

October/November 2021 Chilworth Village Magazine

St Martha Parish Council

www.stmarthaparishcouncil.co.uk

Your Parish Council continues to examine all planning applications in our Parish and submit our comments or objections to Guildford Borough Council (GBC). A particularly contentious application was received recently, regarding the proposed installation of an 18-metre-high phone mast with 4 equipment cabinets, on a small roadside verge in Halfpenny Close, next to its junction with Blacksmith Lane. After very careful consideration, your Parish Council submitted its views to GBC as follows:

REFUSE: The current visual amenity around the proposed site is extremely high. It is within the Surrey Hills AONB, in an AGLV and immediately adjacent to the Chilworth Conservation Area; with views to St. Martha's Hill and the Chantries. This amenity would be destroyed by the proposed installation. The pre-planning consultation suggested that one possible site was rejected due to its closeness to dwellings. This proposed site is nearer to dwellings and should also have been rejected. Government guidance is to piggyback new facilities onto existing masts. There are nearby existing masts at Brookwood playing field in the middle of Chilworth; an entirely appropriate location for any additional facilities and well away from any dwellings. It is believed that microwave power levels from a 5G installation are higher than from existing phone masts and grave concern has been expressed with regard to harm from the emitted microwave radiation. The site is described as "within a dense urban setting". In fact, it is a semi-rural setting with no street lights and as previously described, is next to the Chilworth Conservation area. The application also states that the site was "selected to minimize visual impact upon the street scene by integrating with existing street furniture." This is untrue as there is no nearby street furniture except for a bench. It is said that the mast "would assimilate well into the immediate street scene and not be detrimental." This is patently untrue. The mast would be an eyesore not only for residents close to the mast but for the many other residents and others visiting the AONB and the historic ancient Gunpowder Mills. It would clearly be detrimental to residents and the wider community. We also note that the Borough's consultation with residents was limited to only five dwellings but considering that the mast would have a detrimental visual impact over a wide area, the consultation should have been much wider. Local residents have expressed concern that any necessary maintenance vehicles to the site would seriously impede traffic flow for local residents and emergency vehicles. Already there are around 6 vehicles parked opposite the site, day and night, seriously narrowing Halfpenny Close at all times and preventing access to the site for any maintenance vehicles. There are very strong local feelings opposing this application; with 30 members of the public at our PC mtg and 130 signing an opposing petition within a few days of notification. Many residents are shocked and distressed at this proposal and St Martha Parish Council urges GBC to take account of the views expressed by local residents. The Parish Council asks that at the very least, GBC councillors and planning officers should visit the site before making a decision, to see how inappropriate this installation would be. The proposed site location is clearly inappropriate and unacceptable to the Parish Council and a significant number of local residents, and we urge that the application be refused.

We have now ascertained from GBC that this planning application has been **WITHDRAWN**.

We also receive applications relating to tree work. Many of these relate to trees on properties within the Chilworth Conservation Area, where any significant tree work requires planning permission from GBC.

Highway matters are always on the agenda at our meetings. We recently attended a site meeting with the Surrey County Council Highways Traffic Engineer, regarding the narrowness of the A248 between Pine View Close and Mill Lane, to discuss the problems caused by vegetation encroaching onto the road and pavements, and other local matters of concern.

Regarding West Lodge, the Parish Council expects to hear shortly the results of the two applications for funding to refurbish the building for future use by our community.

The Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Gunpowder Mills will be held on Wednesday 17th November 2021 at 7:30 p.m. in Chilworth Village Hall.

Councillors:

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Next meeting Thursday 28th October 2021 at 7 p.m. in the St Thomas' Church Room.