

At its meeting on 22 May 2025, Holt Parish Council voted unanimously to strongly support this revised Reserved Matters application (Scheme 2) from Bewley Homes.

In the light of this support, we urge Bewley Homes to withdraw their appeal against the refusal of Scheme 1 to allow this improved scheme to be approved in the shortest possible time.

A Collaborative Process

This scheme has benefited from sustained and genuine dialogue between the Parish Council, the applicant, and Wiltshire Council planning and design officers. Over multiple meetings the Parish Council has pressed for improvements across layout, materials, landscaping, housing mix, and character. Bewley Homes has responded positively. Bewley's architect has drawn from the Holt Village Character Statement to produce a solution more in keeping with the existing built environment.

As noted by our chartered town planner and design review expert Vaughan Thompson (MRTPI):

"HPC has achieved an extraordinary amount of mitigation and quality through the detailed scheme process so far."

Key Improvements in Scheme 2

Compared to the previously refused Scheme 1, which failed Core Policy 57 and NPPF Section 12, this revised proposal includes:

- Reduction from 90 to 88 homes, creating more breathing space in the layout.
- No homes backing onto Great Parks or south of the PROW, respecting rural edges and views.
- Three-storey flats removed and replaced with two-storey almshouse-style maisonettes.
- A large usable green space now acts as the heart of the scheme.
- Significantly improved Melksham Road frontage with parking removed, hedgerow retained, house types varied and low stone walls enhancing local distinctiveness.
- Continuous public footway reinstated around the site.
- Clarified house types and more transparent layout.
- Preserved and strengthened ecological corridors, with dark zones and tree buffers retained.

These changes reflect a scheme that is better integrated with Holt's character and layout, as set out in the Holt Neighbourhood Plan and Character Statement.

Vaughan Thompson concludes:

"It is my professional opinion as a town planner and urban designer that the draft proposals put forward to date can lead to an application scheme that HPC can support on behalf of the community."

Conclusion

Holt Parish Council believes Scheme 2 is materially better and capable of delivering a well-designed eastern entrance to Holt and a more attractive community area in its own right. We therefore strongly support this Reserved Matters application and urge Wiltshire Council to approve it as soon as possible.