by ramblers and local walkers who access the public right of way next to the site. Data from the Parish Council’s SAM2 monitor shows a high volume of traffic passes the site particularly between 6

am and 9.30am and 3.30 and 7pm each day, with speeding an additional problem as drivers leave or enter the village at this point.

Residents have expressed the view that the ongoing housing development at Bee Orchid Way should be sufficient to provide a 'share' towards the extra housing required by the GNLP.

The Parish Council's other major concern with this site is its proximity to the Staithe and Broad. At present the site and the neighbouring field act as a 'buffer' between the small exceptions site at Eel Catcher Close and the existing properties set back from the road on New Inn Hill. The site is very close to a tourist attraction for bird watchers, boat users, ramblers and fishing. The popularity for both villagers and visitors to this end of the village lie in its very unspoilt, natural and tranquil qualities.

The Parish Council remains very concerned about the capacity of drains and sewerage to take additional waste from further housing. For example, the ongoing development being undertaken at Bee Orchid Way has provided evidence of overflows from that site's drain into the Staithe. This has happened a number of times and was reported both to the Environment Agency and Anglian Water. Householders in Lower Road at the bottom of New Inn Hill have also reported that the nearby pumping station is not always able to deal with current levels of waste disposal and thus on occasion sewage leaks into the nearby beck and into the Staithe.

The extra weight on the road at New Inn Hill caused by the recent increase in lorries needed by the various housing developments caused the road opposite the public house to collapse and fracture the water main. If heavy plant vehicles put a major strain on the road and the utilities' infrastructure beneath then any further increase in traffic following development will have a similar effect over time.

The Parish Council does not consider this site suitable for development.

Site 2061

This site has a narrow, very restricted access which would make entering and exiting a major difficulty both during any possible construction period or afterwards. Years ago, what may once have been a suitable access point for smaller tractors is no longer viable as an entry or exit. It is closely bordered by private properties with no possibility of achieving any change to the layout to increase access width.

With this constraint in mind, the site is also very close to the corner of Surlingham Lane, from which cars turn into the village increasing the volume of traffic close to the entry of the site. A 'difficult entry/exit' would constitute a serious hazard. Data from our SAM2 monitor shows that between 1,700 and 2,000 vehicles pass through the village daily. Any problem on the A146 results in a massive increase on those numbers as drivers use it as an alternative. Although this section of road is not listed as part of the national cycle highway, nevertheless, being flat, it is a popular stretch of road for cyclists and heavily used as such.

One of the key features of Rockland St Mary is that it is a linear village. Creating a 'backland' site here at the centre of the village would destroy this historic feature and possibly create a precedence for further such developments and 'infill'

The Parish Council considers that, along with the 1 in 30 surface water flood risk, the access constraints make the site entirely unsuitable for development.

Site 2064

This site is at the centre of the village and has all the key facilities in close proximity- the GP surgery, the shop/Post Office, a private swimming pool open for public use, the primary school, the Parish Room and the village hall for recreational use. Consequently this small area is heavily used and so forms another hazardous spot in this single road village for pedestrians and road users due to the numbers of people of all ages using these facilities, parking, and crossing the road. The site access is where the number 85 bus stops.

Although this section of road is not listed as part of the national cycle highway, nevertheless, being flat, it is a popular stretch of road for cyclists and heavily used as such.

Consequently, even if access could be achieved for this site, it would be too dangerous to put a housing development at this point without creating safer pedestrian-only areas and limiting car parking- both of which are probably unviable in a narrow street. The Parish Council is aware that there is a covenant on the private drive.

One of the key features of Rockland St Mary is that it is a linear village. Creating a 'backland' site here at the centre of the village would destroy this historic feature and may set a precedence for similar developments or infills.

Residents have expressed the view that the ongoing housing development at Bee Orchid Way should be sufficient to provide a 'share' towards the extra housing required by the GNLP.

Villagers have voiced concern to the Parish Council about the use of prime agricultural land that has always been used to grow crops year round being lost to housing. People are mindful that, with the very real threats caused through climate change as well as possible consequences of leaving the European Union, that all County Councils should regard good quality agricultural land as having prime importance.

The Parish Council therefore does not consider this site suitable for development.

Site 2063

Residents whose properties back onto this proposed site have expressed concern about drainage issues as the site slopes towards their properties. Much of the land sub-structure is clay based (there were former brick works in the village) and close to marsh land so drainage is an ongoing issue wherever there is the slightest slope.

This site is at the centre of the village and has all the key facilities in close proximity- the GP surgery, the shop/Post Office, a private swimming pool open for public use, the primary school, as well as the Parish Room and the village hall which are used in the day and evening for recreational purposes. Because this small area is heavily used it forms another dangerous spot in this single road village for pedestrians and road users due to the numbers of people of all ages using these facilities, parking, and crossing the road.

Consequently, even if access could be achieved for this site, it would be too dangerous to put a housing development at this point because it is so close to where cars pull in to park at the shop or to the GP surgery opposite. There would be a necessity to create safer pedestrian-only areas and limit car parking- both of which are unviable in a narrow street which serves as the main road in the village. Limiting car parking would have a detrimental effect on the shop/Post Office and cause parking problems for residents further along the street. The site access is very close to where the number 85 bus stops.

There are very limited employment opportunities in Rockland St Mary. New people moving into the village are almost always commuters to employment elsewhere. Residents are concerned that even modestly-sized housing developments add to the ever-increasing traffic in the village.

The volume of traffic into the village from the large Loddon housing expansion by drivers who wish to avoid the difficulties of turning right, onto the A146, has added to pressure on the single road through the village. If the A146 is blocked, the village is used as a backway.

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One of the key features of Rockland St Mary is that it is a linear village; creating a 'backland' site here at the centre of the village would destroy this historic feature.

Residents have expressed the view that the ongoing housing development at Bee Orchid Way, along with various infill building over the years should be sufficient to provide a 'share' towards the extra housing required by the GNLP.

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