

BIDFORD ON AVON PARISH COUNCIL

In the County of Warwickshire



NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2005

The Parish Council is aware of the disappointment many Bidford residents feel concerning the Old School House site.

As you are aware, the Parish Council is **not** the Planning Authority. All planning matters are decided at Stratford District Council. However, the Parish Council was made aware of the decision by Westbury Homes Ltd. to demolish the old school buildings at the end of last year. The reasons given were that it was uneconomical for Westbury Homes to carry out the conversion due to the deterioration suffered by the buildings as well as to the new building regulations currently in force.

When the Parish Council met Westbury Homes last December, it put it to them that they must have been aware of the state of the buildings when they sent in the original planning application. The reply it received was that only a superficial survey is carried out when entering a tender, as it would be uneconomical for a company to spend large sums of money without the security of knowing they would be successful. Westbury also reminded the Council that they did not need permission to demolish but, as they were also aware of the resident's concern, they would like to show the Council their proposals.

The planned replacement is for 4 dwellings which more or less follow the current footprint, including the height which will differ in only some 6/8 ins. in the height of the current ridge, reusing material as much as possible and in a style in keeping with its surroundings, and for the conversion of the Master's House. These plans were on the Agenda for the Planning meeting of 14th February 2005 where they were discussed, and the plans were available for viewing prior to the meeting.

In the meantime, the Parish Council wrote to the Secretary of State for Culture, Arts and Sports at the beginning of December asking that the building be listed and explaining the situation. Regrettably, on the basis of the current criteria relating to the historical and architectural interest of the building, the Secretary of State, on the advice received from English Heritage, has concluded that the Old School House does not meet the criteria for listing.

Following the receipt of this letter, the Parish Council felt it could do no more. It is aware that there are those that feel it should have opposed the demolition of the building but, as stated above, the Parish Council is not the Planning Authority. Furthermore, as already mentioned, **no permission is required to demolish a building unless it is listed or in a conservation area.** And the Old School House was neither.

In view of this, the Parish Council believes that the compromise it has reached is the best for the development. It has ensured the Master's House remains and that the replacement dwellings are similar in size and type to the existing building. Had it not accepted the proposal put forward by Westbury, the result could have been an extension of the rest of the site.

The other issue of great concern throughout the Parish is the Proposed Sand and Gravel Extraction Application at Broom Court Farm. Following the Public Meeting, held on 18th April 2005, and attended by some 300 residents, a Parish Poll will take place on Thursday 19th May 2005. You can follow the details of this issue on the Parish Council's website : www.bidfordonavon-pc.gov.uk clicking under Events & Notices

The Council would like to stress the importance of writing letters of objection to Matthew Williams, Senior Planner, Development Group, Dept. of Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy, Warwickshire County Council, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4SX, e.mail matthewwilliams@warwickshire.gov.uk quoting Ref. No. S42/05CM013. The Council would appreciate copies of all correspondence sent.

And don't forget the vote on Thursday 19th May: at the Crawford Hall for residents of Barton, Bidford and Marlcliff, and at the Village Hall for the residents of Broom.

It is important that all the residents unite to ensure this application is turned down. There are many, good planning objections to this proposal. The Council would urge all resident to exercise their democratic right and vote on May 19th