

The Minutes of a Meeting of the Edington Parish Council held at The Parish Hall, Edington on Monday 1st June 2015 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Mesdames Pike, Watts, O'Donoghue and Dorgan and Messrs Mitchell, Pollard, King, Swabey, Johns and Hinton

Mr Wickham (WC) and 52 members of the public were in attendance for part of the meeting

Apologies were received from Mrs Greening

The Chairman welcomed Mr Johns to the PC who signed his Declaration of acceptance of Office; and to the members of the public.

1. The Minutes of the meeting held on the 11th May 2015 were adopted as read and signed subject to the one noted amendment.

2. Matters Arising. Mrs Pike had received a copy of the Minutes of the Westbury Health Forum meeting on the 18th May

3. Planning.

(a) The following application had been received:-

(i) 15/04363/FUL Extend and convert existing bungalow to a one and half storey building (Resubmission of Planning Permission W/12/00699/FUL) at 22a Westbury Road for Mrs Bridget Roberts – there was no objection

(ii) 15/03425/OUT Erection of 9 houses, garages, parking and access road (outline application with some matters reserved) at Land at Little Court Lane for QDOS Homes Ltd.

The Chairman explained how the PC would deal with this matter. The Applicants and the Court Lane Action Group would be allowed 10 minutes each to put their case and the next 40 minutes would be for any others to make their observations. At the end of that period the PC would go into closed session (the public were entitled to stay) to consider its response to the application.

- Mr Robert Gilhespy for QDOS outlined the provisions of the Core Strategy insofar as they related to development in small villages and which QDOS considered it had taken into account. Pockets of development were allowed and they had taken heed of the Edington Housing Needs Survey (HNS). The application was in outline only and gave scope to address the comments of the PC which they had hoped to have had. As an outline application it fixed only the number, but they were quite willing to discuss the blend, of houses. They wished to be flexible. The proposed development was within the village framework and they had looked at and considered all issues relating to transport and traffic, flood risk, heritage and ecology which had been documented as part of the application. He considered there were no 'show stopper' restraints to the development of the site.
- Mrs Sandie Lewis for the Court Lane Action Group was concerned that there were inconsistencies, errors and omissions in the application. It was inappropriately called 'infill'; WC Core Strategy definition of infill was the filling of a small gap generally only one dwelling; watercourses were significant; it was not in the housing plan and Edington was a Small village. They considered health and safety issues especially on access – there were

no passing places and there were already problems in relation to large vehicles and the visibility from the proposed estate road was not good with sight lines over land not owned by the applicants. The land was higher than the surrounding properties in Little Court Lane and the houses would be overlooking them. The pond proposed would add to flooding risks. There was provision for 26 cars but there would clearly be more. Existing traffic problems would be exacerbated for emergency vehicles, the junctions with Tinhead Road and the B3098 and these problems had long been recognised by the PC. There would be an environmental loss – it was not a sterile area. There was wildlife. Edington's needs as set out in the HNS would not be addressed. She urged the PC to reject the application.

- Mr Rupert Lescott. He was seeking to take a far more pragmatic approach. Having lived in the village for 5 years he felt that it risked stagnating as he compared the village with what it had been even then. He wanted the PC to continue the conversation with the proposed developers. There were 2nd homes in the village, residents approaching retirement, village participation was not as good as 5 years ago and the village needed to increase its footprint with more people and services. He felt that it was quite possible to manage and mitigate the negatives that had been mentioned and current villagers did not have the right to minimise availability of development. Villages by their nature developed as time passed and had to avoid the negatives of 'nimbyism'
- Joan Richardson said that there was no guarantee that the development would provide for young people and there was no school in the village
- David May took issue with the suggestion of 2nd homes, that residents resided here, a life choice to live in what he felt was a vibrant and organised village
- Margaret Barker described an incident that she had witnessed involving a family walking in Court Lane and the subject of a very near miss by a van driving far too fast highlighting the narrowness of the road and the absence of pavements. The children had been frightened by their experience
- Derek Diamond wondered what had changed since previous nearby applications had been refused on grounds of the unsuitability of the roads
- Sandra Salmons said no one liked losing views
- Michael Jones reminded the meeting of the development proposed some 10 years previously for 9 dwellings at Court Farm. There had been support for new housing in the village and the PC had sought with strong reasons a mix of affordable housing and had been against more 4 bedroom executive houses. That application had been refused for policy reasons and on highway grounds. The highway situation had not changed for the better
- Terry Hudson said that on the issue of highways nothing had been said of the traffic generated by Berry Road. Garages were included in the proposal and would also have an impact
- Mr Gilhespy explained that many new developments were done to include affordable housing under s106 Agreements. He said they understood the highway concerns and were happy to talk about these but how road networks were looked at now had moved on a lot. It was necessary to look at a community's long term viability. They recognised that Edington was a Small village in danger of losing a balanced community and were quite happy to talk to the PC about its HNS
- John Richardson was concerned that development risked using every green space available
- Matthew Thomas asked if the PC had talked with QDOS. The Chairman confirmed that he had had informal conversations

- Mrs Christine Laslett was concerned that the village had few pavements and that this was a small country village

Mr Wickham then explained the process of his 'calling in' any application which would mean that it would be considered by the planning committee rather than decided by an officer under delegated powers. There would be a need to take into account the criteria for sustainable development in the Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The PC then considered the application. Mr King outlined the proposals which were for 9/10 dwellings and 26 parking places as well as the garages. Access, apart from the 2/3 suggested social houses fronting Court Lane, was via an access road entering Little Court Lane north of Ethandune House. A sight line to the north of the entrance was across land not owned by the applicants. It was an outline application not within the Conservation Area and hence did not need to be a full application. If granted in outline it would set a precedent for development on the site. It was described as a vacant site in the Design and Access Statement but in the Transport Statement as currently in agricultural use. It was agricultural and had been used as such. Apart from the social housing, which was terraced, the proposals were for 2 semi-detached plus 2 detached 3 bedroom houses and 'to support the development' 3 x 4 bedroom houses. To the north of the access road there was to be an amenity area to include a pond and trees. There were houses on the west and north sides of Little Court Lane and a group of dwellings on the corner of that road with Court Lane and fronting just over half the length of Court Lane from the corner to where the road bends north at Court Farm. Little Court Lane was a narrow single track lane and Court Lane was not much wider but for the verges available. The application suggested that with farm buildings occupying most of the eastern side of Court Lane the development site was bounded almost entirely by development and was thus infill. But these were established farm buildings and part of the rural/agricultural scene.

The PC was unanimous in its view that the application should be opposed. The Core Strategy clearly differentiated Small from Large villages and the towns. This would be a significant new development for a village with limited employment availability and limited services and facilities. The Core Plan strategy at 2.12 would require new homes to be supported by necessary improvements to the infrastructure which patently could not be achieved in any of the roads in the vicinity of the site and up to the B3098. Edington was a rural village with green areas (said at CP52 to be crucial to the Core Strategy) confirming that rural nature of which this site was one and those green areas should be maintained as far as possible. The development would create a block of houses not simply overlooking those in Little Court Lane but creating a significant increase in vehicular traffic in roads that were quite incapable of absorbing them. There were no pavements - indeed the bulk of the whole village was deficient in that respect which itself confirmed the rural environment. The Core Policy 1 designated Small villages as having low levels of services and facilities and few employment opportunities and at 4.16 any development would be carefully managed by Core Policy 2 and only 'very modest development would be appropriate to respond to local needs' This development did not. CP2 limited Small villages to infill and this application did not meet this criteria. The PC was not even satisfied that the site could properly be described as infill. In addition the Housing Needs Survey (referred to in the application) commissioned by the PC identified the housing needs of the village and the proposals of this application were inconsistent with those findings.

There were real issues of road safety. Not only were Little Court Lane and Court Lane narrow roads the substantial increase in vehicles, of cars and larger vehicles to serve the proposed new houses, would be a danger to all road users and especially pedestrians who would have limited room to escape potential danger. There were no significant passing places. In addition the road junction from Court Lane into Tinhead Road was tight with cars from existing properties often parked restricting visibility and room to manoeuvre; and access from Tinhead Road onto the B3098 had real problems with visibility and parked cars. An application in 2000 for development at Court Farm failed on traffic issues and these had not improved with the passage of time.

It was agreed to ask Mr Wickham to have this application called in.

(b) The following decisions had been received:-

(i) 15/03422/TCA Fell T1 Ash, Pollard T2 Ash @ 6 feet at The Filberts 5 Lower Road for Mr Garnett – no objection

(ii) 15/03022/TCA 1. Sycamore 15m plus tall, canopy 5m in radius to be felled. 2. Ornamental Cherry tree approximately 7m tall, canopy diameter 4m – fell. 3. Ornamental Cherry tree approximately 7m tall, canopy diameter 4m- reduction to reduce overhang; at 1/2 Charlton Hill for Mrs Anne Ilesley – no objection

(c) Neighbourhood Plans and Housing Needs Survey. The Questionnaire had been received and it was agreed to consider it at the July meeting.

4. Policing.

The April report received after the last meeting confirmed not only the report of the electric fencing unit having been stolen but that there had also been a burglary from an industrial unit in the village.

Mr Hinton reported that the Neighbourhood Tasking Group had met and would be concentrating on speeding issues along the B3098 and thefts from cars parked in remote areas.

He also reported that Speed Watch had had 8 sessions in May checking 1029 vehicles of which 49 were going over 35mph and 3 over 45.

5. Playfield (PF).

(a) State of surface at the Pub gate. Mr King reported that Mr Sheridan had indicated the cost to have been in the region of £2500. The PC recognised that there was a real improvement to the access there and confirmed its earlier agreement to be responsible for 50% of the work at cost

(b) Mrs Watts said that dogs had again been in the PF. It was noted that the dog proof netting on the gate had not yet been replaced.

6. Finances.

(a) It was proposed by Mr Hinton seconded by Mr Pollard and carried unanimously that the following invoices be paid or payment confirmed:-

(i) Bratton General Maintenance Services for Village maintenance in April £135
(ii) Edington PCC £274 being a Funeral fee wrongly credited by Elizabeth Snell, Funeral Director, to the PC Bank account

(iii) Denis Hurn for Internal Audit £25

(iv) AON UK Ltd Insurance Premium £360.89.

(b) AON had confirmed that this was the last premium due under the agreement to fix the premium for 2 years. This had now ended and AON was offering a new 3 year agreement on similar terms. This was agreed.

(c) Audit. The Internal Audit had been completed and all was in order. The Clerk had discussed the Register of Assets with Mr Hurn and it was agreed that the new swings replacing the old should be added to the amount to be included in the

register. This altered the figure to a total value of Assets of £47774. The Clerk would circulate the register.

The Accounts and the Annual Return for the year 2014/2015 had been prepared for approval and were explained by the Clerk. The PC went through the 'Annual Governance Statement' part of the Return and the 'Explanation of Variances' pro-forma and approved them. The variances related simply to the receipts and cost of the swings and the Clerks Salary all of which had been approved by the PC at previous meetings.

Taking into account the needs, size and circumstances of the Council the PC reviewed its internal audit arrangements and was satisfied that all appropriate checks were in place noting that the PC did not run a petty cash a/c all payments being made by cheque authorised by the whole of the PC at the relevant meeting. The PC was also satisfied that the level of reserves should be maintained to cover unexpected or unusual or potential expenses (such as the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan or the cost of the repairs to the PF surface at the Pub gate). It was proposed by Mrs Watts seconded by Mr Swabey and carried unanimously that the Accounts be adopted and that the Annual Return and Statement of Governances be approved and signed.

7. Highway Matters/Footpaths/CATG.

(a) Mr Wickham reported that repairs to the B3098 apparently required special kit and had originally been listed for June/July. He had just learned that it had been put back to January 2016 which he considered quite unacceptable. He was going to make representations to WC.

(b) Footpaths maintenance. Mr Wickham was also surprised to read the Minute of the May meeting and suggested the PC defer a decision until he had been able to check with the footpaths officer.

8. Car Park (CP). The Chairman reported that at long last there was an element of agreement by all parties to authorise Ross Hillman to carry out the necessary remedial work. He had made it clear that the instruction to Ross Hillman should come from BT and its contractors.

9. Wiltshire Council (WC) Report

There was nothing of significance to report. The next Area Board meeting was on the 4th June.

10. Correspondence.

(a) SPTA News Sheet – June 2015

(b) WALC Newsletter – May 2015

(c) The Minutes of the ERLAC meeting held on the 14th May had been received and were annexed to these Minutes

11. News Items. Consideration was given to what could be included in the News. .

12. Date of next Meeting. This was fixed for Monday 13th July 2015 at the Parish Hall at 7.30pm.