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## Re - Parnham Development Planning meeting... - Please circulate to all Town Councillors

1 message

Julia Hailes &lt;julia@juliahales.com&gt;

18 December 2025 at 06:54

To: d.gillings@beaminster-tc.gov.uk, townclerk@beaminster-tc.gov.uk, "info@discoverbeaminster.co.uk"  
 <info@discoverbeaminster.co.uk>, administration@beaminster-tc.gov.uk, "Administration Asst (Beaminster Town Council)"  
 <finance@beaminster-tc.gov.uk>

Dear Town Councillors of Beaminster,

Thank you for holding last night's planning meeting on Parnham in public, and for voting to object to the applications as they currently stand.

I thought it might be helpful to share a short set of summary notes from the meeting, which I've attached. Please do let me know if you think anything is inaccurate or if I've missed a point you feel is important.

It was abundantly clear that the strength of feeling in the Town Hall was very high. I hope that this does not obscure the very real and substantive planning concerns that were raised, and that these will be clearly relayed to Dorset Council and its Planning Committee. I think it is vital that they are well briefed ahead of their meeting so they are able to reach a sound judgement based on the facts. As a former District Councillor, I appreciate how difficult this can be when faced with such a large volume of documentation.

By way of quick reference, these are the key issues that, in my view, emerged most strongly from the meeting:

- **Enabling development** – The entire proposal rests on this justification, yet serious doubt was expressed that the required tests are met, in particular, whether:
  - The scale proposed is the minimum necessary;
  - Alternative options have been properly explored;
  - A clear and convincing public benefit is delivered.
- **Financial robustness:** Several professionals raised concerns about the credibility and transparency of the financial case, including the absence of a cash-flow analysis in the business plan, the robustness of the assumptions used to value returns, whether those returns would be sufficient to cover the full costs of renovation, and the extent to which wider impacts and risks associated with the development have been properly accounted for.
- **Historic setting:** It was emphasised that Parnham's significance lies not only in the house itself but in its setting. The loss of the historic deer park would fundamentally undermine that heritage value.
- **Wildlife and ecology:** The meeting highlighted the ecological sensitivity of Mill Ground Meadow and the River Brit corridor, including risks to protected species and habitats, and concern that the proposals focus on mitigating damage rather than contributing positively to wider landscape and river restoration.
- **Traffic and infrastructure:** Particular concern was expressed about access arrangements, the lack of a safe pedestrian route between Parnham and Beaminster, increased car use and parking pressure in the town, and additional strain on already overstretched GP and pharmacy services.
- **Public benefit and access:** There was also concern that the proposals do not appear to include meaningful plans for wider public access to the house and grounds. This could be a genuine community benefit, not only for existing Beaminster residents but for any new community created by the development, yet it is largely absent from the current proposals.

I am concerned that a planning application of this scale, supported by a very large volume of documents, is being lodged at an exceptionally busy time for both the public and councillors. It was worrying that some councillors did not feel well briefed and that others felt unable to comment on the proposals. This reinforces the need to ensure the application receives the careful scrutiny it deserves.

I hope that highlighting these points is useful alongside the attached notes, and that you will pass them on to the Dorset Council Planning Committee. As mentioned last night, I would be grateful if you could keep me - and others -

informed of the progress of the application, in particular when it will be discussed and voted on by the Dorchester planning committee, so that we can participate in that meeting.

All the best, and Happy Christmas,

**Julia Hailes**

**JULIA HAILES MBE - SUSTAINABILITY PIONEER**

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