

LYNSTED with KINGSDOWN PARISH COUNCIL



4 August 2023

Dear Nathan

Thank you very much for presenting your proposals for land west of The Street in Lynsted.

As you know, we conducted a survey of residents. The survey was hosted on the Parish Council website and promoted via local Facebook and What's App groups. In addition, over 100 printed copies of the questionnaire (attached) were delivered to homes in the vicinity of the site, to ensure we did not exclude residents who are not active on social media.

The survey page on our website attracted 1,082 views (in a parish of 963 residents).

We received 92 completed questionnaires. There are 478 households in the parish, so this equates to a response rate of 19% of all households. It is therefore a representative sample.

We have now analysed the responses and I'm sorry to inform you there is considerable opposition to the plans.

Key findings:

- 85% think the plot should be left as it is
- There was little interest in a Community Hall, with 60% saying "none of the above" when given a long list of attractive-sounding facilities that could be included
- Over half (51%) didn't want developers to contribute towards improving infrastructure as an alternative to the hall. A third (34%) said they did but, overall, 69% expressed no view as to what infrastructure improvements they would want a developer to fund
- Regarding the 8 or 9 homes, 80% think it's either too many (7%) or don't want any houses built there at all (73%)
- When asked for a view on housing type, 77% responded they don't want houses built of any type
- 96% would not be happy to see more houses built in the area earmarked for the community hall, if that were not progressed
- Nearly 90% think the landscape and appearance of Lynsted would be made either a bit worse (15%) or considerably worse (74.5%)
- 84% said their general enjoyment and quality of life in the Parish would be made either a bit worse (20%) or considerably worse (64%)
- Two thirds (65%) think the community should not negotiate with any developer regarding the site

There were also extensive free text responses. Key themes included concern about the lack of infrastructure for existing homes let alone any new ones, and scepticism that the profit generated by 8 or 9 houses would go anywhere near to resolving the issues of drainage, electricity supply and broadband signal that we suffer from on a regular basis. The proposals for a shop or GP consultation room were regarded as unrealistic. We already have a community area in the Church plus a function room at the Black Lion, both in very close proximity. Who would manage the community hall if it were built and who would pay for the running of it?

The area is surrounded by Grade I and II listed buildings whose historic setting would be disturbed. There were concerns about the impact on the environment, wildlife, biodiversity and rural heritage, as well as the erosion of the unique identity of the village. Building a road across a designated green space was regarded as unacceptable.

Many respondents raised increased traffic and increased flooding in the immediate vicinity as major concerns.

In terms of supportive free text comments, there were virtually none. It was, however, appreciated that you were seeking the views of residents.

At May's Parish Council meeting and again at the residents' presentation in June, you stated that you would walk away if the community were not on board. You reiterated in your email to me dated 23 June that you will only be proceeding with promoting this site if you have full support of the local community.

Unfortunately, that support is demonstrably not there, and at an Extraordinary Meeting on 24 July the Parish Council voted unanimously to reject your proposals. I would therefore be grateful for your confirmation that you will not be progressing any further with plans for this site.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank you for consulting the community and for respecting their views. It certainly makes a refreshing change from other developers we have had dealings with.

Regards

Cllr JULIEN SPEED

Chairman - Lynsted with Kingsdown Parish Council
Borough Councillor - Teynham & Lynsted ward