

## Co-housing development refused in Tump Lane, Much Birch

Rebecca Cain, Chief reporter / Hereford Times 20/01/2017



A PROPOSAL to build a co-housing development where residents share resources has been refused.

Larkrise Co-housing and Herefordshire Housing Ltd wanted to build 20 homes, ten of which would be affordable, on land off Tump Lane in Much Birch, behind existing houses.

But Herefordshire Council's planning committee heard concerns about pedestrian safety on Tump Lane for residents to walk to either Much Birch or Wormelow.

The application planned to install a footpath between the development up to the A49, but there was no footpath proposed to go downhill to the A466.

Cllr David Harlow, ward member for the area, said the lack of a footpath proposal going downhill meant he could not support the application as it is a busy road.

He added: "I am in favour of more affordable homes being built in our countryside. Going around I feel too many of our young rural families simply can't afford to live in many of our villages. But we have got to get the site right."

Co-housing communities are intentional communities created and run by their residents. Although each household has a self-contained home, residents would regularly come together to manage their community, sharing social activities as well as responsibilities, including growing their own food produce.

The applicant's agent said the development would provide an antidote to loneliness. She added: "Larkrise can be a flagship community-led development for the county."

Parish council chairman Alison Cook said they objected to the application. She said a previous development of 12 homes was rejected due to pedestrian safety concerns and this was upheld at appeal.

She said the road has become a rat run and they are waiting for two traffic regulation orders to be introduced- a weight restriction and a 30mph speed limit.

Cllr Bruce Baker said the village has been given an opportunity to have a footpath installed, which residents say they want.

He said: "People seem to forget that Tump Lane is not unusual in Herefordshire. C-class roads and U-class roads in the countryside rarely have footpaths at all. I live in an area which has none at all. It is dangerous. Here we are with an application that proposes to install a footpath."

Although many councillors praised the concept of the development, they said it was in the wrong place.

The application was refused by a majority.