

Letter to Teignbridge Council Planning Department

Planning Applications and Enforcement Delays/other issues in relation to the Parish of Coffinswell.

Planning/Planning Determinations.

It is with regret that the Parish Council feel the need to express our disappointment with regard the service currently provided by Teignbridge Planning Department.

We are of the opinion that in the past we had a very good working relationship with yourselves with Planning applications/determinations, no matter how challenging, being dealt with in a timely and consistent manner and our Parish Councils views/questions always considered and answered.

However recently this level of service has deteriorated with long delays on certain more publicly contentious applications, whilst others of a more simple nature are being addressed within statutory guidelines.

Email received 9th June 2021.

Dear Mr Thompson

I apologise for the delay. We are have been receiving a very high number of applications and our workloads are at unprecedented levels which is resulting in many significantly overdue cases. At the moment we cannot give you a timetable for when we will be able to determine this application. Any further updates on the current workload situation will be available from www.teignbridge.gov.uk/planningworkloads

Kind regards.

Christina Dove
Planning Support Officer

Whilst we fully appreciate the extreme pressures your department must be currently working under the lack of consistency being applied to applications is difficult to understand and as such, please could you explain your current application processing procedure/selection.

Examples of delayed responses:

1. Planning Application 20/02129/FUL Stables on Land East of Normans still outstanding, with applicant recommencing work on site.

Dear Juliette,

I am emailing on behalf of my dad, who lives at Apple Acre, Dacombe. We have noted recent increased development activity in the field behind Apple Acre and there now appears to be a large area of cleared land, possibly hard standing. I was under the impression that planning permission has not yet been given for the stable or any hard standing/ car park. Please could we be informed of what is allowed without planning permission. Already the development is affecting the character of the hamlet of Dacombe. Water running off the hard standing and drainage may have negative effect on the valley which already has drainage problems.

Please could these concerns be addressed at next PC meeting? Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

A resident.

2. Determination request re: Bales Farm/Normans. Forwarded Jan 2021 still no response.
3. Determination request re: Stables built at top of Footlands Lane/Old St Marychurch Road. Forwarded Nov 2020 still no response.
4. Planning Application 21/00596/VAR Barn Normans /Bales Farm still outstanding.
- 5 Planning Application 21/00747/FUL Stables at Orchard Stables still outstanding, with applicant commencing work on site with a number of shelters already erected.
6. Planning Application 21/00747/var The Bothy dated 8 April 2021 still outstanding
7. Planning Application 19/01274/REM Connybeare Wood 17 Nov 2020 still outstanding

Also, enforcement determination requested in respect of additional dwelling having been constructed without Planning Approval.

It is the long and unexplained delays to the applications which invite the greatest resident response and angst and has caused many parishioners to question the planning process and the performance of Teignbridge Council.

Furthermore, our requests for Planning determinations, especially relevant in a Parish such as our own with Conservation Areas, Listed Properties and areas of Great Landscape value are vital in ensuring unauthorised development is not taking place.

This Council has gone to great lengths to explain to our residents the Planning process as a whole and explain the pressures Teignbridge are currently experiencing however these explanations are undermined by the fact that month after month at our Parish Council meetings, we have to report that we have not received any responses from yourselves.

We can only advise that it would appear the applications have not been progressed as indicated by the Planning Portal at that time.

Whilst it is appreciated that delays can and do occur, it is the lack of feedback especially when requested which is to most disappointing.

It has also been brought to our attention by our Parish Clerk that in recent months when we do receive Planning Decision notices from yourselves is stated that the Parish Council had not commented on a number of these applications. However, this Parish always ensures that as a Statutory Consultee our responses are within the required timescales. This is reinforced by the fact that already this year this Council has had two additional specific planning meetings.

It is interesting to note that the Teignbridge Planning Portal has published our comments on each occasion when the Planning Decision Notice states we have not commented.

Are the Parish Councils comments being considered or is this an administration error?

Enforcement issues

Enforcement of potential planning infringements is also something that is very important to the integrity and value of the Planning Process as a whole, however we have recently been advised that Teignbridge Planning Department have introduced a selective/relaxed approach to enforcement.

Mr Steven Hobbs email dated 12 January 2021 in respect of Milber Down Bungalow Ref no 20/00415/enf is an example of this.

In the opinion of this Council, this approach, which is now widely known encourages:

A. applicants to proceed with their proposed developments prior to any Planning Decision being made by Teignbridge, secure in the knowledge that the enforcing Authority are reticent to take subsequent enforcement action. This situation is further compounded by the excessive delays in the processing of the original application which is used as a justification by applicants.

b. individuals to proceed with developments which require Planning Permission without having made any prior application to Teignbridge.

Conclusion

Coffinswell Parish Council respectfully request that updates are provided on all the outstanding issues raised in this correspondence prior to our next Parish Council meeting on 20 July 2021.

This will allow us the opportunity at the next earliest date to appraise our parishioners as to the reasons behind the lack of information and feedback and hopefully start the process of rebuilding their confidence in the Planning system.

