
Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning, Environment and Highways Committee held on
2nd March 2020

Present Jane Hartley, Claire Andersen, Roanna Collis and Jo Akeju. Pat Sutlieff and Jim Gillett attended the Open Forum, as did the assistant clerk and the Borough Councillor

Apologies Paul Mundy

Absent

122/20 OPEN FORUM - There were 44 residents in attendance. All the residents were attending because of concerns with three sites in the Draft Local Plan; Bridge Farm in Twyford, land to the East of Park View Drive North and land West of Park Lane, and some were there to express concern at the Parish Council response to the proposed inclusion of the land west of Park Lane. Cllr. Andersen introduced the meeting, running through the concerns that had been raised the previous month; that there was insufficient infrastructure and amenity in the area; concerns about wildlife; flooding and the flood plain issues; insufficient school places; lack of public transport; deterioration in air quality and the erosion of the separation of settlements. She explained that the Parish Council wanted to hear the views of as many residents as possible, and thanked everyone for coming to this meeting, and she also explained that it was important for as many voices as possible to be heard by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC). She went on to explain that nothing was set in stone at this point, but that the original capacity for both sites was much higher – 150 for the whole of the site north of the A4 and 160 for the land west of Park Lane, so 85 on part of the land north of the A4 and 75 on Park Lane was a significant reduction. She also mentioned other possible local sites that had been put forward, such as the land off Milestone Avenue and sites south of the railway. For many people, flooding issues were the greatest concern, and it was agreed that this was one of the strongest arguments against building north of the A4; the land directly south of this proposed site has flooding issues, with temporary flood defences assigned by the environment agency recently, in case of flooding like that of 2014. They believe building on the north side would adversely affect them as well as residents of Loddon Drive. Moreover, the Environment Agency has recently re-iterated the fact that flood zones two and three should not be built on. East Park Farm was built on the flood plain, and residents received automated calls over the past few weeks of flooding to prepare to vacate their homes – that this did not happen was immaterial – it serves to show that there is a recognised problem in much of Charvil. A further issue related to flooding was the Edward Road pumping station, which residents say serves much of the village, and has not been upgraded or expanded despite the number of homes it serves increasing over time. These developments could put even more pressure on this station, which has failed twice in the floods of the past six years, causing widespread pollution and misery for nearby residents. The issue of doctors' surgeries was discussed, and the Borough Councillor explained that this was not a Borough issue, but the local Health Trust takes these decisions and that they had decided that Charvil was not a suitable location. Given that there is a shortage of GPs, this situation is unlikely to change. There was some discussion about the type of housing proposed – would there be social or affordable homes – and what is affordable anyway. While the present development of 25 homes on Park Lane has no social housing, the developer would

have paid a levy for WBC to build social housing at a site of its choosing, but it could be made a condition of any planning permission to include some social and affordable housing if that was desired by the community, according to the Borough Councillor. A discussion on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) followed – did this have to be spent in Charvil (only the amount received by the Parish would definitely be spent in the Parish – the rest would be spent where the Borough thought best, which may or may not be in Charvil). The Parish Council has not decided what to spend its share of the CIL on yet, but ideas being considered are improving the playgrounds and the pavilion, including proper provision for the Scouts, but this would be put to public consultation before a final decision is made. Some residents wanted to know why Charvil and Twyford had been chosen for significant development, and not Wargrave, Remenham or Ruscombe – the answer being that these three villages were in the Greenbelt, and so could only take very limited development (there is some in Rucombe). Sonning also had one small development. Although Charvil is small, and these sites signified a large percentage increase in the size of the village, it was only 3% of the number of homes needed to be provided by WBC, and Grazeley was earmarked for the lion's share, with 15,000 being proposed in the years 2026-56. There needs to be some understanding of the planning process, and that objecting to all housing is not an option. The discussion turned to why the Parish Council was only objecting to the site north of the A4 and that this is splitting the village, and is inconsistent with the approach taken for many years that the field on Park Lane was unsuitable – just because part of it had been built on due to the lack of five year housing supply does not mean the rest should be developed. The Borough Councillor felt that this was unrealistic and that if the site were not included in the Local Plan, the developer would appeal, and given that a Planning Inspector in 2017 reportedly suggested Charvil was a suitable location for nearly 900 new homes, there was a strong likelihood the developer may be successful, although local opinion does carry weight with the inspectorate. Concerns were raised about the safety of pavements and crossings – the pavements are narrow, they often have parked cars on them, and there needs to be a crossing near to the school on Park Lane if walking to school is to be encouraged – more traffic on Park lane will exacerbate this situation. It was also felt that the A4 cycle shared use cycle track is dangerous, particularly at present, with mud, water and broken bits of tree all over it. It was also mentioned that there needs to be an off-road route to the station from Charvil, which would alleviate pressure on the roads. One resident asked about the status of the field south of the railway – it was generally felt that this was the only remaining green gap between Charvil and Woodley, and as such, would be an unattractive option to WBC. One resident commented on the strength of feeling against these developments, and pointed out that the lack of opposition in the past was down to the fact that all comments from borough representatives implied Charvil would not get further development, but since the draft Local Plan has been published, and increasing numbers of residents become aware of the plans, the opposition has grown. He is willing to provide more information for residents who have not got the time to read the thousands of pages of information provided by the Borough, which he feels act as a deterrent to responding to the Consultation because it is so intimidating. The Borough Councillor said that the leader of the Council was responsible for the Consultation. She also pointed out that there were very few respondents to the Homes for the Future Consultation from this area, and what there were, were evenly split between for or against the proposals (at that point there were no specific sites mentioned). The discussion then turned to how to make effective representations to the Borough – responses must be objective and must not appear Nimby-like and must not look like they are circular letters slightly modified. Being completely negative is unhelpful, and it may be a good idea to suggest what amenities etc would make a development acceptable as negotiating with developers often means a better outcome for all. It may be best to e-mail your responses, and to ask for an acknowledgement of your response. The closing date for comments is **Friday 20th March at 5pm**. Because of GDPR, the Borough will have to have a list of respondents, so you should always be able to check receipt. The process will be to then collate responses and change anything that is deemed necessary with further consultation with Planning dept, Parish Councils and developers, and then produce a final plan that will have to go before the Inspectors who

will hear representations from appellants, WBC etc., before passing a verdict on the Plan. It is nearly certain developers whose sites are not included will go to appeal as large sums of money ride on the inclusion. Cllr. Andersen thanked everyone for coming and assured them that their views would be considered when the parish Council responds to the consultation, and they left at 8.30pm.

123/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND ANY WRITTEN REQUESTS FOR PECUNIARY INTERESTS IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE CLERK -

There were no interests declared

124/20 The Minutes of the Meeting on 3rd February 2020 were approved.

125/20 Highways

The Speed Indicator Device statistics continue to suggest that people do not drive very fast through the zebra crossing, so it is not speed that makes them not stop. It was agreed to see if it could be moved to measure traffic in the other direction. The streetlights are still not working, and the clerk is to chase up what is happening.

126/20 Environment

The Chair was keen to see whether there was any possibility of having teracycle recycling facilities in Charvil.

127/20 Planning

a) **The following Applications were discussed (242)**

200267 Householder application for the proposed erection of a part first floor part two storey side extension at 15 Gingells Farm Road – no Parish Council comment

200116 Application to vary conditions 2, 6 and 7 and to remove of condition 10 of planning consent 152510 for the proposed erection of a four-bedroom, two storey dwelling. Condition 2 refers to the approved documents; condition 6 to the scheme of landscaping; condition 7 to parking provision and condition 10 to the retention of the garage for parking. The variation is to allow for an increase in the size of the porch, changes to parking and landscaping, and conversion of the integral garage. Retrospective at 1a Milestone Crescent – the clerk was asked to object as follows:
Charvil Parish Council would like to object to these variations on the following grounds.

- 1. The Condition Six referring to Landscaping was approved in Planning Application 173437, and although it was approved that the fence and the wall would be retained, all the new plants were to be planted inside the boundary because the fence and the wall mark the edge of the land in private owner ship. The new planting to the front of the property is on Local Authority land, and has been maintained by the Local Authority for many years. The Parish Council is in agreement with the original plan, and believes the original condition should not be varied.*
- 2. Condition 10 refers to the garage. There have long been parking concerns on this site, as it is a corner plot, and although on a dead-end road, there is a national cycle route passing this dwelling, and so on-street parking is not to be encouraged. The original plan had an integral garage which was to be retained to provide enough parking for the site; the varied plan is unrealistic because it would mean cars forever shunting out onto the road each time on of the blocked in cars needs to be used. Everyone knows that in this situation, all but one car will be on the road, increasing the hazard for other road users, particularly bicycles. The situation has been made worse by the approval for the extension at 1, Milestone Crescent in planning application 193390.*
- 3. Condition 2 relates to the dwelling itself. The Council objects to the larger porch as this directly affects the parking and landscaping. With the original sized porch, there would have been plenty of room for the approved landscaping and parking; the larger porch means that both parking and landscaping are compromised.*

193028 Application for the proposed erection of a two-storey side extension including garage conversion to create habitable accommodation, plus single storey rear extension at 8, The Hawthorns – The clerk was asked to comment as follows:
Charvil Parish Council are still concerned about the revised parking plan as there could still be obstruction for neighbours and parking near the new junction on The Hawthorns

- 200408 Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey side and rear extension and conversion of the garage to form a self-contained 'granny' annexe at 43 Chiltern Drive – The clerk was asked to comment as follows:
Charvil Parish Council would like to object to this application because it is disproportionate with the size of the plot and would leave insufficient amenity area.
- 200456 Householder application for the proposed erection of a two-storey front/side extension, following demolition of existing garage, single storey side extension, following demolition of existing side extension, plus single storey rear extension with the insertion of 3no. roof lights at 3 Strathmore Drive – no Parish Council comment

b) The following Planning Application Approvals were noted

- 193390 Householder application for the proposed erection of a two-storey side extension and a part first floor part two-storey rear extension following demolition of existing car port at 1 Milestone Crescent
- 193269 Application for the proposed erection of a single storey side extension to extend the lounge bar and lobby and a single storey rear extension to form a new dining room and enlarged kitchen with 2 no. rooflights, plus relocation of the bin storage area, formation of a new terrace and creation of a temporary access drive at the Heron on the Ford

c) The following TPO request was noted

- 200453 APPLICATION FOR WORKS TO PROTECTED TREE(S) TPO 223/1983, T1 T1, Norway Maple - Fell and replace at Jubilee Hall

d) The following TPO Approval was noted

- 192573 APPLICATION FOR WORKS TO PROTECTED TREE(S) TPO 1137/2006, T3 T3, Beech - Dead wood removal and epicormic growth thinning within the crown (c.20%). Crown balancing to even up lopsided growth by raising the height of the crown by around 4ft one side only. Reduction in crown of around 1.8m from sides only, leaving crown diameter of 12.4m. No intended reduction in crown height at 66 Park View Drive North

- d) To note views of residents and anything arising from the Open Forum - Councillors were impressed by the turnout, and the wide range of comments which will help inform the Council response. A concern was the Edward Road pumping station, and whether it could cope with more houses. Other issues were the lack of doctors and lack of amenities such as pre-school, post office etc.

Any other Planning business at the discretion of the Chairman

Items for Consideration

- 128/20 **To approve facilitating a session for PAT testing for the regular users of the hall, but noting Council takes no responsibility for any items or the payment of this testing** – This was approved
- 129/20 **To conduct the environmental audit of the Village Hall** – This was duly carried out and the Chair will collate the results

The meeting closed at 9.45pm