

Statement From Applicant – App. No. 20/00685/FUL

I would like to thank everyone involved in getting this application to its final stage despite the difficulties presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. I am pleased and reassured to see that the proposal has received the support of all relevant statutory agencies, and I am particularly grateful for the overwhelming support of the Wethersfield Parish Council, who held an extraordinary meeting at the weekend to allow any remaining objections from the public to be aired and addressed. Two main points were addressed, the first concerned safety. Contrary to a common misconception, the site for our development is actually at the safest point in the village. Most traffic casualties are caused by speed, traffic coming through the village is naturally at its slowest around the junction formed by the village green. There can be speeding problems elsewhere in the village, as those of us living on the approaches to the village can attest. We expect to make the junction even safer by working with Essex Highways to consider traffic calming measures, including simply changing a give way sign to a stop sign in front of the proposed development.

The second issue discussed at the Parish Council meeting concerned the pop-up shop that I and members of the Wethersfield Club Committee supported to help local residents during lock down. For 2 hours during the day, it has proven to be very popular with elderly residents and those having to work from home. Indeed, a petition that was sent to our case officer indicated that many Wethersfield residents were in favour of the pop up shop continuing after Covid. This reinforces our own surveys that indicate an overwhelming support for the re-establishment of a shop/Post Office in the village. It is interesting to note that this petition does not specifically indicate that signatories are against the current proposal but are very much in support of having a shop in the village. At the conclusion of the meeting Parish Councillors voted overwhelmingly to continue supporting the application.

I, and all the supporters of this application, are keenly anticipating our village centre once again becoming a vibrant hub of activity, at least in some small way. The eyesore which is the front of the village Hall has been there long enough, people have become blind to it, I think. What we propose will transform the area and compliment the beautiful historic buildings around the green.

I also wish to thank all those that have taken the time to express their support in an eloquent and well-informed manner. This application is from a group of ordinary residents of the village who despaired at the inconvenient closure of the shop and set about finding an alternative. Nobody involved stands to gain financially in any way, all the considerable amount of work put into this application has been done voluntarily for the benefit of the many, not the few, as said somewhere before. However, I genuinely believe that the proposed development will benefit, and gain the approval of all residents in the fullness of time. Therefore, I respectfully ask that the Planning Committee favourably considers this application and grants permission to proceed to the next stage of implementation.

Thank you

CR Stevens

On behalf of CROWS - Community Redevelopment Of Wethersfield Shop.