

## **Agenda Item 17b – Parking Somerlea**

### **Background**

In February 2018 the Parish Council approached Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) suggesting that some of the large grass verges at Somerlea could be converted to provide off road parking to relieve the parking issues on the estate.

There was some debate over verge ownership, whether it was MDDC or Devon County Council, although Mid Devon were cutting the verges and re-charging the cost to Housing.

The briefing papers from 2018 prepared by Cllr Warren in his capacity as Chair of the Parish Council accompany this paper.

Between 2018 and 2020 there were various discussions, emails and work undertaken re this proposal. This culminated in a letter from MDDC in May 2020 advising that they would not be progressing this any further. The letter accompanies this paper. The main reason given was that less than 50% of the homes remain in Council ownership and in order to ensure that Council tenants were not subsidising parking for private properties MDDC would have to seek reimbursement from the private owners. They also felt that a system of paid parking would need to be introduced as the number of spaces would be limited. The costs involved in re-charging non tenants and managing the parking scheme could not be justified against, what they considered, to be a limited benefit.

The letter also clarified that the verges remain in the ownership of Mid Devon Housing, even though they had been designated as adopted highway.

### **Current Situation**

Planning consent was granted to build seven 3-bed modular homes on an area of land at Somerlea which had been used for parking and vehicular access to some properties. There were old garages on the site. The parking provision for the new properties is only 12 parking spaces – less than two per property, which along with the displacement of the vehicles which had been parking on the site (approx. 26 spaces) has exacerbated the parking issues in the area. There are also short term additional issues being caused by site traffic. The Parish Council objected to the application on the basis of the parking and other matters and attended Planning Committee to re-affirm their concerns.

Construction has now started onsite. It is understood that MDDC staff, accompanied by the Police, knocked on doors advising occupants that all cars must be removed from the site prior to commencement of the works. It is also understood that letters were sent to residents, although it does not appear that everyone has received a communication.

Cllr Glover has advised that residents are parking on the grass verges as parking is at a premium, and she has received a number of complaints regarding parking on the estate. She has asked MDDC to consider converting the verges to parking to alleviate the problems.

## **Proposal**

The Parish Council Chair proposes that MDDC review its previous refusal to convert grass verges to parking as the situation has altered with the addition of seven new 3-bed properties, which themselves will have inadequate parking for need, and the displacement of vehicles which were parking on the site prior to construction. This has created further parking problems on an estate where parking was already an issue.

Whilst the situation around ownership of the properties remains the same the additional affordable homes provided by MDDC have exacerbated the problem and just because over 50% of homes are now in private ownership this does not mean that MDDC can abrogate its responsibilities to the community as a whole.

## **Recommendation**

It is **recommended** that the Parish Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, make a formal approach through the Ward Councillors for the provision of additional parking spaces on the verges at Somerlea to address parking issues on the estate which have been further exacerbated by the new development.

**Proposal by Councillor Warren  
September 2025**