

# **Sharba Homes, Barford CONSULTATION EVENT –29 September 2008 Summary Feedback Report**

## **Approach and purpose of consultation**

Sharba Homes is looking at the potential for bringing forward development proposals for a site on Wellesbourne Road, next to Barford House, in the village of Barford. Sharba Homes have a contract with the land owners to promote this site and would like to progress a scheme through the Local Development Framework.

There have been previous proposals to develop this land. In 2005 the results of a public consultation were published in the Barford Parish Plan and identified this land for the development of public open space, community use and a mix of housing. This is in line with Warwick District Council's Local Development Framework which is exploring options for new development including one of which is for the identification of suitable sites in the larger villages including Barford.

Sharba Homes held an initial round of consultation in July 2008 in order to meet local neighbours and organisations with an interest in this site and to hear what the community thought about a future development on this site and what it might include.

Having received feedback from the community and other interested parties a follow up session was arranged for **Monday 29 September 2008** so that people could see how their comments had been responded to and view more worked up proposals for the site.

## **Round 2 Consultation**

A follow up consultation event was held **on Monday 29 September 2008 from 2-7pm in the Barford Memorial Hall, Barford.**

The aim of the session was to enable interested parties to view more worked up proposals for the site the exhibition material and discuss the proposals face-to-face with representatives from Sharba Homes and their project team. Attendees were again encouraged to express their views through written comments and also through discussion with team members.

### ***Notifying Barford residents and stakeholders:***

Over 500 letters of invitation (*see Appendix A*) were mailed to local neighbours within the village. Specific letters were also sent to all those who had either attended the previous consultation session and/or asked to be kept informed.

In addition some 45 invitations were sent out to named stakeholders including local ward councillors, representatives of Village interests/groups, Barford, Sherborne & Wasperton Joint Parish Council, Warwickshire District Council officers and other organisations with an interest in the site.

A public notice was inserted in the Courier Midweek on Wednesday 24 September & in the Leamington Courier on Friday 26 September and notification was sent to the Barford Community Website

**Attendance:**

In attendance at the consultation event from the project team were:

**Sharba Homes:** (developer) Phil James, Gill James, Lydia Cope

**CSJ Brooke-Smith:** (planning consultants): Graham Parker, Narvinder Bains, Anna Bend

**Robothams Architects:** Nick James

**Avril Baker Consultancy:** (consultation co-ordinator): Avril Baker, Marc Leverton

On the day nearly 100 people came through the doors, of which 92 signed in. The vast majority of attendees were local residents but other named stakeholders included representatives from the local school, the Joint Parish Council and Warwickshire Police.

When people were signing in on arrival ABC informally asked people whether they had taken part in the previous round of consultation. In response it was clear that a significant number, potentially nearly half, did not attend in July and were therefore seeing the development proposals for the first time. Of those who completed written feedback forms 14% said they had not attended the previous consultation session.

**Consultation material:**

A number of the exhibition panels (see *Appendix B*) were on display. Those marked with an asterisk are boards that were displayed at the previous round of consultation in July.

The display included:

- Updated introductory board explaining the consultation process
- \*existing site plan showing the extent of the proposed development site, its location within the village and photos of key views
- \*site plan showing site features and surroundings with adjacent properties, existing landscape, key landmarks and sun path
- \*initial concepts showing areas of potential residential development, open space/community use, trees/planting, indicative transport routes and pedestrian and vehicular access
- A new display board showing a more detailed proposed layout for the site.

Also available to view were the various historic maps\* showing the site through the years, a full report detailing the history of Barford House and the archaeological features of the area, a tree report, an ecological report, a highways study, and a drainage report..

In response to comments about the type and quality of any potential new housing Sharba Homes and the project team were also interested in finding out what house types and styles attendees liked or disliked. A series of 20 photographs of different homes from around the village were on show and people were asked to select their most and least favourite of these.

**Feedback:**

Representatives from Sharba Homes and the project team were on hand throughout the afternoon/evening to talk to attendees and hear their views. This verbal feedback has been incorporated into this report and is important because not everyone who visited chose to make written comments.

In addition to their discussions with the team, attendees were invited to provide written feedback on comment forms (see *Appendix C*) which were handed out at the exhibition. Comments could either be posted in the comments box on the day or returned by post or email. A deadline of 10 October was given for those attending to return forms to ABC.

By Monday 13 October, 24 completed comment forms plus one letter of support had been returned. Whilst this is a relatively low level given the attendance on the day, during the evening there was a steady flow of attendees to the exhibition which meant that most people would have had the opportunity to express and discuss their views with one or more team members if they wished.

During the evening members of the team also talked to attendees in order to canvass their views on the various house styles on display. These were recorded on a separate form (see Appendix D) and completed at the time.

### ***Analysis of written comment forms***

The comment form began with an opening question asking whether people generally supported the principle of redeveloping the site. There were then 6 questions about specific aspects of the proposals combining tick options as well as boxes for further comment. Question 8 gave the opportunity for any additional issues to be raised. The final two questions asked whether respondents had participated in the previous consultation in July and finally more about the individual.

#### ***Question 1. Do you generally support the principle of redeveloping this site?***

Respondents could either tick: generally supportive, broadly supportive but with some concerns, opposed or undecided/no opinion.

Of the 24 comment forms that were either posted on the night or received by post or email some two thirds showed a level of support for the proposals.

Nine people (38%) were generally supportive and a further seven (29%) were broadly supportive but had some concerns. Just six people (25%) were opposed to the principle of development with two (8%) undecided.

This compares to the 39 responses to this question in July when 15% (6) were generally supportive whilst a further 57% (22) were broadly supportive but with some concerns. 20% (8) were opposed and 8% (3) had no opinion/were undecided.

The general verbal feedback to the team at the event was that a significant majority of the people support the principal of development of this site, and that there remain a small minority who are opposed to any development and/or have particular issues.

An explanation for the low level of written responses could be that as people had ample opportunity to discuss the proposals with team members that they did not feel the need to repeat themselves in writing.

#### ***Question 2. Do you support the mix of housing type?***

Yes	No	Undecided	No opinion
14 (64%)	4 (18%)	3 (14%)	1 (4%)

2 people did not indicate a preference

In conversations held with team members, the issue of affordable housing was one area of discussion, where mixed views were expressed as to the need for additional affordable housing, although most people supported provision of some sheltered housing.

In addition, if affordable housing is to be provided, it was generally felt that it should be inclusive within the scheme and not concentrated all in one location.

With regard to the private housing, verbal comments received expressed the view that a good variety of housing types, both size and style, should be included.

**Question 3. Do you feel that the proposed layout of the development in each area is acceptable?**

**Area 1**

Yes	No	Undecided	No Opinion
11 (58%)	2 (11%)	5 (26%)	1 (5%)

5 people did not indicate a choice

**Area 2**

Yes	No	Undecided	No Opinion
11 (58%)	4 (21%)	3 (16%)	1 (5%)

5 people did not indicate a choice

**Area 3**

Yes	No	Undecided	No Opinion
11 (58%)	3 (16%)	4 (21%)	1 (5%)

5 people did not indicate a choice

**Question 4. Do you support the conversion of this private, inaccessible land into a scheme focused around Community Open Space?**

Yes	No	Undecided	No Opinion
19 (83%)	3 (13%)	0	1 (4%)

1 person did not indicate a preference.

It was clear from the above results and in conversations during the session that the vast majority of people welcome the possibility of being able to access this land and for it to be opened up and used by the village.

***If 'yes' do you support the treatment/design of the main open space***

Yes	No	Undecided	No Opinion
15 (84%)	1 (5%)	2 (11%)	0

6 people did not indicate a preference

As above, the written feedback shows strong support for the proposed usage of this space which, added to the verbal feedback on the day, amounted to an overwhelming majority in favour.

**Question 5. The proposals include a new recreation centre. Do you agree that such a facility would benefit the village as a whole?**

Yes	No	Undecided	No opinion
14 (64%)	4 (18%)	3 (13%)	1 (4%)

2 people did not indicate a preference

Whereas last time a lot of the debate was about the cricket pitch and use of the outdoor space, this time most of the suggestions and comments were around possible uses of the hall/centre itself and how this would impact on the existing village hall. This issue will be considered further by Sharba and their project team.

**Question 6. The proposed layout shows a new pedestrian access and drop-off point to the rear of the school. Do you support this?**

yes	No	Undecided	No opinion
14(67%)	5 (24%)	0	2 (9%)

3 people did not indicate a preference

Issues around the school pick up/drop off, parking in Church Street and rear access and the amount of parking provision for the proposed new recreation centre were all issues picked up in the specific comments on the forms and in discussions with the team.

**Question 7. Did you appreciate the opportunity to comment on village housing designs today?**

Yes	No	No Opinion
20 (95%)	0	1 (5%)

3 people did not indicate a preference.

This additional element of the consultation provided a good talking point, as well as an additional opportunity for general discussion with attendees. This was enthusiastically welcomed by all who took part as an opportunity to express their opinions on what made Barford the type of village it is. The above results, together with specific comments on the forms and in verbal feedback, indicate that many people wish to see a mix of styles and features and feel that this variety is what gives Barford its character.

**Question 8. Do you have any other concerns or issues that you would like to raise?**

*These comments have been included in the further feedback section starting on page 6 of this report.*

**Question 9. Did you take part in the public consultation session on 14 July 2008?**

Yes	No	Not sure
19 (86%)	3 (14%)	0

2 people did not indicate a preference

On arrival ABC also informally asked people whether they had taken part in the July session. Although not everyone was asked it is estimated that between one third and half of those who attended had not participated in the July session.

It should be noted however, that only 3 of the new visitors completed feedback forms, presumably because the remainder were happy with the proposals and/or the opportunity to discuss the proposals with the team and therefore felt no need to make written comments.

It should be further noted that the 8 written objections to proposals received in response to the July consultation was reduced to just 6 written objections in September – of which only 4 confirmed they were present in July, 1 gave no answer to this question and 1 person confirmed they were not present in July.

**Question 10. About you?**

***People were asked to categorise themselves as a resident, someone who works locally, a local retailer/business owner or other.***

*Of those who completed comment forms 21 said they were local residents the remaining three did not respond to this question. The signing in sheets also show that the vast majority of those who attended lived locally.*

**Further feedback:**

In addition to the numerical analysis above when completing the written feedback form respondents were invited to make additional specific points after questions and to make any other general comments at the end.

It was clear from some of the forms that a number of people made their comments on the first page, not realising that there were further specific questions to follow. This meant that some of the responses were out of sequence therefore all the comments have been collated under topic headings rather than in the order they were made.

***Housing Mix***

Specific comments to this question were only made on a few of the feedback forms and these were generally by people who were either undecided or opposed to the housing mix proposals to confirm this. Those who were happy obviously had no comments to make other than ticking the relevant box. These responses centred around the potential effect that more affordable housing would have on the wider village and the concern this could create a social divide within Barford village. On the other hand, of the 64% who support the housing mix, only 1 person felt it necessary to make a specific comment.

The specific comments included:

- The Wasperton Lane site should not consist of sheltered and shared or low cost housing alone. This divides the housing in the village. This part of the village already has most of the low cost ownership
- I am concerned that affordable homes will be pushed into areas, thus creating a divide between that , & the more affluent area of the village, and creating social characteristics associated with "Housing Estates"
- Mix seems to mean less space for village facilities (*it should be noted however that the size of the public amenity area had not changed from the original proposals presented to the village, and this particular feedback form also requested extensive year-round outdoor facilities including tennis, bowls etc*)
- The mixes will need to be determined by the results of the current Housing Needs Survey
- I would stress the need for some sheltered housing and the need for suitable and nice small bungalows for the elderly – according to the news, we now have more pensioners than children in the UK! (*this comment was received from someone who supported the housing mix*)

### **Amount/density of development**

In their response to Question 2 about 'mix of housing' and in the general comments section a couple of people commented on the overall amount of development/number of homes, whilst others acknowledged that more housing was needed in the village.

It should again be noted that very few written comments were actually made on this point, with the majority supporting the proposals as shown

The specific comments included:

- I would prefer fewer new houses in Barford, the village is big enough already but given the need to provide homes for the village people who can't afford a big mortgage I support the plan in general
- Overdevelopment in a small village which is entirely in a conservation area
- Barford does not require any more houses/development
- Some concern at the proposed density level which appears rather crowded in places

### **Proposed layout**

In addition to people's views on the proposed layout of the three housing areas respondents made a number of other specific comments. These include:

- If the development were to proceed then the layouts are acceptable
- Access to the back of the school would be very beneficial. It is also important to provide good footpaths/cycling links between all the areas.
- Not convinced that area to rear of Barford House is suitable for development due to impact on setting of house and views from public footpath. Support other two areas in principle (*for context, the rear of Barford House is fully screened at present by the owners with very large trees so that the House cannot be seen from the footpath*)
- The 'smaller' houses at the entrance to Area 2 will detract from the sales value of the other houses in Area 2. Also there should be less housing at North end of Area 2 to allow a larger parking area

- Area 1 looks very crowded. The tongue of green (garden) next to our house looks very odd
- Use of tennis court area for housing OK, but more land required for additional parking scheme next to village hall.

Once again, very few specific notes were made, with the vast majority of respondees merely confirming support without further commentary.

### ***Design***

There were several other specific comments around overall design issues and it was frequently commented during the evening that the village has recently been ‘scarred’ by the Oldhams scheme.

Specific comments included:

- The design of the plots and housing would be critical if the principle of housing is approved.
- Design and materials of houses should be sympathetic with current Barford materials - do not introduce Cotswold stone just because it looks good in brochure
- Choosing a favourite design is not necessarily appropriate for the housing that might be constructed. For small terraced housing please take the trouble to visit the award winning development in Shipston-on-Stour
- Photos of existing village housing much appreciated. Shame effort taken was not utilised in the suggested development layout and design
- Your proposed architectural styling is so appallingly ugly, unimaginative and boring that whatever you do will simply be a blot on the landscape - as is everything else that gets built round here

It should be noted however that, despite the above comments on ‘proposed’ designs & architecture, no such proposals were on display at the consultation, as this stage has not yet been reached – only footprint layouts were on display. The comments are therefore assumed to have derived from the example photographs on the bottom of the scheme layout, which were typical Warwickshire house designs only, and from the Sharba questionnaire on typical designs of existing Barford houses.

### ***Treatment of the open space***

In the questionnaire respondents were asked if they supported the proposed treatment of the open space. The vast majority of those who responded did support both the principle of opening up this area of land for village use, as well as the proposed green area with a cricket strip in the centre, although one comment was made that “cricket pitch sounds nice but limited actual use - need to be sure that village really wants this and will pay to maintain it!”.

A second written comment was made from one person only who, whilst supporting the proposed open space use, also requested if “tennis/bowling/all year round outdoor activities” could be included in addition.

Those that did not agree with the open space proposals were invited to suggest what they would prefer to see instead. The only written comment being received in response being “leave it to the local farmers for agricultural purposes – sheep/cattle etc/wildlife”

### ***Proposed uses within the Recreation Centre***

Following the debate about the merits of cricket pitch and/or other sports uses, which was a key area of feedback from the first round of consultation, there were again differing views about the potential uses that could be included within the proposed new recreation centre.

Some people clearly still want a range of indoor sports facilities; others see the potential for different uses such as a social club, space for drama, dance or meetings that can't be accommodated in the existing hall.

Others raised the question as to whether new facilities or recreational space was needed at all and the impact of such a facility on the viability of the existing hall. There was also the issue of who would fund or maintain any new facility.

Some of the specific comments around possible uses include:

- Two badminton courts sounds good but again need to be sure that village really wants this and will pay. This facility will reduce income at current village hall. If no such facility more OAP dwellings please
- Badminton, table tennis and facilities to encourage young people (teenagers) to use and be actively involved in the centre
- A large multi-purpose space that could be used e.g. for indoor sports and recreation
- Drama stage/film screen + removable seating. Country dance floor
- Just needs to be a flexible site for a variety of activities e.g. tennis, badminton, 5-a-side etc
- It would be interesting to have a 'social club' area within the centre complete with licensed bar( similar to Stoneleigh Social Club)
- A large multi-purpose space that could be used, for example, for indoor sports and recreation facilities (e.g. badminton, 5 a-side football) and for performance and village events. Provision for a small meeting room, catering facilities and changing rooms for outdoor sports
- Indoor sports, receptions for groups too large to go to the Memorial Hall
- Café, cinema, sports

The local resident who wrote a letter as he was unable to attend the exhibition also commented: "I will continue to support this development as long as I am assured that Barford will gain some very good facilities that are sadly lacking - ie new social centre/village hall and hopefully a car park for the school to use for pick up and collection of children."

Comments regarding the impact on the existing village facilities and recreational space as well as future maintenance include:

- One village hall for a village this size is sufficient
- Sports only so no conflict with village hall
- We already have the playing fields with lots of space
- Not sure that village could support such a large facility. It is necessary to take into account its ongoing management and maintenance
- It could be in the wrong place
- Worried about who would look after it
- There is already a more than adequate recreational park

The opinions on this subject are clearly widely diverse and Sharba intend to conduct further enquiries into exactly what type, size and style of facility Barford village would like to have.

### ***School rear access/Parking for recreation centre***

Various comments were made surrounding the issue of access and parking for the benefit of both the proposed new recreation centre, as well as the new pedestrian access proposal for the rear of the school, in relation to the proposed layout. Other views were expressed in the final general comments section.

Specific comments around the access in relation to the school are as follows:

- Does an extra gate into school pose a security problem? Will it be locked during school hours?
- Parents should not be encouraged to bring their children by car. Pedestrian access is a good thing
- Access to the back of the school would be very beneficial. It is also important to provide good footpath/cycling links between all the areas.
- Access to the school is adequate for size of school
- Ease congestion in church street
- If the school agrees

In addition, there were a couple of specific comments about the proposed car parking area for the new community facility:

- If car park cannot be larger than shown add grasscrete area to edge of cricket pitch - near to pavilion/rec centre
- More land required for additional parking next to village hall

One other specific comment received was:

- Will take traffic away from the new shop

### **Responses to house types & style questionnaire**

In addition to the consultation boards around the proposed new development Sharba Homes was also keen to further understand what the local village like or dislike in terms of quality of architecture and which architectural features they considered are in keeping with the village. This follows comments at the previous consultation where people felt strongly that the style and quality of local village housing should be reflected in any new development.

To encourage a debate on the issue, 20 different photographs were displayed showing a range of residential properties in Barford. Then on the day, in conversation with team members, people were invited to look at the photographs and consider what embodies the character of the village by picking their favourite or least favourite images. During the consultation session 22 people answered the design questionnaire

***When asked to select their favourites***

16 properties were listed by 1 or more respondents.

The most popular were numbers 16 (9 votes) and 3 (8 votes) with numbers 1, 2 and 11 getting five votes each.

Feedback indicates that many people like a mix of styles and features and feel that this variety is what gives Barford its character. Two specific quotes make this point:

- A mix of all Barford styles – this is the only way to achieve a cohesive whole. Have a look at Chichester's recent developments. Add some colours and different kinds of bricks see Emscote Lawns as good design
- Think it's excellent – mixture of styles is what makes Barford interesting

Other specific comments included:

- We would expect the proposed development to pick up on the strong door & window features of the above properties to fit in with the village
- Georgian style
- Classic
- Leaving the rest to the experts
- Good selection/fair – happy with this
- Like rendered properties and cottage style + courtyard designs to fit in with existing properties in the village
- Different colours and more character
- Georgian style, veranda, keep charm and different styles.

One person also specifically commented that this should be referred to the UDS. Another made the point: "village type properties that could be adapted to today's requirements."

***When asked to select their least favourites***

Again 16 properties were listed – several of which also appeared in the 'favourites' selection. The least popular were numbers 5, 14, 17 and 13 – with 4 votes each.

Similarly these results show that people have different views.

Specific comments included:

- Too plain repetitive and boring
- More modern
- Too square, no character
- Ugly flat brick, don't like windows
- No modern brick and bland design
- 60s style

## **Conclusion:**

Sharba Homes and their team were again most appreciative of the number of people who took the time and trouble to come along to this second round exhibition and who provided further comments and thoughts.

Copies of the exhibition boards from the September exhibition are already available to view on the Barford Community website and this feedback report will also be posted there.

Sharba very much valued the opportunity to discuss in more detail the proposed development of this site and found the high level of feedback very helpful.

Whilst a small minority of people remain opposed to the principle of developing this site there are an encouraging majority who support residential development with additional community facilities and welcome the benefits this could bring to the village.

It is proposed that further studies and consultation will take place early in the New Year.

**Full copies of this report including the appendices are available on request from:**

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