

The Role of Lidgate Parish Council in Dealing with Planning Applications

West Suffolk Council is the planning authority for West Suffolk and planning applications are submitted to and processed by them. Once an application has been submitted and validated it will be allocated a case officer who will oversee the application and deal with queries. Part of this process is to hold a consultation about the application. A number of organisations will be consulted, these are called statutory consultees. Parish councils are a statutory consultee. When they receive a planning application, they have 21 days to respond. It is sometimes possible to request a short extension to allow an application to be discussed at a forthcoming meeting, but this would be the case officer's decision.

Planning applications are discussed at regular meetings, or at a planning meeting, if they are received between main meetings. Meetings are advertised on the Parish Council notice boards in The Street and Bury Lane and on the Parish Council website <http://lidgate.onesuffolk.net/>

If the Council considers that an application will have an impact on neighbouring properties, it will notify the applicant and neighbours about the meeting and invite them along to discuss the application with councillors during the Open Forum prior to the start of the meeting. This gives the councillors an opportunity to find out more about the application and how neighbouring residents feel about it.

It is always a good idea for an applicant to engage with neighbours and the Parish Council as possible problems can often be resolved at an early stage. The Parish Council will listen to residents' views and may ask questions about the application. The Council will then decide on its response during its main meeting. Its response will be submitted to West Suffolk Council who will make the final decision about an application.

Some decisions will be made by planning officers under delegated powers. Some applications will be referred to West Suffolk Council's Development Control Committee which is made up of district councillors. District councillors can 'call in' an application which means that they can ask for it to be referred to Development Control.

If you ever have any queries about planning applications, feel free to contact the Parish Clerk or speak to one of the parish councillors. The e-mail address for the Parish Council is lidgateparishcouncil@yahoo.co.uk or you can ring the Parish Clerk during office hours on **07880 686069**.

Residents are welcome to come along to the Open Forum at the start of meetings and discuss any planning applications on the agenda with councillors, or they can email their support or objections to an application to the Parish Council. As West Suffolk Council is the planning authority though, it is important that any comments about planning applications are submitted to them as well. For more information read 'How to respond to planning applications'.