**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN WILMCOTE VILLAGE HALL ON 25TH FEBRUARY 2025 AT 7.30PM**

**1. Present:** Cllr Ray, Chairman, Cllr Stewart and Cllr Hession. In the region of 100 members of the public.

**2. Apologies:** Cllr Shilvock

**3. Declarations of interests in the SWLP Preferred Options Consultation**

Written declarations of a pecuniary interest were declared in writing prior to the meeting by Cllr Shilvock, Cllr Mahon and Cllr Boyes.

Before the meeting started Cllr Mahon reiterated his interest and Cllr McMillan advised Cllr Ray that he wished to declare a pecuniary interest. Cllr

Cllr Ray passed that on at the start of the meeting. Cllr Hession told both that they must leave the room which they did.

Cllr Ray advised the public that this was a parish council meeting, not a public meeting as such, but they were welcome to stay and he would take a few questions once the business on the parish council meeting agenda was concluded.

**4. To agree and vote on the parish council response to the Preferred Options Consultation:**

Cllr Hession had circulated the suggested following consultation response to Cllrs prior to the meeting which she read out for all to hear.

Wilmcote Parish Council Response to Proposed Development of 6,700 Homes Wilmcote Parish Council, on behalf of the majority of our residents, strongly opposes the proposed development of 6,700 homes near Wilmcote.

This development would effectively create a new town, posing a significant threat to our historic village, the surrounding green belt, and the local infrastructure.

Key Concerns:

1. Loss of Green Belt and Agricultural Land

o The proposed development encroaches on protected green belt land,

leading to irreversible urban sprawl and loss of valuable agricultural land crucial for food sustainability.

o Given that the UK already imports approximately 60% of its food,

preserving agricultural land is vital for national food security, especially in the face of environmental or geopolitical crises.

2. Severe Strain on Infrastructure and Public Services

o The current road network, including access to the A3400, is already at

capacity. Additional traffic from nearly 7,000 new homes would exacerbate congestion, creating daily gridlock and safety hazards.

o Healthcare services, including GP surgeries and hospitals, are already

overstretched. Large-scale developments frequently fail to provide adequate new medical facilities despite legal obligations for contributions.

o Public transport provision is insufficient, and no detailed proposals

have been made to address these shortfalls.

3. Flooding and Environmental Impact

o Local residents have raised concerns regarding flood risks in areas

such as Featherbed and Pathlow. Increased development will only worsen surface water drainage issues, heightening flood risks to existing homes and infrastructure.

o Additional pollution from increased traffic and construction

activities threatens air quality and biodiversity in this rural setting.

4. Impact on Wilmcote’s Heritage and Character

o Wilmcote is an area of historic significance, closely associated with

William Shakespeare. Large-scale development risks eroding its unique character, reducing its appeal to visitors and harming local tourism.

o The scale of this proposed development would see Wilmcote and

neighbouring villages subsumed into an urban extension, fundamentally changing their identity.

Resident Concerns and Consultation Feedback:

A well-attended public meeting was held on 8th February, where the South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP) was presented, and residents voiced their opposition.

Residents have expressed concerns, including:

• The development is driven by government housing targets rather than

local housing needs.

• Profits from land sales should be reinvested to support rural

communities rather than benefitting a few landowners.

• A more balanced approach should be considered, with smaller,

distributed developments rather than one massive settlement.

• The belief that green belt protections may not be sufficient to

prevent the proposal, meaning strong local resistance is essential.

Conclusion:

Wilmcote Parish Council urges the relevant authorities to reject this proposal. The scale of this development is inappropriate for the area and will result in irreparable harm to the local community, environment, and infrastructure. While we acknowledge the need for housing, this development is not a sustainable or responsible solution.

We call on Stratford-on-Avon District Council and the South Warwickshire Local Plan authorities to prioritise existing communities, protect the green belt, and seek alternative, more measured approaches to housing growth.

With a show of hands Cllrs Ray, Stewart and Hession were in agreement for this response to be submitted. Cllr Ray assured all present that this would be submitted before the deadline.

One member of the public suggested perhaps we should seek the views of a professional planning consultant. It was agreed that would be arranged.

Meeting ended at 8.00pm

A brief summary of the following discussions, questions and complaints

Members of the public remained and many unpleasant comments were made about loss of confidence in the parish council, useless communications, one man suggested the website should be updated, the four Cllrs with interests should stand down and at that point Cllr Hession said she had spoken to the Monitoring Officer and she said they should step away. Cllr Hession also said people are asking them to stand down. If they don’t want to there is nothing they can do.

One man threatened to report the 4 Cllrs to the Monitoring Officer if they didn’t resign by Monday. He was adamant that the Chairman should write to those Cllrs to that effect. Eventually the Chairman did say he would write to them asking them to consider their position.