

The Preston Community Group

“The continuing saga of the proposed Village Shop and Coffee House”

NHDC has invited the Working Group to submit a pre-planning application to determine which site, if any, they (NHDC) would support for this proposal. It would remain subject to a full planning application and a Community Right to Build Order.

The two sites the Working Group are asking NHDC to consider are:

- a) Land adjacent to Holly Cottages in Back Lane
- b) The old tennis court in the grounds of PHC (Temple Dinsley)

Our comments are as follows:

- Both sites are outside the settlement boundary and therefore Green Belt.
- The old tennis court is sited on land which is Grade II* listed and forms Parkland which was given to the Knights Templar in 1147.
- Vehicular access to both sites would be contentious. Back Lane is very narrow and the Primary School would be close to any proposed access which could raise safeguarding concerns. In addition, any new build would obstruct the unrestricted views from Back Lane as well as impact on the peace and quiet enjoyed by the neighbouring houses. Such development may pave the way for further housing development along Back Lane (which was a key reason for objection to the dog-training area the other side of Holly Cottages, a year or so ago, the application for which the NHDC turned down).
- The old tennis court would require a new access from Hitchin Road, is on a bus route, and is already congested at peak times. The speed limit at this point is 60mph. Also, the Dower house and other properties are extremely close to the old tennis court.
- Both sites would suffer severe environmental damage. Trees would be felled and wildlife habitats disturbed.

NHDC have already indicated that for them to support a shop it would need to be within the settlement boundary. They have even suggested that to test the viability of such a project a Pop-up Shop should be set up first.

The Preston Community Group has considerable reservations over the viability of this proposal. The Working Group has stated that to ensure viability a café is essential. The centre of this village is the RED LION and its viability should not be put at risk. The last thing the village needs is a “destination” shop and café. Such facilities would attract more visitors to the village, along with all that such an increase would entail.

For any further information on any of the points above, or if you are interested in other research that The Preston Community Group has conducted, please do not hesitate to contact us at **prestoncommunitygroup@gmail.com**.

This document will be delivered to all residents of Back Lane and will be available on the village website and posted on PNS.