

## **Policy on Building on Submitted Sites and Future Planning Applications in the Parish of Leavening, North Yorkshire.**

Following a unanimous policy resolution at the Annual Village Meeting held on 18 May 2022 and by a resolution approving this document by the Parish Council on 10 October 2022, Leavening Parish Council, on behalf of residents of the village, asserts that it is opposed to the proposed development of submitted sites which would seek to develop areas of the parish which are designated as having high landscape value or ecological value. . This is intended to include all building development that would imply a change of land use. Residents are not opposed in principle to appropriate development of infill sites within the curtilage of the village boundary if this is sensitive to basic principles which retain its character.

### **ABOUT LEAVENING**

Leavening is a village nestled in a valley where its Beck emerges from the western flank of the Yorkshire Wolds and flows into the Derwent basin, also falling into the local catchment of some of the UK's northernmost chalk streams. Sheltered by the 600ft height of Leavening Brow, with magnificent views stretching from the Humber basin across the Eastern Pennines to the North York Moors, the village is home to 150 or so dwellings. The layout of the village follows the most protected lines in the landscape, creating a linear pattern along an east-west axis. Siting of housing development has historically been dictated by the need for shelter from the weather, and availability of building land has not compromised the ubiquitous mix of patches of deep sand and clay which geologically underpins the area adjacent to the famous chalk geology of the Wolds.

The population of the village has varied very little since 1891 (339) to today (377). It is 13 miles from the City of York (population 200,000) - and 5 miles from Malton (population 5,000). Local employment is

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largely agricultural, service sector and hospitality focused. More residents are now working from home following the pandemic.

### BACKGROUND TO THIS POLICY STATEMENT

The Call for Sites that was made during the process for the Ryedale 5 Year Plan, lists a number of sites around the perimeter of Leavening village which have been proposed as potential sites for future commercial/housing development. These sites are numbered in the List of Submitted sites as follows:

- Site 20 – Oak Tree Stables, York Road, Leavening
- Site 90 – Land north of York Road, Leavening
- Site 133 – Land at Leavening, York Road
- Site 153 – Boundales Farm, Leavening
- Site 287 – Leavening Heights

At the annual village meeting on 18 May 2022 the Parish Council presented these proposals to residents and sought guidance and input on the response that the Parish Council ought to make. This document is the outcome of both this consultation and the detailed discussions and the resolution at Parish Council meetings which followed.

### VILLAGE INFRASTRUCTURE & AMENITIES

The following considerations influenced the decision of the Village:

- 1. Commuting and Amenities** - Leavening has limited amenities including one public house, but no shop. For those seeking dormitory housing to commute to work in larger urban areas there are many closer alternatives with much better amenities (e.g., Dunnington, Stamford Bridge, Pickering and Kirby Moorside). There continues to be a low level of high skilled employment opportunity in Malton/Norton. Many of those employed there prefer to live within that population centre.

- 2. Accessibility** - There is minimal public transport infrastructure. A bus service to and from Malton runs only on a Tuesday each week, and therefore does not make commuting by public transport viable. There is no bus service to York and cycling routes are via country lanes, some of these heavily used by local traffic. These roads have been busy over the past decade.
- 3. Demographics** - The age distribution of the village population is weighted above the national average. This is reflected in the Primary School intake this year of just 5 pupils. Although on the face of it new housing development might offer the promise of new starters for the school, in recent years purchasers of houses in the village have been predominantly in families without young children or the need for school provision.
- 4. Traffic and Roads** - There is growing concern from residents about the weight of traffic during peak times of the day, including HGVs and farm traffic. All entrance roads into the village are country lanes - Main Street and York Road are effectively single track in places. Increased traffic volume has been fed back as a critical issue. Recent data from vehicle activated signage in the village shows an average 680 vehicle passages per day along the York Road/Main Street artery, where there is insufficient width for an HGV to pass any other vehicle. Further development will add significant burden to the village in terms of volume of traffic, access difficulties and parking congestion.
- 5. Water and sewerage services** - the sewage treatment works is acknowledged to be running beyond capacity, requiring frequent pump interventions, and causing discharge to Leavening Beck, which is currently under investigation. Further development may well overwhelm the capacity of the

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treatment works and recent development at Preston Hill which has seen additional houses built has exacerbated this issue

- 6. Emergency Services and Healthcare** - Access for emergency services, due to the isolated rural location, is limited and recent emergency call outs have required Air Ambulance deployment. There is no social or healthcare provision in the village and the Village retains a Defibrillator which has been used in critical care situations.
  
- 7. Communications** - Ryedale District Council took the decision in 2019 to retain the BT phone box as part of its approach to providing rural areas with guaranteed access to a public telephony service due to the unreliable phone signal in parts of the district. Broadband services are reliable and of a good standard.
  
- 8. Street Lighting** - the village has no infrastructure for street lighting as well as limited footpaths on main roads meaning that increased residential capacity would cause a challenge to future infrastructure. Streetlighting linked to future development would, in effect, detract from the character of the village; creating annoyance to residents, harmful to local ecosystems and undermine the future enjoyment of the countryside or the night sky.
  
- 9. Community Green Space** - Leavening residents have access to some community space, but not a common area such as a green. Community groups are active in retaining two areas for public use (the multi use games area and play area) with interest also registered in the development of future allotment and community garden space. This demand for space which enhances the communal nature of the village and has

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ecological credentials is a priority for the Parish Council moving forward.

### **LANDSCAPE VALUE CONSIDERATIONS**

Place and rural sustainability are important to the residents of Leavening and the Parish Council has recently given its support to Natural England's public consultation on the proposed Yorkshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The parish falls within the proposed boundary, and we believe inclusion within this is important because of the high landscape, heritage and ecological value of the village and its surrounding area.

The village and neighbouring communities retain the affection of its residents (established and new), and attracts visitors who include walkers and cyclists, who view Leavening as an excellent example of an unspoiled Wolds village.

There is strong opinion in the community that an attempt to advance housing development around the village and outside the current boundary would destroy the character and heritage and impact directly on the local ecosystems and arable land.

Without significant infrastructure development, Leavening would be unable to sustain major growth in residential and commercial property, but the Parish Council acknowledges and welcomes the opportunity to discuss planning proposals within the limits of the parish boundary which are considerate and small scale and are committed to sensitive and sustainable development in the future in line with core principles.

### **PRINCIPLES**

Leavening Parish Council is committed to developing the following principles in relation to future developments:

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- To work towards a low carbon future, reviewing proposals for small scale, thoughtful development which is within the confines of the current village boundary.
- To ensure that high landscape value areas are not affected by housing and commercial sprawl to the detriment of the character of the village and the local environment.
- To avoid development which classes Leavening as a 'service village'.
- To ensure Leavening remains a viable and affordable rural community which is focused on retaining its unique geographic setting for the benefit of the community, and the small businesses that operate within and around it.
- To protect and enhance the local area to retain its high scenic qualities and enhance its natural and cultural heritage.

## RESOLUTION

For the reasons outlined above, Leavening Parish Council asserts that it is unanimously opposed to future building development on any and all of the sites proposed in the Call for Sites associated with the current Ryedale draft 5 Year Plan. Sites which are deemed as infill or aimed at improving the character of the village in a thoughtful and sustainable way, in keeping with the heritage of the village, will be considered. This is now, and will remain until further notice, the policy of Leavening Parish Council.

**Resolution Passed: 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022**