

GREAT CHESTERFORD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GREAT CHESTERFORD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY JANUARY 15TH 2014 AT 7:30PM IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE, GREAT CHESTERFORD

Present: Joanna Francis
Gareth Bevens (from 7:40)
Sharon Tricerri
Matt Rowan
Alan Cattley – Clerk
Representatives from Bidwells and Bellway Homes
Approx. 25 members of the public.

Howard Rolfe (from 8:00)
Neil Gregory (from 7:45)
Julie Redfern
Tom Newcombe
David Hall

14/001 Apologies for Absence

None

14/002. Declaration of Interests

Cllrs. Redfern and Rolfe declared themselves as members of Uttlesford District Council.
Cllr. Gregory declared himself a parent of a child attending Scouts

14/003. Minutes of the Last Meeting

After the addition of Cllr. Hall's name to the list of those present, the Chairman signed as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 11th December 2013.

14/004. Public Forum

Concerning agenda item 14/006, comments included:

- The need for a further development was questionable given the development of the Stanley Road Site.
- There would be a change in the character of the High Street. A modern estate opening directly into a conservation area was not thought desirable, and it was queried whether there could be direct access onto the B184.
- The effect on traffic volumes was queried; it was thought that 49 houses would result in at least 100 extra cars.

Cllr. Francis commented that if the local plan five year land supply figures were met, the proposal would need support from the Parish Council. Possible benefits would need to be discussed, and there was no decision yet.

- It was suggested that development should complement existing housing; it was thought a dangerous precedent would be set by allowing demolition of existing property to gain access to a new development.

Cllr. Francis commented that this was already allowed by planning legislation.

- It was observed that 100 new houses had been the agreed number under a previous Local Development Plan and it was felt that the school would have difficulty accommodating the likely increase in numbers arising from any further increase.

Cllr. Redfern commented that the LDF was still under consultation and not yet policy.

- It was asked whether the proposal was subject to a “window of opportunity” before the 5 year land supply was met.

- The safety of the High Street would be compromised by the extra traffic movements of 100 extra cars, particularly with respect to interactions with buses.

The landlord of The Plough made the following comments:

- Although he has a six year tenancy agreement, Greene King (owners of The Plough) had not consulted him about the proposals.
- It had become clear since taking over that the village wanted a village pub rather than a restaurant and this required the provision of car park/garden facilities and space for outdoor events.
- The Plough does not break even at all times of the year, and needs the extra turnover generated by special events which would no longer be possible if the garden were removed.
- It was quite possible that The Plough would become unviable in its current form, and would have to become just a restaurant with the remainder of the surface area reverting to private housing.
- The loss of facilities would be unlikely to be mitigated by extra business arising from the new development within the 6 years of the tenancy.

Representatives from Bellway Homes were in attendance to respond to queries regarding Planning Application UTT/13/3444/DFO.

It was noted that the proposal included:

- 20 affordable properties (10 + 10)
- Bungalows to the rear of the Elms
- The two 1½ storey properties are within the approved height parameters
- A cycle way under S.106
- Three wheelchair accessible or adaptable properties
- Four of the eight bungalows were two bed roomed affordable dwellings.
- A public open space.
- Parking compliant with the outline permission, slightly increased due to design changes.
- Open space element had been agreed by UDC.

There were several questions raised by members of the public:

Q. Why were the 2½ storey properties higher than those around them?

A. They were all within the parameters of the outline plan, and there was a landscape buffer around all except two.

Q. What landscaping was to be provided between the site and the High Street?

A. Although not explicit on the plan, there was to be a closeboard fence along the boundary plus a hedge. The existing hedge will remain, and it was likely that hawthorn would be planted to offer a double staggered view which would be planted small to encourage growth.

It was commented by a member of the public that deciduous vegetation would offer little screening in winter.

Bellway stated that screening would be put in place as a first job as it was an H&S priority. This would be 1.8 - 2m hoarding; a member of the public asked that this statement be put in writing.

Q. What would happen with the fencing at The Elms' side of the site?

A. The boundary fence ownership would remain as before, with scrub provided near existing fencing.

Q. Is the decision to build some 2½ storey properties final? Was there any possibility these could be reduced to 2 storey?

A. The ridge height was unlikely to change.

Bellway stated that the provision of 2 ½ storey properties was to give variation of roof line. There would be dormers only on the front and Velux windows at such a height that there would be no view over existing properties.

Q. Why could the taller properties not be built in the middle of the site?

A. This could be considered, but it was not part of the proposal.

Q. What would prompt a change to the proposal?

A. This will be reviewed after consultation with the Planning Officer.

Cllr. Francis suggested specific comments from residents should be made to UDC via the planning website.

Q. Can we be sure that there is adequate parking provision and that the roads are sufficiently wide?

A. The site meets targets for visitor parking and exceeds target for on-curtilage parking. The roads will be 4.8m wide plus a footway (the minimum is 4.1m). There will be a 5.8m shared surface composed of block paving available for cyclists, pedestrians and cars which meets the Essex Design Guide.

Q. The footpath to Four Acres would be of no use to residents; could this be used for parking instead?

A. A 3m path was required by the S.106; there was an obligation to provide this in the planning permission.

Q. Why was the access into the west side of the site so wide?

A. This is to allow for possible future expansion and was of an adaptable standard.

Q. Are the garages of a usable size?

A. Yes. Current legislation now requires a minimum size of 3.2m x 7m. If this requirement is not met, extra parking space must be provided.

Q. Given that there are problems with existing foul drainage, is it not the case that further development will exacerbate this?

A. Anglian Water has been consulted and has not requested improvement. They have confirmed that current capacity is adequate locally and in the treatment works.

Q. What is the provision for surface water?

A. The pavements and parking spaces will be permeable, and there will also be a connection to Highways' drains.

Q. Why were there no windows on the rear of Plot 32?

A. It might be possible to add a blank window; Bellway to investigate and advise.

Q. What arrangements would be made to minimise the effects of construction traffic on neighbouring properties?

A. The site compound will be located away from residents.

There will be a Construction Management Plan in operation which stipulates arrangements for cleaning roads etc.

It is not possible to control hours of access by suppliers to the site.

There is a slight risk that smaller subcontractors might be tempted to park in existing roads, but in practice most will choose to park as close to the site as possible to minimise the distance required to carry tools etc.

Q. How long will the project take?

A. It is hoped to start by the summer, with an expected finish about a year later making a total of 18 months. First occupiers would be expected after 3-6 months.

Q. Was it true that some of the market bungalows would be sold to a housing association?

A. Bellway were unable to confirm this.

- Q. What were the likely working hours on site?
 A. Mon-Fri 7:30 – 6:00, Sat 7:30 – 1:00, no Sundays or Bank holidays. It was not usual practice to stipulate access hours unless working close to a school. All nearby residents will receive a letter identifying the site manager in case of need.
- Q. Would vehicles' wheels be washed?
 A. Yes.
- Q. Would it be possible to comment on the materials used on sides facing the conservation area?
 A. Specifications could be advised when available.
- Q. Who would be responsible for maintenance of the play area?
 A. Under s.106 requirements this will be the responsibility of a management company.
- Q. What details were available concerning the play area?
 A. Following UDC policy, the area would be over 100m² and of a “natural play” type with only small items of play equipment. It was hoped to retain two large existing trees, clear the site of brambles and sow a flower seed mix. The tree canopies would be lifted to ~3m to allow extra light and there would be a mown path. Only trees found to be unsafe would be removed, and the intention was to facilitate woodland play rather than sports, for which the village had existing facilities.
- Q. Should plot 42 be limited to a single storey as it backed on to bungalows?
 A. This would be 1½ storeys high, but still met the required height parameters. Bellway would not object to a condition being placed on the property to limit future extensions.
- Q. Was there likely to be problems associated with the old well which was understood to be on the site?
 A. This was in fact an abstraction borehole rather than a well. It was being monitored with a standpipe and was not of archaeological significance. It was a condition of the outline permission that an archaeological survey be undertaken; this had already begun, and any significant findings would be reported.

It was commented that the Council would prefer to see the 2½ storey properties in the middle area of the development and would like clarification of the proposed materials, the status of the road adopted to the boundary and the extent and scope of management requirements of the LAP. Subject to these comments, it was resolved to strongly support the application.

Cllr. Francis' offer to represent the Parish Council at the planning meeting was accepted.

14/005..Planning

To consider any comments to be returned to Uttlesford District Council (UDC) on the following applications:

UTT/13/3444/DFO Reserved matters application following outline consent UTT/12/5513/OP for the development of residential dwellings and open space, providing details of layout, appearance, landscaping and associated infrastructure.

Location: Land South Of Stanley Road And Four Acres Great Chesterford Saffron Walden Essex
Resolved: Support strongly, subject to comments.

UTT/13/3301/HHF. Erection of side extension previously approved under UTT/1372/10/FUL

Location: 8 The Elms Great Chesterford Saffron Walden CB10 1QD
Resolved: No comment.

UTT/13/3221/HHF Conversion of existing detached garage.

Location: Magnolia Cottage Carmel Street Great Chesterford Saffron Walden Essex CB10 1PH

Resolved: No comment.

14/006. Proposed development behind the High Street.

The meeting received details from one of the owners of properties involved in the proposal.

The proposed plan would provide 49 new houses of various sizes of which 8% would be bungalows. Acre Croft, Hawthorn House and Thorpe Lea would be demolished and the Plough would be accessed through the development's access.

It was stated that the development was outside the Development Boundary and would be screened.

Among the suggested benefits to the village were:

- Increased business for the pubs and shop.
- Possible access to the proposed development behind Geldards (subject to negotiations).
- Up to £200k being made available for village projects.

The following concerns were expressed:

- Access via the High Street was likely to produce a dangerous increase in traffic flow and extra congestion at peak times.
- High density inappropriate for the location.
- Proposal not in keeping with the existing properties.
- Negative effect on the Plough of loss of car park and outdoor area.

In consideration of these concerns, it was decided not to support the proposal.

14/007. Multisports resurfacing.

It was decided to accept a quote from Doe Sport Ltd. to provide a replacement hard surface for £15,500 plus VAT. Work was provisionally booked for the week after Easter. Thanks were proposed to Cllr. Gregory for his work in negotiating with the suppliers.

14/008. Green Waste Collection.

It was resolved to continue with a weekly service as in previous years and to distribute a flyer to all households via the Walden Local with the timetable and locations when available.. The clerk was requested to write to UDC suggesting that, in view of the wide use of the service, the subsidy should be maintained in future years.

AC

14/009. Finance

The receipts and payments report was noted without comment.

To 3rd Quarter Management Accounts were received with the comment that the budgeted figure for the green waste collection was incorrect.

The decision to approve a figure for 2014/15 precept was deferred until the February meeting.

14/010. Village Plan Progress Report.

Colin Day presented a brief interim progress report on the Village Plan responses.

Approximately 50% of the questionnaires had been returned and the first phase was now complete. The forms had been sent for analysis and the first reports were expected soon. The general impression was that most people were happy with life in the village.

It was hoped that information should be available in February which would allow for the possibility of the Council making provision in next year's budget for implementing suggestions with cost implications.

It was hoped that full results would be available in time for presentation at the Annual Village Meeting. Requests for grant funding had been to ECF whose response is still awaited and the Stansted Airport fund which had been declined.

Thanks were extended to Colin and the Village Planning group for all their hard work so far.

14/011. Village Litter Pick.

Cllr. Redfern will circulate interested parties with suggested dates.

JR

14/012. W.I. Noticeboard.

To consider a request from the Women's Institute to locate their notice board with the PC notice board in School Street.

While the Council had no objection to the request, it was noted that there remained uncertainty about the ownership of the land on which the notice board is situated. Cllr. Tricerri was asked to approach owners of neighbouring properties to attempt to ascertain this.

ST

In view of the poor condition of the existing PC noticeboard it was suggested that the PC consider its replacement. The clerk was asked to contact the WI for details of the supplier of their board with a view to acquiring another to match if appropriate.

AC

This item to be carried forward to the next meeting by which time the required information should be available.

14/013. Items for Newsletter

The following topics were suggested:

Village Litter Pick

Green waste skips.

Development of NWT site.

Burglaries in the village

Annual Village Meeting

Village Google group

Housing update

Shop/Post Office

The chairman will approach individual councillors for contributions.

14/014. Scout Hut

It was reported that Saffron Walden District Scouts had prepared a Deed of Surrender and that this and a cheque for £2000 for repairs were expected imminently.

Documents still needed to be signed off by 1st Essex Scouts.

It was noted that there was remedial work required to return the Hut to a fit and proper state for use.

14/015. Annual Village Meeting.

It was decided that this should be held on April 23rd 2014.

14/016. Items for Information**1. 12/35. Council Standing Orders**

Review is underway.

2. 13/30 Proposed Cycle Path

It was hoped that the feasibility report would be available by March.

Cllr. Bevens had attended Access Walden's social event and reported that there appeared to be general support and political will for the project.

14/017. Matters for further discussion.

Suggested topics for possible inclusion in future meetings included:

Installation of cycle racks.

Work to fill holes on the Rec.

Progress on the Rose Lane footpath resurfacing.

State of footpaths in the village.

Surface in Station Approach

14/018. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Parish Council is to be held on Wednesday 12th February 2014 at 7:30pm in the Sports Lounge at the Community Centre.

Meeting Closed at 10:10 pm

Signed (Chairman).....

Date: 12th February 2013