



Maidencombe Residents' Association

**Court House
Rock House Lane
Maidencombe
Torquay
TQ1 4SU**

**Phone: 01803 310383
Email: info@themra.co.uk**

PRESS RELEASE RETIREMENT VILLAGE, SLADNOR PARK, MAIDENCOMBE

Maidencombe residents are totally opposed to the proposed development by English Care Villages (ECV) of a 159 unit retirement complex in what is currently countryside in Maidencombe, a small, rural hamlet on the edge of Torquay.

ECV acknowledge that the development is a departure from the adopted Torbay Local Plan, so residents are calling into question why it is even being considered by Torbay Council. The Council has recently adopted the Torquay Neighbourhood Plan to go to referendum. Under the Localism Act 2011, communities are empowered to have more say in development projects, and these two Plans are pivotal in guiding Planning decisions. Residents are hoping that their democratically elected Councillors will respect their wishes.

These are the key aspects of non-compliance with the Plans:

- The development fails to meet a number of criteria for Sustainable Development, a key requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local and Neighbourhood Plans.
- It is in the Countryside Zone, where no development should be permitted.
- These housing developments should be in easy walking distance of shops, doctors' surgeries, pharmacies and post offices. The site is 2.5 miles from the nearest facilities along a busy road with no pavements and hazardous bends. ECV claim that residents and staff will be able to walk or cycle, so we challenge the MD, Mr Keith Cockell to try.
- It will severely impact protected species such as Greater & Lesser Horseshoe Bats and Cirl Buntings.
- There will be a major impact of both residents' and operational vehicles exiting from a blind junction onto a busy road.
- There will be a significant loss of amenity for neighbouring properties in terms of vehicular traffic, noise, and light pollution.

The price of the apartments, at 2 to 5 times the average house price in Torbay, will be beyond the reach of most local residents. Thus rather than create movement of older residents within Torbay, there will be an influx from the more affluent areas of the country. This will place a huge additional burden on the already overstretched GP and Hospital resources in Torbay. In addition, as residents may eventually struggle to meet the very high service charges (which ECV rely on to make their profits), there will be additional burden on the social care budget, which is already annihilating Torbay's financial resources.

The residents have a major concern with regards to drainage. Given that the Met Office this week have published concerns about climatic changes towards more extreme rainfall events, there will be a significantly greater risk of flooding the lower parts of the hamlet, which include several Listed

Buildings. In addition, Maidencombe Beach, which is a major amenity for both Torbay residents and visitors, could be endangered by potential runoff and erosion of the cliffs.

This is not the first time that ECV have conflicted with Local Plans. In 2016, they applied to build a 145 unit facility in the rural village of Beckford, Worcestershire. The District Council refused the application on the grounds that it was non-compliant with the Local Plan through being in a rural area, need was inadequately justified, and the development was too far from hub facilities. ECV appealed the decision, but the appeal was rejected and their application for costs against Wychavon District Council was also rejected.

The Maidencombe residents do not know what commitments may have been made by Torbay Council Planning Officers during the pre-Application stages, but we are urging all the Councillors to respect the Development Plans and the wishes of their electorate, and reject this Application. As noted, there is a precedent.

The residents suggest that ECV choose a site that is closer to the vital facilities in the town centre, and the apartments are priced to be within the means of Torbay residents. This should be a win – win for the Council and Torbay. But whether it would be a good business case for ECV to return profit to their parent organization, Legal & General, is unknown.