

KILMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk – Mrs. L. C. Wood

Minutes of an extra Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday, 1st November 2017 at 7.30 p.m. at Whitesheet CE Primary Academy

Present: Present: Councillors G. Cotton (Chairman), Mrs. E. Hames (Vice-Chairman), M. Curtis, R. Flower, G. Hunt, I. Meeker & C. Reeves

Also: Wiltshire Cllr. George Jeans, G. Adlem, Mr. & Mrs. Drummond-Smith, Mr. A. Goodhew, Mrs. Lissack & Miss Lissack, Mr. & Mrs. Moore, Mrs. S. Pelham & Mr. A. Reeves

Meeting convened at 7.30 p.m. with Public Session

This provides an opportunity for members of the public to raise questions about and comment on items on the agenda. The Chairman will re-convene the Parish Council meeting after the public session (please note that members of the public are no longer permitted to speak unless invited to do so by the Chairman).

Mr. Drummond-Smith said that he was sorry that this situation had forced people in the village to take sides. He said he had read the letters of support for this planning application and agreed with what they said – this is a village that has lost its heart and needs regeneration but they needed to be some kind of strategy as to where these sorts of things should go in the village and some kind of future planning for regeneration. Mr. Drummond-Smith said that the first thing he knew about this planning application was when he received a letter from the planning department and there was no landscape appraisal, no noise management scheme or lighting scheme, no consultation with the highways authority. Wiltshire Council's own public protection officer says there should be no fires. Mr. Drummond-Smith said that from his own point of view, this application would be a disaster and would wipe 10 – 15% off the value of his home. He had visited a number of similar sites and none of them were near to residential houses and he said that the impact on his security at weekends and during holiday periods would be intolerable.

Mr. Gary Adlem spoke on behalf of Mr. & Mrs. Moore in favour of the planning application and said that the planning application was from a family who had lived in the area all their lives and would allow Mrs. Moore to work from home. He said that it was untrue to say that the area offered nothing for visitors and that the whole idea of the application was to allow visitors to come and stay in the area and enjoy local facilities and attractions. Mr. Adlem said that this was the sort of business that should be allowed in order to maintain a prosperous community. He said that the shepherd huts were constructed in a traditional way and are designed to be in keeping with the landscape and they had been positioned in an area that would have no detrimental effect on the surrounding properties. Additional hedge planting would take place to provide extra screening and the applicants were open to conditions being imposed on any approval. The parking site is some 45m away from Newhouse Farm and the applicants were in communication with the Highways Authority regarding comments they had made on visibility to the south from the access road.

Mr. Moore said that, as a husband and father, he felt passionate about this planning application as it would allow his wife to work from home and should they be fortunate to be granted planning permission, people would see how these shepherd huts were in keeping with the landscape.

Apologies for absence – None received

37. To receive any declarations of interest from Members and to consider requests for new DPI dispensations.

Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Kilmington Parish Council Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011.

- Cllr. I. Meeker declared a personal interest in Planning Application 17/0888/FUL and made the following apology statement: 'I wish to express a register of a personal interest in this application,

on the grounds that I am a neighbour which shares two boundaries with the applicant and would regard our relationship as friends. With this in mind and my letters expressing my personal feelings towards this application, it could be deemed contentious while occupying a position of public office that deliberates over local issues. I cannot apologise enough as a new councillor that these letters may be perceived as biased and unfair to some, these were not my intentions and maybe an ignorance of council rules has led to this matter. I must reassure all present that any comments made will always be in the parish interests and my desire to join this body was to help regenerate Kilmington from stagnation. My voice will always be one for the good of the village, any application that can offer value without having a detrimental impact on the community will always hold strongly with me. This is your opportunity to convince us tonight of any issues of merit and concern. Again, I must apologise, and as to avoid any contentious issue, I will still take an active role in this debate, but I will abstain if a vote is called upon.'

- Cllr. R. Flower declared a personal interest in Planning Application 17/0888/FUL (neighbour tenant)

38. Planning

(All applications can be viewed on Wiltshire Council's website

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/environmentandplanning/planninganddevelopment/planningapplicationssearchonline/planningsearch.htm> – and type in the relevant application number)

Parish or Ward: KILMINGTON

Application No: 17/08888/FUL

Proposal: Change of use of land to erect 5 shepherd huts for holiday use. 4 huts to be used for accommodation and 1 hut for WC – shower. Provide new drive and parking area to accommodate 4 cars.

Site address: The Cowshed, Kilmington Common, Kilmington BA12 6QU

The Chairman said that he could not recall a planning application which had demanded so much of the Parish Council's time and thanked all present for their contributions. He said 'We are always in a very difficult position when considering planning applications because, while we have a legal obligation to consider and support or object, Wiltshire Council has no obligation to act on what we say. Indeed, many Councils within the UK ignore what Parish Councils say. Despite this, the local public, quite understandably, as we are their local representatives, find it hard to appreciate the limits of our influence. To try to understand better Wiltshire Planning Department's handling of Parish Councils' comments, three of us recently attended what was described as a Planning Training Seminar. This was not a good seminar, and unfortunately, having given up half a working day, all three of us came away with no information on this at all. I am sure I speak for all of us in saying that our mutual concern is for a successful and thriving future for the village. Amongst the ways of achieving this is to be receptive to new ideas for land use in our area. Not all of them will be appropriate, but we must recognize that landowners, particularly farmers, who have been stewards of our landscape for generations, find that in many cases the business model they have used in the past is no longer viable and, so they need to seek new uses for all of part of their land.'

Cllr. Hunt said that he wanted to establish what the demand for these shepherd huts was going to be and whether or not there was already an oversupply of beds in the area for tourism and he wanted to try and understand what the need for this business in this location is going to be. He felt that the occupancy rate was one of the main factors for consideration and asked Mr. Adlam if he had made an analysis of the business within a 5-mile radius and whether he had any evidence to suggest that that visitors would bring prosperity to the area. Mr. Adlam said that he had produced a document to Wiltshire Council that shows the occupancy but this had not been put in the public domain. Cllr. Hunt pointed out that there were various visitor locations for people to stay in the area and wondered whether there was a demand for more. Mrs. Moore said that the sort of people that want to stay in shepherd huts are different to the sort of people that want to stay in pubs or hotels. Mr. Moore said that if the project did not work financially then he could re-sell the shepherd huts and he therefore did not feel the need to establish a business plan or analysis of potential occupancy.

Cllr. Reeves wanted to ask about lighting on the site and said that although Mrs. Moore had mentioned lighting in her response letter this did not form part of the planning application. Cllr. Jeans said that it is possible to condition this but conditions would need to be reasonable and said that it would have been useful to have had this documented in the Access & Design Statement. The Chairman said that there was a significant amount of comment from other bodies about lighting and so he would be surprised if it wasn't stipulated as a condition. Cllr. Hunt said that he thought it would have been wise for the applicant to address the concerns of the AONB team. Cllr. Meeker said that he was not very impressed with the CPRE response as it was clear that they had not bothered to visit the site but had based their comments on pictures taken from Google Earth which were out of date. Cllr. Meeker felt that this was disgraceful and appalling. The Chairman said that if these bodies were going to comment on applications then they should at least use up-to-date data.

Cllr. Hunt said that he was concerned that there appeared to be several criteria within Core Policy 39 that would not be met by this application and with no landscape impact assessment and no attempt by the applicants to enter into discussions with the AONB team, he felt that there was not sufficient information for the Parish Council to make an informed decision on impact on the landscape. He said that he was entirely unconvinced about the need for this visitor accommodation in the area and a document on the impact on the landscape was of critical importance and that the Parish Council would be failing in their duty if they did not take this into consideration and on that basis he was unable to support this planning application.

The Chairman said that he wanted to try and understand better the practicalities as it seemed to him that the applicants were applying for change of use on 5 isolated areas where the shepherd huts would be positioned. He did not understand how the visitors were going to transit from where they parked their cars to get to the 5 shepherd huts because they would be crossing agricultural land. Mrs. Moore confirmed that the remainder of the land would still be agricultural land and that the aim was for the visitors to cross the land, in their wellies, amongst the grazing sheep etc. The Chairman said that there was car parking provision for 4 cars but what would happen if visitors turned up with 7 cars. Mrs. Moore said that she would persuade people to come in one car but if there was a situation when there were more than four cars then they would seek to provide temporary parking for them on their own property. The Chairman said that he had the impression that there was a reluctance, on behalf of the applicant, to respond to the comments made by various bodies to this application and that they seemed to be taking a reactive approach rather than a proactive one.

Cllr. Reeves asked about the sewerage and drainage. Cllr. Jeans confirmed that it is quite common for the planning authority to approve applications with the condition that the development shall not commence until a scheme for the discharge of sewerage or drainage detail has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Cllr. Jeans said that it was possible to overcome lots of points and issues with conditions such as this.

The Chairman said that the Parish Council needed to decide on their consultation submission to the planning authority and felt that it could be supported with a number of conditions, or the Parish Council could submit an objection with a note that they are not against it in principal or they could probably find other degrees of comment in between.

Cllr. Curtis said that he owned a holiday let which accommodated 9 visitors and he was aware that they used local pubs, shops and facilities and that his visitors commented that it was a good central location. He was therefore inclined to support the application with a number of conditions

Cllr. Meeker said that although he wanted to see regeneration of Kilmington he did not know whether or not this was the right business to do that. He appreciated that this application would impact on himself, Michael & Carolyn the most and due to his declaration of interest, he would be abstaining on any vote.

Cllr. Reeves said he had been in the village all his life, had seen a lot of things come and go and whilst he acknowledged Michaels concerns, he felt that he would support the application with conditions.

Cllr. Mrs. Hames felt that there needed to be more encouragement to do more in the village and she would support, with conditions.

Cllr. Hunt said that the Parish Council should not approve every business venture in the village just because it is a business venture and Cllr. Meeker said that the nature of this application is such that if the venture is unviable then the land could easily be returned back to agricultural use. Cllr. Hunt replied that he had seen

evidence that when a business fails the applicant tries to do something different on the land to stop it failing and he was worried about the lack of information within this application on some basic points. He said he had not read or heard any evidence to suggest that it met with Core Policy 39, in particular points 3 – 4 with regard to the landscape and this needed to be dealt with.

It was pointed out that the approval could be conditioned that Wiltshire Council are satisfied that it meets Core Policy 39.

Cllr. Reeves therefore proposed that the application be supported, with the following conditions.

1. That a Landscape Impact Assessment or Landscape Appraisal is produced and meets the satisfaction of the Planning Authority
2. That a Noise Management Plan (as suggested by the Council's Public Protection Officer) is produced and meets the satisfaction of Environmental Control Department and the Planning Authority
3. That a Scheme of External Lighting (as suggested by the Council's Public Protection Officer) is produced and meets the satisfaction of the Environmental Control Department and the Planning Authority
4. That further plans are submitted illustrating an adequate visibility splay (as suggested by Highways Development Control) and that these plans meet the satisfaction of Highways Development Control and the Planning Authority
5. No open camp fires to be lit on the camp site (as suggested by the Council's Public Protection Officer)
6. All services are cabled underground.
7. That the Planning Authority is satisfied that the planning application meets criteria set out in Core Policy 39

This proposal was seconded by Cllr. Curtis and carried with a vote of 3 for, 1 against and 2 abstentions.

39. General Items

Report on multi-parish meeting at Whitesheet School – The Chairman reported that he, Cllrs. Hunt, Meeker & Reeves had attended a meeting which we were invited to by Zeals Parish Council. 'I think we were all very impressed with the acting Headmistress and her passion and enthusiasm to maintain this building as a school facility and repopulating it with a class. We were less impressed with others and we came away with hope that DSAT would improve their communications which have been appalling and which have contributed to the lack of confidence in the school. It was quite interesting to see the progress that the acting Headteacher has made since September which makes me hope that it has a flourishing future.' Cllr. Hunt said that he was disappointed that they were unable to be more open with us about their business plan and felt that they must know how many pupils make the school viable which had left him in a position where he was still not in a position to think about sending his daughter to the school. He said it was very difficult to champion when they won't give us the answers to the questions we ask. Cllr. Reeves said that it was not quite as clear cut as that as the school had needed to make a lot of budget cuts. The Chairman said that they would be meeting again in 6 months' time by which time it was hoped that communication had improved. A new permanent Headteacher has been appointed would will start in January.

Meeting closed at 9.07 p.m.

Members are reminded that the Parish Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability), Crime and Disorder, Health & Safety and Human Rights.