

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 18th March 2013

Present Alice Wilkinson (Chairman), John Davies , Paul Mundy, Chris Drew, Piran Trezise, Jackie Jeffery, Liz Black and Borough Councillor Nick Ray.

Apologies for absence –Jim Gillett, Lauren McCann and James Bell

5904/13 Open Forum – Mr Hicks and Dierdre Wells of Red Kite Development attended to promote their application for 25 dwellings on the field west of Park Lane and four residents attended to oppose it. The residents were against the principle of development on this piece of land; it supports a large variety of wildlife, is visually important to Charvil, it is outside the permitted development boundary, would increase traffic and erode the village nature of Charvil. In support of their application, Ms Wells explained that this development would only be on less than 25% of the field, and that the copse would be protected at the bottom of the site. They had carefully considered what the village needed as far as facilities, and believed allotments would be popular and improve village amenity. She said that they had listened to Wokingham and that is the reason they were suggesting just 25 houses, in line with the Core Strategy, and that the density of these proposed properties was far lower than they needed to be; in addition, they would be well screened from the road and would be similar to those in the Hawthorns, so they would not look out of place. The question of why put in an application now, rather than waiting the outcome of the MDD DPD examination in May, where Mr Hicks is challenging the exclusion of this site from development plans, was raised but not really answered. When questioned why all of the dwellings were so large, Ms Wells said this is the normal type of property added to villages. The Chairman asked about social housing, and Ms Wells intimated that they could pay a premium to override this stipulation. There was a general feeling that the rest of the site would be developed over time if this was allowed to go ahead, and Ms Wells did not do much to dispel this view except propose the possibility of asking Wokingham if they needed the rest of it for local amenity. There was some discussion as to whether Wokingham had given sufficient thought to the school being located on this site, and whether it had been discounted out of hand, but there was no conclusion on this matter.

5905/13 Declaration of Interest – Re. F/2013/303 - The Chairman's home is next to Mr. Hicks' field; Re. Donations - Cllr. Mundy's wife is treasurer of the pre-school and Cllr. Trezise's wife is to start working for the pre-school

5906/13 Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th February 2013 –The minutes were approved by Council and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising from the above Minutes –

Wokingham Borough Council was to contact the football teams at East Park Farm about driving cars up to the pavilion.

5907/13 PLANNING (ref 159)

a) New Applications for Information and Comment:

- 0182 Conversion of loft space to create habitable accommodation to dwelling, with front and side roof lights and alteration of part of existing roof to form a rear facing gable at 72, The Hawthorns – no Parish Council comment
- 0300 Proposed erection of a first floor side extension to dwelling at 12, Thornbers Way – no Parish Council comment
- 0303 The proposed erection of 25 dwellings with associated garages, parking spaces, associated roads and landscaped areas plus provision of allotments with associated access and parking. Replacement access to adjoining grazing land. After much discussion about traffic, and the issues of sustainability and permitted development (including some well thought out written comments from a local resident) and the effects on the proposed school from such a development, it was agreed that the clerk would object as follows:

While Charvil Parish Council has no objections to the design of the proposed development, it objects strongly to the principle of development in this location for the following reasons.

- 1. Wokingham Borough Council has recently published its list of sites to be included in the Managing Development Delivery Development Plan Document (MDD DPD), and this site was specifically excluded because it was only adjoining the village on one boundary and, due to the character of the site, would be contrary to CP3 general principles for development. Over the years there have been a number of applications and efforts to include this site in development plans, but it has been consistently refused by both the Borough Council and Planning Inspectors because of its importance in providing a settlement gap between Charvil (a semi-rural village) and Woodley (a relatively large, urban area). Wokingham has previously recommended that the settlement boundaries remain unchanged for Charvil and both CP9 (stating that Charvil is a limited development location) and CP17 (stating that sites in limited development locations should have a maximum of 25 dwellings) of the core strategy imply that any suitable sites must be inside the settlement boundary. This site is not inside the settlement boundary and has consistently been designated as countryside; it should continue to be seen as such.*
- 2. Council notes that the MDD DPD is still subject to examination and approval by the Secretary of State; however, even if it cannot be taken into account as adopted policy, Wokingham Borough's sustainability assessment of the site does not fulfil the recommended criteria for sustainable development. With reference to the Core Strategy for Charvil and other villages, Wokingham Borough states that, "These settlements have a limited range of facilities and do not have access to good quality public transport facilitiesthey are all either within or adjoining areas at risk of flooding. Overall, due to the limited range of facilities, it is not considered that significant development is appropriate in these locations, although smaller developments which help support the communities and provide for an identifiable local need may be acceptable".*

This site is over 800 metres from all key services except a primary school (subject to planning permission at the time of writing). The bus service is limited, in that it does not function in the evenings and weekends, while the closest station is over 1500m away. Given the poor public transport links and the very limited number of safe cycle routes in the area, most journeys will be made by car, particularly as there are no core employment areas within 800 metres, and few within 1500m. None of this is sustainable. In addition, there would be substantial disturbance to wildlife, and the loss of a strategically important green space.

The roads around the site are designed for the semi-rural nature of Charvil, and a predicted extra 50 cars on these roads each day will add to pollution, noise and disturbance on

already over-crowded roads. The proposed school is committed to encouraging as many families as possible to walk or cycle; however, it is still estimated that there will be up to 75 vehicles accessing Park Lane at peak times. This development would exacerbate the already crowded traffic issues unnecessarily.

3. Much is made of the likelihood of a new primary school in Charvil, very close to this site. This school is to serve the existing need for school places within the parish. Wokingham Borough Council predicts that all 30 places will be needed as of this coming September, and that the school is likely to function at capacity for the foreseeable future. An extra 25 family dwellings would again create pressure for school places that this school is trying to mitigate.

After this planning discussion, Ms Wells, Mr Hicks and the residents all left at 8.55pm, after Ms Wells insinuated that the chairman should not have been so involved in the discussion given her interest in the matter. Council was of the view that at no point did the chairman try to do anything apart from chair the meeting, and did not express her personal views and did not try to influence the decision of Council to object to this application.

- b) **Planning Application Rejected** – The following planning refusal was noted
1134 First floor extension to create 2x1 bedroom flats above existing post office at 36, Park View Drive South
- c) **Appeals** The following dismissal of appeal was noted
0774 To erect three dwellings on land adjoining 17, Charvil House Road
- d) **Enforcement** – the following was noted
00073 Alleged breach: Removal of Arboretum and other trees and vegetation at East Park Farm
- e) **MDD DPD** – Council noted that this is to go to independent examination in May and commented that they support this document as it is and do not agree with the inclusion of the omissions in Charvil.

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

FINANCE

- 5908/13 **Finance Reports** - Reports were unanimously approved.
- 5909/13 **Authorisation of Payments** – Council unanimously approved payments including £400 to Charvil Pre-school
- 5910/13 **To review the five year capital budget** - deferred. It was noted that the Piggott Academy was investing in its own MUGA and that it should be suitable for tennis.
- 5911/13 **To consider the review of the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations** - deferred.
- 5912/13 **Donations – to consider donation requests from the LINK visiting scheme and Berkshire Blind Society** - These were deferred.
- 5913/13 **To Consider a request from a resident of East Park Farm that the alley near his house be lit as it is at present very dark in the winter months and is often used by local school children** - There was some disquiet that Council should take on responsibility for an area Wokingham have decided need not be lit. It was felt that a better course of action was to encourage children to use the main path near the pavilion and to review if the issue becomes worse with the opening of the new school.
- 5914/13 **Investments** – It was agreed in principle that Council should return to a programme of investments but this was deferred until next month once the end of year figures were complete.

5915/13 Authorisation of a continuation to the standing order for salary payments to clerk and assistant clerk, and signing of a letter to that effect – this was unanimously approved and signed by the chairman and Cllr. Drew.

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

REPORTS

5916/13 Village Hall Management Committee – The minutes of a meeting on 6th March were noted.

Mrs Thomas of the Ballet school has purchased some ballet barres and Cllr Drew will show them at the next meeting to show they should not cause any safety issues.

Cllr. Mundy is due to conduct the Village Hall audit this week.

5917/13 Amenities Committee – The minutes of a meeting on 6th March were noted

The vegetable plot invoices had been sent out and one plot holder no longer requires his, so Keith Dormer is attempting to fill the vacancy.

Following complaints of the bin overflowing at the Hawthorns, Wokingham report it is emptied twice a week, which should be sufficient.

5918/13 Borough Councillor's Report – Cllr. Ray has made a written representation in qualified support of the Kebab van. He has also written a letter in support of the school. The Piggott Academy has various concerns that they have discussed with Wokingham, but these should not affect the overall planning consent. As far as the Waingels sewer is concerned, Wokingham has produced an internal report but this should not affect the Parish Council's viewpoint.

5919/13 ENVIRONMENT – Cllr. Black reported that she would like to stand down from her environment responsibilities.

5920/13 HIGHWAYS - A question was raised as to why Strathmore Drive is due for resurfacing work when there were other, more heavily used roads, were also in a poor state of repair. Particular attention was drawn to Park Lane under the railway near Waingels Road. *Clerk's note: Wokingham do intend to patch up under the railway bridge but this is complicated by needing to get permission from Railtrack, and the length of the diversion to conduct this work.*

5921/13 Update on the Primary School – Nothing to report

5922/13 Update on Waingels Road Sewer – See Borough Councillor's report.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION (Copies available from the Clerk) – Wokingham Borough Council Meetings/Agendas; Clerks and Councils Direct

Any Other Business

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.45pm