

Public Meeting
Thursday 3rd July at 7.00 pm.
The Boathouse, Groomsport Harbour

Planning Reference: W/2008/0459/F

Proposed development at 10,12 & 14 Bangor Road, Groomsport, Co Down.
Demolition of three bungalows and construction of 18 units, comprising 6 town houses and 12 apartments

96 people attended the Open Public Meeting to view and discuss the planning application for this development on the Bangor Road. The meeting had been arranged by the Groomsport Village Association at the request of a number of residents. The meeting was chaired by the Rev Duncan Pollock, Chair of the Village Association.

Apologies were received from Deputy Mayor (Cllr. Ian Parsley), Alderman Marsden Fitzsimons and Councillor Marion Smith. The Deputy Mayor, in his personal capacity, shares many of the residents' concerns, and Alderman Fitzsimons and Cllr Smith both expressed their support for a rejection of this planning application.

The Chair noted the great interest in the planning application demonstrated by the large attendance, and invited comments from the floor.

A visual presentation was given by Mr W R Anderson, a resident from The Meadow. Mr Anderson's presentation raised issues of concern under two main headings. 1) Those potentially affecting all village residents and 2) those of particular concern for residents in the immediate vicinity of the development.

At the conclusion of his presentation, Mr Anderson proposed that:

1. The Groomsport Village Association Committee be invited to lead the protest against this development
2. People with special expertise be invited to support the Committee
3. The Committee prepares a Minute of the meeting
4. The Committee seeks publicity of the outcome
5. The Committee seeks a meeting with local councilors to gain support for rejection of the proposed development.

These proposals were agreed unanimously by a show of hands. The Reverend Pollock confirmed that the Association Committee would co-ordinate efforts to have the development proposal reject.

Following Mr. Anderson's presentation nine people, including Lady Hermon MP, Cllr Peter Weir MLA and Cllr Alan Chambers, spoke robustly in condemnation of the proposed development.

These speakers' contributions reflected strongly the mood of the meeting, which was for a total rejection of the proposed development by the Planning Service. Also, it was noted that 60 letters of objection had been received by the Planning Service to date.

There were no objections raised to the proposal to seek a total rejection of the planning application.

In conclusion, the Rev Duncan Pollock thanked everyone for attending the meeting and confirmed that the Committee would do its best to carry out the wishes of the meeting regarding opposition to the proposed development.

Residents raised many areas of concern. Some of the main issues are listed below:

- Overdevelopment: Inappropriate density, height and massing
- The development fails to relate to its immediate neighbours which are predominantly single storey detached dwellings in individual plots with front & rear gardens.
- The proposal is dominant and overbearing and will negatively impact on character and visual amenity, particularly affecting immediate neighbours on Bangor Road and in The Meadow.
- The proposed development would significantly impact on the character of this established area in a strategic location at the gateway to the village.
- Concerns about increased number of cars exiting onto this narrow road at the entrance to the village.