



Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 18th January 2016

Present Chris Drew (Chairman), Jackie Jeffery, Fiona Mowlem, James Bell, John Hobson, Jim Gillett, Paul Mundy, Liz Black and Borough Councillor Nick Ray

Apologies for Absence Lauren McCann and John Davies

6543/16 Open Forum - There were five residents present to or discuss planning application 153307, and one journalist present to listen to this discussion. Four of the residents live adjacent to the site, at the Model Cottages on the A4 between Charvil and Sonning, and they ran through events from the end of November, when the applicants moved onto the site. They explained that the new owners cleared the site of all flora and fauna, and put hardcore and tarmac down as hardstanding for the caravans and vehicles now present on the site. They believe the application is invalid because it is retrospective, and object strongly as there has been a history of failed applications on this site because it is designated countryside, and is an important "green wedge" between Charvil and Sonning/Woodley. The councillors looked at the plans and written objections, which the residents explained further, and after asking a few questions, the chair thanked them for coming and they all left at 8.25pm.

6544/16 Declarations of Interest – There were no declarations of interest

6545/16 Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th December 2015 - The minutes were approved by Council.

6546/16 Matters Arising from the above Minutes – There were no matters arising

6547/16 PLANNING (ref 193)

a) New Applications for Information and Comment:

153109 Application for proposed two storey rear extension to 65, Park View Drive North – no Parish Council comment

153162 Application for the proposed erection of side and rear part single storey, part two storey extension and demolition of existing garage at Westo, Milestone Avenue – no Parish Council comment

153295 Application for the proposed erection of a single storey, part two storey front extension to include front dormer and single storey rear extension at 93, East Park Farm Drive – no Parish Council comment

153307 Application for the proposed use of land for the stationing of caravans for residential purposes for 2no gypsy pitches together with the formation of utility/dayrooms and hardstanding ancillary to that use at land adjacent to Model Farm Cottages, Bath Road, Sonning – the clerk was asked to comment as follows:

Charvil Parish Council wishes to object to this application on the following grounds.

1. This plot of land has been subject to a number of planning applications in recent years, and Wokingham Borough Council has been consistent in refusing any development beyond

the footprint of the old farm buildings that the present cottages and barn are built on because the whole golf club complex and the fields on the north side of the A4 present a vital green gap between the settlements of Sonning and Charvil. To allow this application would be severely damaging to the continued existence of this green gap between the settlements, and could create a precedence for future development on land that is classified as countryside.

2. Wokingham Borough Council recently completed its consultation on traveller sites, and at present it concluded that there were enough sites up until 2019, and that it had a list of suitable sites that could accommodate the further 52 pitches that the Authority estimated as necessary by 2029, and this site was not one of them. Given the existence of a policy for such sites, it would be setting another dangerous precedent to allow a traveller site on this land.

3. This planning application contains a number of material errors, which Council believe make this application invalid. For example, there is reference to a mains sewer, and there is no mains sewer on this site; it states no development has started, but hardcore and tarmac have been laid, and caravans are already in situ; it is claimed there is a sustainable drainage system, but there is little evidence of this. It is Council's understanding that this application is a generic model used by this agent on many sites, and not taking into account the specifics of this site, and these errors are indicative of this.

4. This plot was important to the biodiversity of the area; unfortunately, all the plants and wildlife were cleared from this site before the application was lodged; however, the wider area is still of importance to local wildlife, and any further development will be detrimental.

5. There are no proposed parking spaces on the plan, which would appear to contravene the local planning laws, particularly for a traveller site with spaces for mobile caravans. Moreover, Council is already concerned about vehicles joining the dual carriageway that is very busy, with fast-moving vehicles – this development is only going to increase this hazard.

6. Wokingham Borough Council has invested much time, energy and money drawing up its core strategy, undertaking consultations on all aspects of its development plans, and latterly adopting a policy on traveller sites, which Council applaud as it should all allow for sustainable development. It would be a great shame if all these efforts prove fruitless when confronted by an application such as this, which is clearly designed to abuse the systems that have been put in place.

153481 Application for the proposed erection of a part single storey part first floor side extension to include a new front entrance following demolition of existing garage at 12, Quantock Close, Charvil – no Parish Council comment

b) Planning Applications Approved – the following approvals were noted

153058 Certificate of lawfulness for the proposed conversion of loft space to create habitable accommodation to dwelling with flat roof rear dormer and installation of front rooflights at 3, Righton Close

150325 Full planning application for the continuation of siting of a mobile home for occupation by an agricultural worker at Newlands Farm, Loddon Drive

c) To consider the changes to the system of receiving plans and its implications for the Council – Council were happy with this form of presentation for the meetings, but there were some issues around looking at the plans when visiting a property. It was suggested

that a tablet might help, and it was resolved that Cllr. Bell was going to look into the costs of a tablet and a new projector.

- d) **To note progress of the application for the cricket pitches** – the application had now been accepted, and the closing date for comments was 11th February.

There being no further Planning business the Planning Meeting was closed.

FINANCE

- 6548/16 **Finance Reports** – It was resolved that the Reports be approved which they were unanimously.
- 6549/16 **Authorisation of Payments** – It was resolved that the Council should approve all outstanding payments including £960 to Fericon Press and £531.73 to NIC Services Group Ltd, which was done unanimously.
- 6550/16 **To approve the budget decisions made by the Finance Committee on 4th January** – It was resolved to approve these decision, which was passed unanimously
- 6551/16 **To approve the final precept figure** – It was resolved to approve the final precept figure of £39,655, which should be no increase per dwelling; this was unanimously approved.
- 6552/16 **To approve the re-appointment of David Weller as the internal auditor** – It was resolved to approve this, which was done unanimously
- 6553/16 **To consider the idea of conducting a Parish Survey to inform the development of a five year plan that reflects the wishes of residents** – The Chair of Finance ran through the rough idea of a parish survey and reflected upon one done in 1993. There was much discussion on how best to get a good response, and it was felt that a variety of media may be necessary to get as big a response as possible. Council were in favour of this idea and it will be advertised in one of the next editions of the Village News.

There being no further Finance business the Finance Meeting was closed.

REPORTS

- 6554/16 **Borough Councillor's Report** – The Borough Councillor had little to report apart from the request for further development sites for the next Local Plan from Wokingham Borough Council
- 6555/16 **Highways** – The Chair of Highways ran through the report from the speed survey conducted before Christmas, which, while it did not appear too dramatic, illustrated the number of cars that approach both the zebra crossing, and the side roads at excessive speed was far too high, given the number of children and elderly residents in this vicinity. The clerk has sent the report to the local Police, who will conduct enforcement days sometime in the near future. One idea that was suggested was improving the lighting at the crossing, and also the clerk was asked to pass a copy of the report to the school to gather their views.
- 6556/16 **To consider progress of the East Park Farm discussions** – The map has been altered to exclude the country park area to the south of the stream, as this seems a more natural boundary. Cllrs. Hobson and Mundy were going to double check the most recent version of the heads of terms with the ones agreed with Pete Baveystock in November. The Condition survey was noted. The clerk and Cllr Ray explained the rates position and that it may be possible to claim a rebate on the grounds that the hall and pavilion are largely offering community services, not commercial gain.
- 6557/16 **To consider the principle of replacing the missing streetlights in East Park Farm, that were removed during the school project** – Council was in favour of replacing these, and would like the matter to be investigated more fully.

- 6558/16 To consider adequate cover for the assistant clerk while on leave** – Councillors agreed to do all the hall openings, and the Chairman agreed to close after the pre-school event on 13th February.
To note that the date for the litter pick has been set for Sun 20th March at 2pm and to consider how Council best publicise it – Wokingham will provide leaflets to be distributed throughout the village. Cllr. Mowlem will put out a request for someone to pick up the rubbish, and will advertise on Face book and Twitter closer to the event.
- 6559/16 To update Members' Interest forms** – Cllr Hobson has completed his updated form and both he and the clerk have now signed it.

There being no further business the open meeting closed at 9.50pm

By virtue of the confidential nature of the business to be contracted the press and public were excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item under Section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

6560/16 To consider the quotations for the planned cricket square and to approve one contractor for the project

After some discussion, the clerk was asked to contact Durasport and S & C Slatter for more information. A decision will be made at the next meeting

Chairman's Signature