

**Application Number:** DM/2018/00910

**Proposal:** Community hub facility and associated landscaping.

**Address:** Three Fields Site Main Road Magor Monmouthshire

**Applicant:** Mr Ben Thorpe

**Plans:**

**RECOMMENDATION: Approve**

Case Officer: Ms Kate Young

Date Valid: 29.05.2018

**1.0 APPLICATION DETAILS**

1.1 In May 2008 outline planning permission was granted for the erection of a new community hall, new vehicular access and carpark on this site. In June 2009 full permission was granted for a new community hall and associated works including a car park. Work on that permission was started with the provision of the access and car park but the pre-commencement conditions were not discharged. The design of the proposed building has now changed and thus there is now a need for a full application to provide the community hub.

1.2 The site to the south of Newport Road in Magor covers an area of 1.74 ha. To the south of the site is the main South Wales railway line which is raised up on an embankment. To the west is Mill Reen with flood embankments on either side. To the north-west are residential properties. The site is within the Magor and Undy Development boundary and has been designated as an Area of Amenity Importance. The whole site is within a C1 Flood Zone and is also an Archaeologically Sensitive Area.

1.3 The current application seeks the erection of a community hall, measuring 19 metres by 28 metres and being 8.24 metres high to the ridge, (this is smaller than the previously approved scheme). The building would be finished in brickwork at low level with vertical timber cladding (Cedar or Larch) above. The roof would be covered in zinc panels with a standing seam. The canopy to the front would also be of zinc. The building will provide sports facilities, changing rooms, community hall, kitchen and toilet facilities all on a single level. The scheme has been developed by the MUCH community group who will manage the building once constructed. The building has been designed to meet BREEAM Excellent Standards, a low energy building using sunlight and natural ventilation. Solar panels will be installed on the south elevation and a waste water heat recovery system will be used.

1.4 The vehicular access into the site and parking provision for 34 cars has already been provided. A pedestrian crossing over the B4245 will be provided close to the access as will a pedestrian island in the main road. Green Infrastructure will be provided throughout the site in the form of soft and hard landscaping, including a new hedge to be planted along the road frontage, tree planting and an ephemeral pond. Low level security lighting would be provided on the building, the embankment would be regraded and steps added, a 'teenage shelter' would be provided to the west of the carpark. New pedestrian links into the site would also be provided.

1.5 The application is accompanied by the following supporting documents:  
Design and Access Statement;  
Flood Consequences Assessment;  
Geotechnical Report;

## 2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (if any)

Reference Number	Description	Decision	Decision Date
DM/2018/00910	Community hub facility and associated landscaping.	Pending Determination	
DC/2006/00353	Convert existing bungalow into house plus increase in size.	Approved	29.08.2006
DC/2008/01185	New house.	Approved	24.02.2009
DC/2016/00084	Demolition of existing road bridge and construction of new bridge under Part 11, Class A to Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (GPD).	Approved	18.02.2016
DC/2008/00976	Replacement of existing bungalow with two storey dwelling.		
DM/2018/00910	Community hub facility and associated landscaping.	Pending Determination	
DC/2007/00924	Construction of community hall, including new vehicular access from B4245 and new car park (renewal of outline permission)	Approved	23.05.2008
DC/2009/00351	New community hall with associated works, including car park	Invalid Application	01.12.2009

## 3.0 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

### Strategic Policies

S5 LDP Community and Recreation Facilities  
 S12 LDP Efficient Resource Use and Flood Risk  
 S13 LDP Landscape, Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment  
 S16 LDP Transport

## **Development Management Policies**

SD2 LDP Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency

SD3 LDP Flood Risk

SD4 LDP Sustainable Drainage

GI1 LDP Green Infrastructure

NE1 LDP Nature Conservation and Development

EP1 LDP Amenity and Environmental Protection

MV1 LDP Proposed Developments and Highway Considerations

DES1 LDP General Design Considerations

LC5 LDP Protection and Enhancement of Landscape Character

## **4.0 REPRESENTATIONS**

### 4.1 Consultation Replies

Magor with Undy Community Council - Approve

Network Rail - No objection in principle but due to the proposal being next to Network Rail land and out infrastructure, to ensure that no part of the development adversely impacts the safety, operation and integrity of the operational railway we bring to your attention asset protection comments which the applicant is strongly recommended to action. The LPA should include these as planning conditions if the matters have not been addressed

Natural Resources Wales - We recommend that you should only grant planning permission if specified conditions are imposed.

MCC Highways - The site was the subject of a previous planning application for the same development and was approved under DC/2009/00351. Since that approval the site has been developed as far as providing the vehicular access onto the B4245 and the car park however the community building was not erected. The current application is for the erection of the community building.

In light of the above the vehicular access and car park has been developed in accordance with the previous planning approval therefore there are no objections to the proposed community hall. The community hall has been reduced in size therefore the car parking provision is more than satisfactory to support the development. However, it is noted that concerns have been raised over the width of the vehicular access in that it is too narrow. The approved access has been designed 5m wide which is acceptable for a shared vehicular access. The minimum width required for a shared access is 4.1m.

I would refer to the off-site highway improvements required by the highway authority under the previous application, namely; controlled pedestrian crossing facility and a dedicated right turn. The dedicated right turn was not conditioned as part of the previous planning permission by the Planning Authority which is a concern. The controlled pedestrian crossing was conditioned however no proposal for the same has been submitted as part of this planning application. It is accepted that there are existing controlled pedestrian crossings east and west of the development however an additional controlled pedestrian crossing is necessary adjacent to the site to cater for the local community situated between the site and the eastern controlled pedestrian crossing.

In light of the aforementioned comments there are no highway grounds to sustain an objection to the application subject to a condition requiring a pedestrian crossing.

Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust - An archaeological evaluation was conducted on the site by GGAT Projects in 2001 (Report no. 2001/069, dated October 2001). The evaluation noted archaeologically significant deposits, likely dating to the Iron Age, Roman and medieval periods. Additionally, ridge and furrow earthworks were noted, as well as drainage grips, which form an

integral part of the historic landscape of the area. A further deposit of peat was noted during a watching brief conducted during geotechnical investigations in 2006 (GGAT Projects report no. 2006/026, dated April 2006).

As a result there is the potential to encounter archaeologically significant remains during the course of any ground-intrusion works.

Therefore it is our recommendation that a condition requiring the applicant to submit a detailed written scheme of investigation for a programme of archaeological work to protect the archaeological resource should be attached to any consent granted by your Members.

#### 4.2 Neighbour Notification

6 letters of support.

Superb idea and essential for the future of Magor with Undy

Plans have been thorough, careful iterations and residents views taken into account

The group running the team are dedicated volunteers with a professional approach

Fantastic to see this progressing

MUCH Group are doing a fantastic job

Plans well designed

The Hub will accommodate many activities

Useful asset to the community

Hopefully this will integrate with the community adopted station.

The central location of this facility is key to tying the communities of Magor and Undy

Providing a space of activities that cannot be accommodated elsewhere in the village

Need more services for young people

2 letters of objection

The steps are no good for pushchairs, wheel chairs and mobility scooters

Requires drainage from the pond due to flooding

The teenage shelter will not be used as there is too much surveillance of it.

The opportunities plan shows a footpath to the Plantations which goes through people's gardens

CCTV with sound will be required

Carpark is a hot spot for boy racers.

Proposal will require a great deal of maintenance and funding in the future

Current carpark is overgrown with weeds.

The teenage shelter will lead to litter and may intimidate local residents.

Vandalism

Design of the building out of keeping with the character of the area.

The proposed building will be too high

It will look unsightly and intrusive from the road

Area prone to flooding; impact on the water table

May lead to future flooding

Impact on Wildlife

Few unspoilt areas left in Magor

Planting too many trees will affect the nature of the marshland

Noise impact

Access to carpark too narrow for two cars.

Parking will spill onto the main road

Car park used for school run parking

Increase in accidents

Community centre could be located elsewhere, could use the Memorial Hall

## **5.0 EVALUATION**

### 5.1 Principle of the proposed development

5.1.1 The site is within the Magor with Undy Development Boundary and planning permission has previously been granted for a community hall on this site and therefore the principle of a community hub on this site is established. Policy S5 of the LDP states that development proposals that provide community and recreational facilities will be permitted within village development

boundaries subject to detailed planning considerations. The principle of a new community facility in this location is policy compliant and conforms to the overall strategy of the LDP. The access and parking provision have already been constructed. The whole site has been designated as an Area of Amenity Importance. Policy DES2 of the LDP only allows development on areas of amenity importance if there is no unacceptable adverse effect on the visual and environmental amenity of the area, no adverse impact on its relationship to adjacent areas of green infrastructure, no impact on its role as a venue for formal and informal sport, and there would be no adverse impacts on the cultural amenity of the area or nature conservation interests. In this case the proposal does improve the visual and environmental amenity of the area by providing significant improvements in Green Infrastructure through substantial landscaping and providing community access. The site will have enhanced links to existing sports facilities including the tennis courts. The site will encourage informal recreation providing public access to managed open green space with footpaths running through. The open space surrounding the building and the carpark has been designed to offer a variety of habitats in order to protect and enhance nature conservation interests. The proposal does accord with the objectives of Policy DES2 and the contribution provided by this area of Amenity Importance is retained and enhanced.

## 5.2 Design

5.2.1 The building footprint and height have been significantly reduced from that of the previously approved scheme. The proposed building is made up of three forms, two halls with pitched roofs linked by a central flat roofed element. The principal elevation faces west into the carpark and has a large amount of glazing. The east elevation is the one most visually prominent when traveling west along the main road. This elevation is largely blank but there will be some high level glazing behind hit and miss timber cladding. Elevation C facing the road will contain two sets of double doors. The building form and layout has a simple composition, any signage on the building will have to be the subject of a separate application for express consent to display an advertisement. Window and door openings are generously proportioned to provide solar gain. There will be external shuttering to the windows. The finishing brick will be a red mixed-stock brick and the remaining elements of the building will be clad in locally sourced timber. The roof finish will be zinc and the door and window frames will be aluminium or composite, with their colour to match with the roof. The gutters and rainwater goods will be hidden behind the cladding. Vents and extracts will be on the rear elevation of the building where possible.

5.2.2 The building is aiming to achieve BREEAM Excellent providing a low energy building using sunlight and natural ventilation with solar panels and a waste water heat recovery device. A cycle shed and bin store will also be provided on site in materials to match the main building. The proposed design is appropriate for this type of community building, the scale and massing is acceptable and it will contribute to a sense of space without dominating the area. The choice of materials is appropriate for this type of community building and should prove to be low maintenance. The proposal accords with the objectives of Policy DES1 of the LDP.

## 5.3 Flooding

5.3.1 The application site lies entirely within a C1 Flood Zone due to tidal flooding of the Severn Estuary. A community hall is considered as less vulnerable development according to the advice in TAN15. A Flood Consequences Assessment was submitted as part of the application and the topographical survey confirms that existing ground levels range from 5.5 metres to 8metres AOD. The FCA states that the proposed finished floor levels of the new building will be set at 8.5 metres AOD. Based on this height of finished floor level the proposal is predicted to be flood free in the 1:200 flood scenario and is therefore compliant with A1.14 of TAN15 provided that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved FCA and that finished floor levels are no lower than 8.05 metres above AOD. Based on a FFL of 8.05 the proposed development is predicted to flood to a potential depth of 40mm during a 1 in 1000 year extreme m flood event. This is within the tolerable limits set out in A1.15 of TAN15 for this type of development. It is recommended that a Flood Evacuation Plan be produced and that the occupants sign up to the Early Flood Warning System operated by NRW. The development is demonstrated to be flood free in the 1 in 200 year flood and within tolerable limits for the 1 in 1000 year event. The proposal is therefore compliant with both A1.14 and A1.15 of TAN 15 and NRW offers no objection.

## 5.4 Highway Considerations

5.4.1 The car parking provision is more than satisfactory to support the development and complies with the adopted Monmouthshire Parking Standards. The approved access has been designed to be 5m wide which is acceptable for a shared vehicular access. The minimum width required for a shared access is 4.1m. Therefore the width of the existing access is acceptable in highway terms. There is a need for a controlled pedestrian crossing close to the entrance of the site, to ensure the safety of pedestrians visiting the Hub building. The B4245 can be very busy at peak times and it is necessary to have a new controlled crossing close to the site entrance. This can be secured by condition. Despite an original request by Highways for the provision of a turn right lane, the previous scheme on this site did not require such a dedicated right turn on the B road. This is not considered necessary within the current application given that the proposed building is of a smaller scale than the previous one.

## 5.5 Residential Amenity.

5.5.1 There are thirteen properties on the north side of the B4245 which face into the site, two of these would be directly opposite to the Hub building itself. The proposed new building would be approximately 35 metres to the south west Carlinville and Dunmarklyn. Whilst that would reduce views and outlook from those properties the distance between the two means that there will be no overbearing impact especially given that the pitch of the roof of the proposed building slopes away from the road. The proposed building is smaller than the one previously approved for this site. There would be two glazed openings on the north east elevation of the building but these will not result in a loss of privacy given they are at ground floor level and the fact that there is a main road between the two. The other properties will face into public open space much as they do now. The is one residential property ... adjacent to the northern corner of the site, this will be next to the proposed community growing area which will not have an adverse impact on existing residential amenity. Local residents are concerned over the noise that could be generated from building itself and from the carpark. A Noise Report was submitted as part of the application. The community building will be used for a wide variety of purposes including badminton and other sports, drama and film shows, community meetings and wedding parties.. There is a potential for some of these activities to impact on nearby residential properties to the north of the site due to the breakout noise from the building envelope. The building has been designed so that the main function room is on the south side away from the existing residential properties. In addition there are very high levels of background noise on this site generated from the road and the railway line. Whilst it is accepted that some of the activities will generate noise that could impact on local residents this increase in noise it set against a high background noise and will not be so great to justify refusal of the application. A condition could be imposed restricting operating hours and any infringes of noise levels would be covered by Environmental Health Legislation.

## 5.6 Archaeology

5.6.1 Despite there having been evidence of archaeological remains in the local area, Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) has no objection to the proposal but request a detailed written scheme of investigation for a programme of archaeological work to protect the archaeological resource. This can be imposed by condition and is unlikely to prevent the development from progressing.

## 5.7 Ecology

5.7.1 A preliminary ecology appraisal survey and report was carried out in January 2018 by Just Mammals Consultancy. In addition, a separate ecological survey for otters and water vole was carried out during the same time frame. The site is considered to have moderate wildlife interest and ecological value due to the mature trees, orchard, hedges, drainage ditches and Mill Reen. During the botanical survey 76 species of mostly common and widespread plants were found, alongside 8 species of common birds. Although no reptile species were recorded, some habitats on site were found to be suitable for

supporting reptile species, such as slow worms and grass snake. Breeding amphibians may also be present and Just Mammals have recommended a dedicated reptile and amphibian survey is carried out. There was no evidence of badgers. No dedicated assessment for bat presence was undertaken, but it is assumed that roosts may be present. The fringes of the site will almost certainly be used for foraging and commuting by bats, and it is likely that on occasion, bats will forage over the grasslands which dominate the site. The presence of species of bat along the reens is very likely. No survey for these animals is recommended by Just Mammals, but advice is given with respect to retention of trees and the use of artificial lighting on site.

5.7.2 The proposal accords with the objectives of Policy NE1 of the LDP

## 5.8 Green Infrastructure and Landscaping

5.8.1 The soft landscape proposals for the proposed Community Hub have been developed in conjunction with the design team to provide an appropriate setting for the development which responds to the existing landscape character and promotes public usage of the wider site. Broadly, the planting strategy utilises native tree and shrub species across the wider site augmented by ornamental flowering and structural plants adjacent to the new building.

5.8.2 The site forms a series of three low lying fields which are bounded to the north by the B4245 and to the south by the South Wales Main Line railway. Beyond the railway line are the Magor Marshes and several reens cross the site to drain towards them. Two of the fields are managed as pasture, whilst the third contains an orchard consisting of young and mature fruit trees. The southern, lowest, part of the site is subject to periodic flooding with groups of alder and willow reinforcing the local landscape character and the site's proximity to the Marshes. Native hedgerows line the site's field edges and reens. A recently constructed car park is situated in the centre field and of note is the steep, unmanaged and incongruous embankment which has been introduced along the southern edge.

5.8.3 The landscape proposals have sought to retain the open pasture character, whilst strengthening green infrastructure linkages across the site and beyond to the Gwent Levels and to the tree lined ridge to the north. Pockets of native structure and hedgerow planting would be introduced to infill gaps and provide additional biodiversity and a new hedgerow and tree planting would be incorporated along the northern boundary to provide a buffer between the Community Hub and the main road. Within the fields, wildflower meadow areas would be introduced and in the lower lying areas, marshland species would be introduced along with sporadic specimen wetland trees. A part of the low lying meadow area has been designed in conjunction with the Project Engineer to function as a bio retention swale and in addition, a small ephemeral pond has been incorporated with a timber boardwalk to provide access. Native shrubs have been introduced alongside the car park to provide visual softening of the cars when viewed from the meadows.

5.8.4 The proposal accords with the objectives of Policy GI1 of the LDP.

## 5.9 Other Issues Raised

5.9.1 Local residents had several concerns about the proposal and most of these concerns have been addressed in the main body of the report. The basic principle of a community facility in this location is already established and is policy compliant. The design of the building is well thought out and is appropriate for this type of facility in this location. The height of the building is in part governed by the need to provide a badminton court although the height has been kept as low as possible. The steps in the embankment are to provide better pedestrian links but it is accepted that these will not be suitable for wheeled vehicles such as pushchairs and mobility scooters. Alternative points of access are provided elsewhere on the site. The footpath link to The Plantation is shown on the opportunities plan and is a suggestion for future consideration. It does not form part of the current application. The carpark will be managed by the MUCH Committee and consideration will be given to providing a barrier at the entrance to restrict access. The proposed pond will provide natural drainage and will not lead to additional flooding. The existing access into the car park is 5 metres wide; this is considerably greater than the 4.1 metres required as a minimum for this type of development and wide enough for two cars to pass.

1 This development shall be begun within 5 years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the list of approved plans set out in the table below.

REASON: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved drawings, for the avoidance of doubt.

3

The development permitted by this planning permission shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved FCA undertaken by Vectos dated May 2018 and following all the mitigation measures detailed in the FCA.

REASON: To reduce the risk of flooding.

4 Before the development commences a scheme for the provision of a pedestrian crossing on the B4245 shall be provided. The building shall not be used for the approved purpose until the crossing has been provided in accordance with the approved scheme.

REASON: In the interests of highway safety.

5 No development shall take place until the applicant or his agent or successor in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON:

To identify and record any features of archaeological interest discovered during the works, in order to mitigate the impact of the works on the archaeological resource.