Darnhall Parish Council
Planning Consultation
Public Meeting - 24th March 2026 - Darnhall Village Hall

Purpose
For Darnhall Parish Council to consult with residents and hear their views and opinions so that the Parish Council can properly reflect community views in any representation the Parish Council makes to the planning authority CWAC.

To consider planning applications
1. Land off Darnhall School Lane, 330 dwellings, 25/03686/OUT
2. Land to West of Swanlow Lane, 190 dwellings, 25/03947/OUT

Present
M Sherry (Chair), R Strachan (Vice Chair), G Higgs, R Lee, C Williams (Darnhall PC)
Councillor Boone (CWAC)
86 members of the local community

Councillors Higgs and Strachan facilitated the meeting

Cllr Strachan (RS) opened the meeting setting out the meetings purpose. It was clarified that the 'developers' were not present as some attendees had expected. RS explained that the Parish Councillors had met with Richborough and Asteer Planning to gather information and understanding of the proposed development application for Outline Planning permission for both sites. RS explained that the Local Authority planning committee would be the decision maker and any representations are for them to consider. RS explained that Richborough are a Nationwide land promoting business and deal exclusively in applications for outline planning permission. Asteer Planning are a Planning Consultancy working for Richborough to provide relevant information for the process. The landowner of both sites is the Darnhall Estate.

RS explained that the government is introducing a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and has significantly increased the housing requirement placed on Local Authorities. This is a target driven requirement the numbers required now considerably exceed that identified in the CWAC Local Plan. This has resulted in Landowners / Developers submitting numbers of speculative planning applications, such as these, in this period where Local Authorities do not have the required numbers in their Local Plans.

RS noted that the Darnhall School Lane site has been subject to previous planning application which was rejected after a lengthy campaign which saw it go to two planning appeals, judicial reviews and eventually to the Secretary of State. This process would be taken into consideration in the current application.

It was noted that the vast majority of the Land Off Darnhall School Lane site was within the Parish of Darnhall. The land West of Swanlow Lane site was in Winsford but on the border of Darnhall Parish so impacted on the Darnhall community. Both sites currently include 30% affordable housing which is a standard requirement

RS emphasised that it was important for residents to submit their concerns as they will be taken into consideration by the local authority. The Parish Council would be submitting a response objecting to the applications that reflected the views of our community so tonight's meeting was very important to us and thanked everyone for attending. It was important to maintain a thought process that ensured we presented the best argument against the development whilst being able to argue for the best outcome for the community if the development was passed.

A discussion took place on important issues to consider such as sustainability, what this meant and how people may express concerns relating to this and other relevant planning considerations such as road safety and biodiversity.

A discussion followed where residents raise many issues of concern.

The meeting concluded at 7.40pm

RS thanked everyone for attending and for their active contribution and encouraged attendees to submit their concerns to CWACC planning. It was noted that the initial consultation date had passed but councillors advised the meeting that submissions after this should still be accepted and taken into consideration. The Parish Council will endeavour to circulate a record of the meeting and issues raised that may assist residents to submit their personal representations.

Summary of headline issues raised by residents together with a selection of comments made in the meeting.

N.B. The welcome high volume of contribution made it difficult to assign all comments to specific sites, where this is possible S1 for Darnhall School Lane and S2 for Land West of Swanlow Lane are used.

This is a summary only - many points were repeated in the discussion in particular cumulative impact on local services and schools, public transport, road safety and impact on wildlife / biodiversity.

- Hospital, doctor and dentist spaces
  I work at Leighton Hospital, it is already at capacity
  Doctors and dentist services are already overstretched in the town

- Lack of bus services
  The only bus services are to Crewe, other destinations Chester, Warrington, Northwich usually need changes and are practically useless.
  S1 It's a long walk to the nearest bus stop on Swanlow Drive

- Poor road conditions
  There are no safe walking or cycling routes from these sites to Darnhall School or the High School

- Queuing at junctions
  Townsfield crossroads layout is dangerous and probably would have even longer queues with these and other developments

Speeding on Moors Lane and Darnhall School Lane is already a problem

- School places
  Local Schools are full how could they cope with this

- School traffic
  Traffic near Darnhall School – always congested, no safe crossing
  Safe walking Cycling routes to School and local amenities
  Walking from the Darnhall School Lane side, no safe route, need to cross the already busy road at least 2 or 3 times and no footpath on one side.
  S1 It would be too far to walk to school from here especially down the busy main road with three busy junctions to cross

- No school crossing facility

- Vehicle speeds
  Speeding on Moors Lane and Darnhall School Lane is already a problem

- Vehicle volumes
  Moors Lane / Swanlow Lane Junction wont cope with the increased volumes, visibility there is very poor
  Darnhall School Lane gets blocked near the school now it just wont cope

- Affordable housing numbers
  Could the numbers go up and result in more inappropriate apartment buildings in this area

- Lack of local amenities
  No public parks or playing fields in our area (Swanlow Ward)

- How will it all be drained
  S1 What will be the impact on the brook that flows into Ashbrook and surrounding land – contamination and flooding
  Will the sewerage system cope with another 500 houses

- Cumulative impact
  These two plus other proposed developments in the immediate area could see a thousand houses which would be a very significant impact on local services including primary and secondary school, are the local authority planning for this

- Visual impact & Impact on amenity of residents
  S2 Plans look like 2 – 3 storey apartment block right up to our houses
  Will there be green space between the existing houses to protect the amenity of existing residents
  Proximity and size of new build on existing residents – requirement for considerate development and appropriate buffering

- Parking ratios

Nearby new developments are already congested with parked cars everywhere as there isn't enough parking and roads are too narrow This will be worse when young families grow

- Maintenance of green spaces
  Who will maintain the green spaces, will we all pay for it

- Impact on Wildlife & biodiversity
  Mature trees and hedgerows, they should be protected
  SI There are Bats, Owls, Foxes, Hares on this land, its rich in wildlife
  S2 there's a badger set at the edge of this and pond that has Snipe there.
  There will be so many domestic cats it will have a big impact on local wildlife
  S1 Is the solar farm still going ahead? if so this is a massive loss of countryside

- Impact of building process
  Heavy vehicles, road cleaning and maintenance
  Moors Lane recent work verges all dug up, false promises to repair, residents have had to put up with mess for months and then put it right themselves