



## Plans for 32 homes east of Wagtails in Alderbury

The felling of trees on a site earmarked for up to 32 new homes in Alderbury has been branded “ecological vandalism on a grand scale”.

Wiltshire Council’s Southern Area Planning Committee discussed the outline application for land east of Wagtails, Southampton Road from 1215 Heritage Homes during an online meeting.

Five houses on the front of the site have already been granted permission and are being built. The planning officer has recommended refusal of the plans over ecological concerns, planning policies, and insufficient provision of affordable housing, public open space and education provision. Residents and the chair of Alderbury Parish Council, Elaine Hartford, spoke in opposition to the proposals.

Cllr Hartford said the parish council had objected to the plans which were “outside the settlement boundary”.

She said the area was full of wildlife but the site had been “desecrated” by the removal of nearly 150 trees. A Wiltshire Council report said a substantial number of trees on the land were “effectively clear felled” in 2018.

Cllr Hartford said the plans was “overdevelopment” and “out of character” for a rural village and the current infrastructure would “not be able to sustain it”. She also said Alderbury had done “more than its fair share” towards the housing land supply figures.

Ward councillor Richard Britton described the felling of trees as “ecological vandalism on a grand scale”. He said there was nothing in the proposal that “gets close to offering any compensation for the loss of habitat and biodiversity”.

He also said the A36 was “already operating at capacity” and asked that highways concerns to be included in the reasons for refusal – something his fellow councillors agreed to.

The applicant has appealed to the planning inspector over non determination of the application, which is where a decision has not been made by the planning authority within 13 weeks. Cllr Britton said: “This committee would have refused this application in line with the officer’s recommendations. Those recommendations should form the basis of the council’s defence of the appeal.”

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