

GREAT CHESTERFORD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GREAT CHESTERFORD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY MARCH 11TH 2015 AT 7:30PM IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE, GREAT CHESTERFORD

Present: Neil Gregory
Matt Rowan
Gareth Bevens
Sharon Tricerri
Julie Redfern

Howard Rolfe
Tom Newcombe
Simon Witney
David Hall

Alan Cattley – Clerk

Approximately 40 members of the public.

15/025 Apologies for Absence

None received.

15/026. Declaration of Interests

Cllrs.Rolfe and Redfern declared themselves as members of Uttlesford District Council.

15/027. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on February 13th 2015 were signed as a correct record of events.

15/028. Proposed development at Thorpe Lea .

Ms Kate Wood introduced herself as a planner representing Carter Jonas LLP (CJ). She explained that they had been asked to undertake work preparatory to making an outline planning application for development of the site.

Details so far included:

- The site was approximately 1.45 hectares
- Application was likely to be for around 30 houses
- Access from Walden Road would be sought, for which consultation and consent from ECC Highways would be required.
- Ecological surveys and historic impact surveys would be required.
- It was intended to join the site with the footpath from Rose Lane

Ms. Wood stressed that matters were still at an early stage, and that no plans or designs were yet in existence. There would be more detailed consultations made in due course, and comments were being sought from residents and others.

There would be opportunity for representations to be made when the application was submitted, and comments to UDC at that stage were to be encouraged.

Colin Day introduced himself as Hedgerows Monitor for the Parish Council.

His comments included:

- If an application were forthcoming, we should seek to protect the hedges around the site in accordance with the 1997 Hedgerows Regulations.
- The PC should be urged to reject the proposal as the site was not earmarked for development.
- There was already permission granted for development of around 100 houses in the village..
- The scale of the proposal was out of scale with existing housing and constituted urbanisation.
- The developers should be urged to submit a proposal of suitable scale, with appropriate road widths.

Further comments were made questioning the safety of access from the Walden Road and the adequacy or otherwise of the sewage system. Ms. Wood replied that a transport assessment would be made and if potential problems with the sewers could not be resolved then permission would be refused.

Other observations and questions included:

Q Is access from Walden Road the only option being considered?

A Yes

Ms Wood was aware that previous plans had included access via the Plough, and access was not a “reserved matter”.

Q Would CJ comment on an impression gained from informal contact that planners would not allow proposals of lower density?

A Ms. Wood was not aware of this; it was the job of CJ to maximise value for the site. If there were a benefit in a lower density proposal they would consider it and it might be good marketing to provide low density “executive” housing, but ECC policy was to pursue best use of the land available.

Cllr. Rolfe commented:

- There was no certainty that ECC would permit access as proposed.
- It was possible that a proposal for 30 houses would justify provision of a roundabout.
- ECC was most likely to press for greatest density
- The Local Planning Framework has a presumption for sustainable development.

Q Will the proposal fall within the Neighbourhood Plan?

A It was too early for full consideration in the NP

Cllr. Redfern commented:

- Affordable housing has a long waiting list and was therefore high on the agenda
- It was unlikely ECC would grant access as proposed.
- There was concern that the proposal offered no link to the centre of the village.

A resident commented that the plans would not help local youngsters to stay in the village as even housing designated as “affordable” was beyond their financial means.

Q Has access to school places been considered?

A (From Henry Weir, headmaster of GC Primary Academy). The school has capacity for village children, but it was possible the catchment area would shrink. Essex figures suggest that demand for school places is diminishing, and a new school will not be built until there is a demonstrable need.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Wood for coming, and asked that CJ continue to keep the village informed.

15/029. Public Forum.

A resident spoke on behalf of neighbours with concerns about the proposed application to develop land behind Bartholomew Close. These included:

- Access via existing roads – road width, layout and junctions were all believed to be inadequate to cope with increased traffic flow.
- Potential problems with parking and access to existing properties’ driveways.
- Construction vehicles would be unlikely to negotiate roads constricted by existing levels of on-street parking.
- Differences in height would be overbearing and overlook existing properties.

It was noted that it was likely that the application when received would be “called in” for consideration by UDC’s planning committee.

The owners replied that they would listen to residents' comments. An application with "reserved matters" was expected to be submitted within the week. A traffic management plan would be drawn up to help mitigate disruption during construction and could include restricted access hours and limitations on size of vehicles. The access roads had been assessed and found to comply with ECC guidance.

A High Street resident reiterated concerns about the height of the development and asked that the development be limited to two storeys with no dormer windows to minimise overlooking.

Further comments included:

- Parked cars already restricted access to residents' driveways and it would be impossible to avoid construction vehicles clogging the approach.
- HGVs should not be allowed to park on the road – a 3.5m wide lorry would block access in a 4.7m road.
- The Stanley Road development had involved huge lorries

Cllr. Newcombe commented that it would be possible to impose conditions on any permission given to limit vehicle size.

The chairman expressed the opinion that the comments were well founded, and stated that the PC's comments on any application would reflect this. He stated that residents would have the opportunity to comment themselves, and he urged them to do this.

Questions were asked about the preparations for a Neighbourhood Plan:

Q Is the steering group separate from the Parish Council?

A Yes

Q Is the group open to the public?

A Yes

It was stated that the meetings will be publicised in advance and open to the public. Agendas and minutes will be published for every meeting, the next of which would be on April 1st.

The chairman commented that the Neighbourhood Plan will be a powerful tool, and would shape development in the villages over the next five years and beyond.

Colin Day spoke on behalf of the fundraising committee for repairs to the church clock. He reported that the fund had already raised £9,500 from over 100 individual donations.

A resident asked when the large board suggesting that litter was not cool would be removed. Cllr. Redfern would ask ECC to consider removing it.

15/030 Land behind Bartholomew Close.

This item was covered as part of 15/029 Public Forum

15/031 Planning

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

UTT/15/0151/FUL Proposed new dwelling and altered access arrangements

Location: Land North Of Dabbs House London Road Great Chesterford Essex CB10 1NY

In the absence of plans and uncertainty over whether the application had been withdrawn it was decided that no comment was possible.

15/032 Neighbourhood Plan.

An initial meeting had been held, and it would be necessary for the PC to approve the structure of the group. The boundary would need to be defined; this could be simply the parish boundary or it could include other areas. It was suggested that the boundary should include Great and Little Chesterford, and there would be a meeting with Little Chesterford PC to discuss this.

It was observed that the villages shared a number of resources, including the doctors' surgeries, community centre, pre-school and SteamUp and in this sense the villages were more than just neighbours.

It was commented that the information gathered as part of the Great Chesterford's Village Plan process would inform the Neighbourhood Plan and it would be a relatively small task to repeat the exercise to include Little Chesterford. It was not thought that this would slow down progress as it would not be necessary to suspend work on other matters while it was taking place.

It was asked whether Little Chesterford could veto any decision. It was pointed out in reply that the whole process would require approval by referendum of all residents.

Other observations and comments:

The group would need the PC to apply for grants.

The PC would need to be satisfied with the work of the group.

It was important that those outside the group should have input.

It was felt to be important that the process was seen to have clarity and it was suggested that further details be provided at the next meeting.

The group's terms of reference were based on the model terms of reference.

If more volunteers come forward they will be accommodated.

It was commented that all processes and decisions should be fully documented in order to minimise the risk of any perceived breach of process causing problems later.

It was suggested that Littlebury might be approached to consider joining, but it was felt that there was not sufficient time available.

It was resolved to delegate authority to the steering group to sign documentation detailing the area designation.

15/033 Finance

The receipts and payments report was noted without comment.

It was resolved to continue provision of the weekly green waste collection.

15/034 Request for funding

It was resolved to contribute £200 towards the cost of repairs to the church clock.

15/035 Verges on Ickleton Road.

Cllr. Bevens was asked to submit a formal request to the Highways Panel to initiate a regular trim of the undergrowth. It was suggested that Cllr. Walters, chair of UDC's Highways Panel, be approached to try to establish a long term solution to this recurrent problem.

15/036 Community Clear Up Day.

Cllr. Redfern agreed to organise this for 10:00-12:00 on March 21st.

15/037 Date of Annual Village Meeting.

It was resolved to change the proposed date of April 15th to April 29th to avoid clashing with other village events.

15/038 Allotments on Community Land.

The contents of letter to UDC seeking clarification of use permitted under the covenant were noted. It was understood that the original letter had gone astray; the clerk will send a copy by email

15/039 Replacement trees on Horse River Green.

It was agreed to seek advice from UDC’s Tree Officer; Cllr. Tricerri will ask for a site meeting.

15/040 Matters for further discussion.

It was noted that e.on. had advised a proposed charge increase of approximately 30% for the supply of electricity for the village’s street lighting. This would be contested.

A complaint had been lodged with Abellio’s survey team about the state of Station Approach. Cllr. Newcombe will chase progress.

Cllr. Bevens was congratulated on his presentation to the Cambridge City Deal Assembly on the need for increased cycling provision.

15/041 Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Parish Council is to be held on Wednesday 8th April at 7:30 in the Community Centre.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm

Signed (Chairman).....

Date: 8th April 2015