

SHIPDHAM

Farmer gives details of plans for new homes

A Norfolk farmer hopes to build 50 new homes in the heart of a small rural village near Dereham.

Ian Leonard is seeking outline planning permission from Breckland Council for two housing estates on agricultural land in Shipdham.

The first development, to the east of Pound Green Lane, includes 35 homes, ranging from one-bedroom bungalows to four-bedroom houses. Of these, 14 would be social housing.

The second development, on what is currently a grazing field off Parklands Avenue, off Watton Road, includes 15 homes, six for social housing, ranging in size from single-bedroom bungalows to four-bedroom homes.

The Pound Green Lane site has two access points for farm machinery, one of which is also used by four houses next to the site. The application outlines plans to separate the access, using fencing and planting, to allow the properties to retain their existing access independently.

A report supporting the bid said the applicant's farm vehicles would no longer use either of the access points. It said the removal of traffic from Pound Green Lane would improve the amenity of existing residents.

A pond on the site would not be infilled, despite safety concerns. "The benefits of retaining the pond and increasing biodiversity are considered to outweigh the safety risk," the report said.

An existing oak tree on the site would be retained and additional trees and hedges would be planted.

Shipdham Parish Council will discuss the plans on November 8.



BACK IN THE SWIM: Iris Giusarma has overcome her many injuries since being hit by a motorcycle last year.



NORWICH

Accident victim Iris learns to walk again

By SAM EMANUEL

A woman who broke almost every bone in her lower body after being hit by a motorbike has defied the odds and learned to walk again within months of the accident.

Iris Giusarma was told that if she was ever to take a step again, it would not be for several years.

But the determined 55-year-old decided to rehabilitate herself and now, just a year after the crash, she can not only walk, but can also swim a mile and complete an hour in the gym.

The mother-of-one suffered serious injuries when a motorbike hit her as she was pushing her bicycle across a road near her home in Old Catton, Norwich, in October last year. She spent two months in hospital and had several major operations.

She said: "I don't really remember much about it - I was knocked straight out. I couldn't breathe and my body went into shock. I had my eyes closed and I thought I was going to die."

Ms Giusarma, who did not work before the accident because of health problems, was immobile for several months afterwards because of leg

irons and plaster on her legs and pelvis. She had three operations, including one to take bone from her back and put it into her hip and one to take a skin graft from her thigh and put it on her ankle.

Hospital staff had planned to give her rehabilitation to try to increase her ability to move, but she asked to go home as she did not want to go to hospital three times a week, and decided to give herself physiotherapy.

She said: "My legs were like a blancmange, so I taught myself to walk again with little baby steps. When I started, I managed to do about four and was absolutely exhausted.

"They said that if I did learn to walk again, it would take several years, and when I heard that, I had a little cry. But I decided that the battle had begun and I joined the gym. It has been a hard, hard year, but I have embraced life - I know there's a lot I can't do, but there's a lot I can do."

She says she will be disabled for life, and may have more operations on my knees. Her left leg is still numb

because of nerve damage, and constant pain stops her from sleeping.

She said: "The surgeons were absolutely wonderful and I am doing so much better than they expected. I am aiming to go on a trip to India and to take part in the Cancer Research Race for Life next year."

Ben Davis, consultant trauma surgeon at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, where Ms Giusarma was treated, added: "I'm delighted to hear that Ms Giusarma is so pleased with the surgery she had with the team here.

"It's always a delight to see how well she is doing when she visits us in clinic. Her extremely positive attitude played a very important factor in her recovery from severe injury."

Ms Giusarma is now an active member of the Esporta gym on Drayton High Road, where she has made several friends and can now swim a mile and complete an hour in the gym.

The rider of the motorbike was not prosecuted, but Ms Giusarma said she was considering a compensation claim.

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