

Harby Journal

Special supplement FEBRUARY 2010

MILLWAY DAIRY PLANNING APPEAL

INFORMAL HEARING OPEN TO ALL VILLAGERS

**VALLEY CHRISTIAN CENTRE,
MAIN STREET, HARBY**

From 10am Tuesday 23 February

Wednesday 24 February reserved for any outstanding matters

It is important that as many villagers as possible attend, even if it is only for a short time, to hear the arguments of the developers and the council in front of the Planning Inspector. Whether you agree or disagree with the proposals, please make an effort to be there.

Should you not be able to attend through the day, make a point of dropping in (perhaps on the school run) and make yourself known to the doorkeeper. If your partner is unable to attend and you represent them, make this clear.

The supporters of these proposals claim

- **Removes for all time the constant threat of inappropriate industrial development**
- **Removes a considerable eyesore and increasingly dangerous building**

← **North**



Proposed development

Editor's Note:

Welcome to this Special edition of the Harby Journal, issued as a supplement to the February 2010 Journal. This supplement is devoted to the important local issue of the development plan for the Millway dairy site.

Dairy Crest closed the former cheese factory in 2000 and Harby Estates acquired the site in 2004. It has remained derelict since 2000. Proposals to develop the site have been refused by Melton Borough Council and the site owners, Harby Estates Ltd, have lodged an appeal. The appeal will be decided upon on the basis of an informal hearing. The outcome will affect everyone in Harby.

Unfortunately very few people are aware of this public hearing due to the lack of publicity. This supplement is being published to remind everyone of the issues and to brief newcomers to the village who will not have been involved in the discussions over the years.

The information within has been kindly collated by Quentin Lewis of the Harby Liaison Group, and reviews the pros and cons of the proposed eco-development.

Continued from front page

- **Provides much needed starter and retirement homes**
- **Provides substantial local employment based on a business centre**
- **Enhances village facilities, including £300,000 donation to new village hall fund**

The objectors to these proposals claim

- **That an important employment potential opportunity is lost to the village**
- **That it does not comply with the local planning regulations**

Make your views known

Current Situation

Harby Estates have launched an appeal against Melton Borough Council's refusal to grant planning permission for a carbon neutral mixed development of homes, live/work units and B1 business space on the former Millway Dairy site.

- The developers, Harby Estates Ltd have applied for planning permission to redevelop the former Millway site. This was turned down by MBC without any discussion or meeting to discuss potential areas of compromise.
- The developers have now appealed against the planning refusal and the appeal hearing is to be heard in the village at the Valley Christian Centre, on Tuesday 23rd February and reconvening on Wednesday 24th if there is any unfinished business.
- Anyone can attend to hear the arguments between the MBC and Harby Estates. Villagers can make their own representations as individuals (both for and against the plans).
- If they cannot attend, then they can write to the Planning Inspectorate directly. There is no guarantee that the letter will be acted on as it is now out of time but it and its contents will be noted.
- Address to write to:

The Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quays House
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6PN

Quoting Appeal Reference:

APP/Y2430/A/09/2114336: former dairy site Harby Leics
LE14 4BE

- The inspector will normally announce his/her decision, whether or not to overturn the Borough Council's refusal to grant planning permission, within three weeks.

***IF YOU WANT YOUR VIEWS TO BE KNOWN TO THE
INSPECTOR,
PLEASE WRITE NOW – DO NOT LEAVE IT TO NEXT
WEEK, IT MAY BE TOO LATE.***

A reminder of the issues

The proposals are

- To clear the whole of the Millway site, demolishing all buildings.
- To build a mixed community of
 - 11 x three to five bedroom houses
 - 7 x two bedroom apartments
 - 6 x two bedroom downsizing apartments
 - 12 x two bedroom affordable houses
 - 6 x live/work units
 - 10,000 sq ft of B1 business space
- The whole project to be built to the highest Eco standards.

Built to highest Eco standards

- Solar heated: all properties orientated towards the sun
- Earth covered roofs to maximise heat insulation
- All hardcore from demolition and breaking up concrete hard standings to be used on site including for heat sinks in the buildings to retain heat.
- Zero carbon emission
- Rainwater harvesting
- Sewage disposal via Intensive reed bed systems
- Bio-fuel production from coppicing, etc.

Minimal impact on surroundings

- Tiered housing built into slope to reduce intrusion
- Roofs camouflaged with green vegetation, either grass or sedum
- Strategic hedging and tree planting to protect public views from roadside, village and canal banks
- Reinstatement of adjacent canal bank including boat lay-by
- Enhanced wild life habitat
- No call on local sewage works, reed bed disposal

Other matters

- In all, the built upon area is reduced by one acre compared to the current situation
- Cost of housing will be competitive and affordable.
- Business centre support facilities available to the wider local community including secretarial, mail box, telephone answering services, meeting rooms and offices available by the hour / day / week, hot desking, etc
- Community office with manager
- Information centre for visitors
- Employment generated by the development is estimated at over 60 persons, almost as many as the dairy.
- A continuous footpath will be provided along Colston Lane to the Canal Bridge.

What is at stake is a total package of the above, each part reliant on the others. It is not possible to 'pick and mix' only the bits that you particularly like.

The objections to the proposals are

The Parish and Borough councils' main objections to the proposed redevelopment of the Millway site are:

1. A loss of potential employment that might be generated by the industrial use of the Millway site.
2. That it does not comply with various structure plans, etc.

With regard to the employment issue, the site's owners point out that it has been marketed intensively since the dairy closed 10 years ago with no real interest, not even in the "boom" years of 2004 / 2007. This is not surprising because within a ten-mile radius of Harby there are now over 1.2 million square feet of empty industrial units competing with the Millway site, all with better road access and without the site clearance issues. The Millway site cannot compete except by attracting bad neighbour uses that had been rejected elsewhere in the county.

Recently, a Hallal chicken factory was proposed with on-site hostel accommodation for 400 temporary workers. In 2005 there was the meat carcass stripping and re-processing proposals. The proposed uses included the potential of 24-hour lorry access, night-time working, obnoxious smells, noise, no guarantee of any local employment. Despite active marketing by the owners, no real interest has been generated.

Since MBC rejected the plans, the developers have met their request to increase the workspace to 10,000 sq ft. This, together with the live/work units is expected to generate over 60 new jobs, almost as many as the cheese factory in its best years. These are going to be eminently suitable for local employment.

Perversely, the best way to create truly local employment is for the Millway site not to be developed industrially but to be redeveloped as proposed.

Some people do hold the view:

Harby should stay as it is, we do not want it to change or grow any larger.

A BRIEF HISTORY

- In 2005, a presentation was held at the Millway site by the developers to introduce their proposals to the villagers.
- Subsequently, it became clear that both Parish and Borough Councils were against the development and would not enter into discussion with the developers. However, it was apparent to many villagers that there was considerable merit in what was proposed.

- To fill the vacuum between the village and the developers, a group of villagers representing a wide spectrum of the community formed the Harby Liaison Group (HLG) to promote Harby's best interests.
- HLG sponsored village presentations in 2007 and 2008 where exit polls showed continuing overwhelming support of over 78% for the development and 15% for it remaining industrial use only (7% didn't vote).
- It was clear that the Millway development would put stress on various village amenities. Discussions were held with the school, village hall and other village organisations. The consensus was that the village hall would be affected the greatest. But its fabric was run down and needed refurbishment. Knowing that Melton Borough Council would be demanding a planning gain, HLG pre-empted the situation by negotiating a section 106 agreement with the developers to upgrade the hall so it would be fit to service the extended community. As a result the developers are offering £300,000. This ring-fenced the planning gain to the village and not some other pet project of the council elsewhere.
- Having completed its objectives of ensuring Harby benefitted from any development, HLG was wound down.

MORE INFORMATION INCLUDING A FULL SET OF THE DEVELOPER'S PLANS AND COPIES OF THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSES CAN BE FOUND AT:-

http://publicaccess.melton.gov.uk/publicaccess/tdc/dcapplication/application_detailview.aspx?caseno=KAA2WLKO00G00

Other considerations

- This development overcomes the danger that unless Harby expands, it will become atrophied. To be a vibrant community, it needs new local employment to encourage village children to stay in the locality, who in turn need starter homes and then need places at the school for their children. If nothing is done, as the average village population ages the school declines because of falling numbers. The head teacher has expressed concerns for the situation in two or three years.
- In the same way, older villagers need housing to downsize to or they have to leave Harby. There is a danger of the village becoming a community of commuters (not a village).
- What is really new and a first for such a development is that six homes are now included for village people wishing to downsize on retirement. So many people have had to leave the village because there is no suitable accommodation, an issue that has been neglected by the planners and local councils in the past.
- These proposals help overcome the fears raised by some people that the eco project will create a split village. However, both village youngsters moving to the affordable homes and those who have lived in the village for sometime downsizing will be the cement that joins both parts, together with the shared facilities.

- The few green areas left in Harby can be protected from development more easily because the pressure to build on them will be reduced by the new housing stock, especially the affordable homes.
- The Grantham Canal's recent developments locally have not been considered by the councils in their rejection. The canal is developing into a linear park and is used increasingly for recreation. It is considered by users as being part of Harby, although outside the village envelope. The new eco development will enhance the canal's development both directly through bank-side improvements and indirectly through removing the derelict factory hinterland.
- An important consideration is what if the planning refusal is upheld. Without a commercial use, the site will continue to deteriorate, attracting break-ins and the danger of illegal rubbish dumping or colonization by travellers.
- The site cannot remain idle; a use will eventually be found that is likely to be unpalatable to villagers. The B2 planning approval stays with the accompanying threat of 24-hour additional lorry movements, noise, smells, disruption and no guarantee of either local employment or improvement to the site.

***THE MILLWAY DAIRY SITE
PLANNING PROPOSAL***

***Low environmental impact redevelopment of site to
provide business centre, 6 live work units and 36
dwellings with associated infrastructure and
landscaping at***

Millway Foods Ltd, Colston Lane, Harby

APPEAL BY HARBY ESTATES LTD

INFORMAL HEARING

to be held at the

VALLEY CHRISTIAN CENTRE

MAIN STREET, HARBY

From 10am Tuesday 23 – Wednesday 24 February

COME AND MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN