

# Chelmondiston Parish Council

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Chairman: Cllr David Cordle, 'Trelowena', Hill Farm, Chelmondiston, Ipswich IP9 1JU

**Mrs Frances Sewell** – Clerk to *Chelmondiston Parish Council*  
Houseboat Pandora, Pin Mill, Chelmondiston, Ipswich IP9 1JW  
Telephone: 01473 780 138 e-mail: clerk@chelmondistonpc.info

The Call-In Manager  
National Planning Casework Unit  
5 St. Philips Place  
Colmore Row  
Birmingham  
B3 2PW

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By Post and e-mail to: npc@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Dear Sirs

## Application for Call-In

**Former HMS Ganges Site, Shotley Gate, Shotley, Suffolk IP9**

**Babergh District Council ref: B/12/00500/FUL**

### Proposal:

As amended ....

*"The full and partial demolition of existing buildings associated with the phased redevelopment comprising new buildings and conversion of existing buildings to provide 285 dwellings; a 60 bed nursing home; a new building containing 364sqm retail use and 796sqm of offices (Class B1); a building containing 439sqm flexible dentist/doctor's surgery/veterinary surgery/retail offices (Classes B1/A2 or D1) and 437sqm of offices (Class B1); the use of Nelson Hall for estate offices, changing rooms, dry sports, workshops, community use and cafe (Sui-generis); the use of Vincent House as a flexible Hotel or Hostel (Classes C1/C2) together with parking and landscaping to form a linear park and landscape gardens together with associated further landscaping and lighting."*

Chelmondiston Parish Council fully endorses the views of Woolverstone Parish Council on the above planning application and its determination by Babergh District Council (BDC).

Rather than reiterate the arguments clearly set out in Woolverstone's submission, we have appended their letter to this in which we, too, respectfully request that the Secretary of State use his statutory powers to call-in this proposal and to re-examine it with a more balanced perspective than hitherto has been the case.

We do not feel that BDC's Planning Committee gave balanced consideration to the significant negative aspects of this planning proposal, nor to their own Local Plan and Core Strategy, nor to National Planning Guidance. While accepting that the site is unsustainable and the proposed development barely viable, they then failed to give weight to the environmental, social, infrastructure and other problems which would make approval of the planning proposal a bad planning decision.

As far as our parish is concerned, this is a development which would offer us no benefits, yet would put enormous strain on our community, largely because of the impact of a 40% increase of traffic on an inadequate road. BDC failed to appreciate just how inadequate the B1456 actually is. In urban terms it might be considered acceptable, but in an urban setting there would be alternative routes to share the traffic load, especially if the road were blocked by accident. We do not have this possibility in a road which is, to all intents and purposes, a 10-mile long cul-de sac, which floods at regular intervals at its busiest end because of high spring tides. Side roads, mostly only single-track, are so small as to present only further problems if traffic in any numbers is moved onto them.

Furthermore, we feel that BDC, possibly seduced by the offer of £2.5m for heritage projects, has failed in its duty to secure proper guardianship of listed monuments whose renovation should absolutely NOT be included in any financial agreement regarding mitigation measures for the development. Indeed, BDC has a duty to protect existing “heritage” areas – such as the conservation village of Woolverstone and the AONB, in which most of Chelmondiston lies. Our parish also includes the Conservation Area of Pin Mill, which, situated only a mile from the B1456, would also suffer as a consequence of the large traffic increase. Allowing almost double the traffic throughput would destroy the peace and tranquillity for which these areas are specially designated, and thereby cause damage to rural enterprises based on tourism and country pursuits. BDC should have ensured that the owners of the former Ganges site keep their listed monuments in good repair. Their renovation is emphatically not an issue for Section 106 measures.

Although within Babergh District our nearest town is Hadleigh, the Shotley Peninsula is, in fact, geographically much nearer and more closely tied to Ipswich as a centre for jobs, shopping and entertainment. There is a huge development plan in progress in Ipswich where there are many dwellings still unoccupied and many more being built. The proposed development at Shotley would do nothing to meet local housing needs on the peninsula, but would, instead, transplant a large number of people to an area where there are few facilities and from where they would mostly commute regularly to Ipswich and beyond for the majority of their needs. It would make far more sense for such a large development to be in close contact with the centre to which its population would most likely look for jobs and the usual infrastructure of daily life.

We recognise that the former HMS Ganges site requires some form of development, but turning a rural backwater into an isolated urban-style development 10 miles from the nearest town is surely not the correct solution. We have recently had proposals for development of a “solar farm” on high grade agricultural land on this peninsula. Would it not be much better to use the brown-field Ganges site for that sort of development? Then we would not see the destruction of a rural area essential to the well-being of Ipswich as a haven of tranquillity and an area to which people turn to pursue leisure activities.

**To sum up:** we feel that BDC Planning Committee’s decision was taken for the wrong reasons. In view of the fact that the site is recognised as unsustainable, and also the lack of proper infrastructure in the whole peninsula, this decision cannot be seen as appropriate. It goes against national and local plans and fails to make a good case why planning guidance should be ignored in this case. Furthermore, the lack of adequate levels of mitigation measures, for example a complete absence of any “affordable” housing, agreed, we hear, because the developer would not then make a sufficient profit, should not be a permissible reason to destroy AONBs, Conservation Areas and the quality of life of the surrounding populations. For these reasons we would ask that the Secretary of State call this application in for a more balanced decision.

Yours faithfully

*Fran Sewell*

Chelmondiston Parish Clerk

*Please address all correspondence to the Parish Clerk*

c.c Tim Yeo MP  
Peninsula Parish Councils