

Meeting of Charlbury Town Council held on Wednesday 23rd November 2016
at 7.30pm in the Corner House.

Members Present: Mr P Kenrick (Chairman), Mr P Morgan, Mr G Clemson, Mr R Puttick,
Mrs N Ely, Mrs J Burroughs, Mr R Prew, Dr A Merry, Ms L Reason,
Mr R Fairhurst.

Apologies: Mr R N Potter, Mrs K Broughton

Prior to opening the meeting, the Chairman reported that he had attended the AGM of the Corner House and Nine Acres management committees and had thanked them for their work during the year on behalf of Council. He had also attended the launch of Southill Solar Farm.

1. To receive the minutes of the last meeting.

Dr Merry proposed that the minutes be signed as a correct record, this being seconded by Mr Prew and agreed.

2. To deal with matters arising.

Meeting with Sports and Social Club. Notes of meeting to be circulated to the group.

Public meeting to explain the Council's position in respect of seeking borrowing approval. The public meeting was attended by 183 people and agreed to request that a parish poll be held. Two questions were agreed. Clerk to ask WODC to arrange the poll, as agreed, for December 8th. The Chairman thanked the Clerk for his help in running the meeting, this had helped him.

Town Proud Group. Further sessions had been arranged. Mr Prew highlighted the need for high visibility jackets to be worn for safety and insurance purposes.

Spendlove Car Park. WODC Officer, Claire Locke, had been met by Chairman, Ms Reason and the Clerk. Response in correspondence.

Mr Sullivan. Footpath, Nine Acres lane to Spendlove. Clerk to respond.

Wigwell Consultation Section 156. A response had been sent.

Mr Fairhurst. Will prepare a paper setting out general principles for Town Council to consider for future planning applications

3. Declaration of Interest.

Dr Merry declared an interest as a cheque recipient.

4. To sign orders for payment/receive report.

The Clerk had previously circulated a list of the accounts to pay and explained these to those present. Mr Fairhurst proposed that the accounts be paid, this being seconded by Mr Prew and agreed. Accordingly cheques were signed by three Councillors.

5. To receive a report from the Planning Committee.

The following plans were considered:

16/03494/OUT Erect up to 34 dwellings including affordable homes, formation of new pedestrian and vehicular access from Grammar School Hill, land SW of Wellington Cottages. The following comments were approved on a proposal from Mr Morgan, seconded Mr Prew. F 9, Abt. 1

Charlbury Town Council
23rd November 2016

Comments on Outline Planning Application 16/03494/OUT Erection of 34 new dwellings on land opposite Wellington Cottages

Charlbury Town Council objects to the above outline planning application for reasons given below. The Council requests that a site visit be held, that the application goes to committee and that the large number of comments made by local residents and organisations be given careful consideration.

We also consider that the level of local consultation has been inadequate and we strongly urge the applicant to hold walk-in events in Charlbury, open to all residents, to explain the proposed scheme and to hear and answer residents' concerns.

In summary, the Town Council does not believe that a development in the proposed location is acceptable due to the sensitivity of the landscape and environmental setting within the Cotswolds AONB, the Charlbury Conservation Area and the Wychwood Project Area. We also have serious concerns over other issues such as adequacy of infrastructure and road safety.

In more detail:

Location

We have serious concerns in relation to any developments on the western fringes of the town due to the environmentally sensitive nature of the landscape which defines the setting of the ancient woodland of Wychwood Forest and the historic Cornbury Park. The site is within the Cotswold AONB and in accordance with paragraph 116 of the NPPF, planning permission should be refused "*except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that [it is] in the public interest*". Even if a need for a development can be demonstrated, options for meeting the need elsewhere must be considered. We assert that other locations within Charlbury, which do not have the same level of environmental impact, are potentially available as will be documented in the Neighbourhood Plan for Charlbury which is currently under development. One such location, with the potential for 40 homes, is included within the latest modifications to WODC's emerging local plan which is currently open to consultation.

Policy EH1 of WODC's emerging local plan also underlines the above concerns stating: "*When determining development proposals within or impacting the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding*

Natural Beauty, great weight will be given to the conservation of the area's landscape and scenic beauty." Also: "Special attention and protection will be given to the landscape and biodiversity of ... the Wychwood Project Area."

Further, as stated in section 9.6.27 of WODC's emerging local plan, *"The sensitivity of Charlbury's strong landscape and environmental setting mean that significant development on the fringes of the town is unlikely to be acceptable..."*

The proposed site also lies within the Charlbury Conservation area whose boundaries have been drawn in recognition of the strong landscape and environmental setting of the town. The planned development will seriously erode this setting and therefore would fail to protect and enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

Precedent

Granting permission to build this development, clearly beyond the current boundary of the settlement and in such a strong and sensitive landscape, would create a precedent which may lead to the submission of further plans which would further erode the important setting of Cornbury Park, of the ancient Wychwood Forest and of the settlement of Charlbury. Such future applications may then be difficult to resist.

Access

Although this is an outline application, we note that the approval of the proposed access to the development site is NOT a reserved matter. We believe that the proposed access is unsafe and that any attempts to improve the safety are likely to have a seriously detrimental impact of the appearance and rural character of this part of the town.

Grammar School Hill has a distinctly rural character running beyond the defined boundary of the settlement. The rural nature of this thoroughfare is important to the sensitive setting of the landscape across the Evenlode Valley to Cornbury Park and the ancient Wychwood Forest. The road is narrow and includes two right angle bends with very poor visibility. One of these bends is located at the proposed access point to the development and we are not satisfied that the proposed simple entrance with limited vision splays would be sufficient to ensure safe ingress and egress to/from the site or safe passage of other vehicles. Despite its rural nature, the road is a bus route and carries a high volume of traffic into and out of the town centre. A pavement is only provided on the east side of the road and this is narrow. Pedestrians accessing the development site would be required to cross over the road to use this existing pavement. These issues would compromise the safety of residents of the development and may tend to discourage walking and cycling, thereby adding to pressures on the very limited car parking available within the town.

Entry to Grammar School from Fiveways junction is restricted by parked cars associated with the properties at Wellington Cottages and by a bus stop close to the junction.

There is no street lighting on the section of Grammar School Hill adjacent to the proposed entrance to the development which is wholly appropriate to the rural nature of this area. However, the current level of lighting would make it impossible to achieve a safe access to and from the development in the location planned. However, any increase in lighting in the area would inevitably have a seriously detrimental impact on the sensitive nature of the area, damaging views

into and out of the settlement across the valley. The resultant urbanisation of this rural setting would totally unacceptable in this location.

We believe that the proposed access does not meet the requirements of policy OS2 of WODC's emerging local plan which requires *inter alia* that "All developments should: ... be provided with safe vehicular access and safe and convenient pedestrian access to supporting services and facilities".

Primary School

Charlbury Primary School is an excellent school which is currently full with no opportunity for expansion. Many children living in Charlbury are currently forced to travel to schools in neighbouring villages. We consider this to be unacceptable and are concerned that the proposed development will exacerbate this issue. Specifically, policy CO4 of WODC's emerging local plan seeks to "Locate new residential development where it will best help to meet local housing needs and **reduce the need to travel.**" However, according to current catchment criteria, children living in the new development cannot expect to gain admission to Charlbury Primary School unless siblings are already attending. Most will therefore be forced to travel to other schools.

Roger Clarke, Town Clerk
Charlbury Town Council

16/03670/HHD Raise the roof to form additional bedrooms at Wychwood View, Stonesfield Lane.

1. We ask that neighbours comments be given careful consideration.
2. Otherwise no objection

16/03773/FUL Change of use retail to beauty salon at Goodgames, Sheep Street.

1. We have no objection and support any proposal to keep Town Centre properties as businesses.

16/03794/HHD Construct pitched roof to extend over part of the existing flat roofed garage at Mount Pleasant Cottages.

1. We have no objection.

December Agenda review of comments/statements on new housing developments.

6. To deal with Correspondence.

WODC. Precept form noted

WODC. Local Plan revisions. Response to be agreed at December meeting.

OCC. Licence ref. Bowls Club Car Park. Mr Prew proposed that the document be signed by the Clerk, seconded Ms Reason and agreed.

RBL. Thanks to Ms Ely for laying wreath at Remembrance service noted.

C Locke. Spendlove Car Park. Hold over of resurfacing until Community Centre is completed noted.

Arts Festival and Wychwood Project. Grant applications to 7th December meeting.

7. To receive reports with reference to Charlbury.

a) County Councillor. Mr Rose reported as follows:

OCC are working on next year's budget. Hoped for no more cuts. 2% cap is likely.
Waste recycling Centres. Work to be put to tender to seek to maintain the service. Hours may be reduced. Some charges may be necessary. Reuse of items to be encouraged.
Mr Fairhurst congratulated the County for obtaining a £110m grant for Oxford/Cambridge rail link.

b) District Councillor, Ms Leffman reported as follows:

Post office - met watchdog officials at Citizens Advice meeting - Mrs Newbold has resigned her post. The situation is currently unclear but actions are being taken to ensure a service remains here in some form.

Vanderbuilt Homes. Officers have told the developer that consent will not be given but it may well go to appeal. Officers may refuse under delegated powers.

Enstone Airfield recycling project waiting for further officer reports.

Mr Graham: Apologies had not been received. There was no written report. The Clerk was asked to send Mr Graham a letter asking him to attend as planning issues were current and his role at Uplands Planning will be useful.

8. To receive a report from the Working Group meeting of 12th October.

A revised report had been issued along with an amended copy from Ms Reason. The Clerk sought guidance on how the Council wished to proceed on this and take account of the revisions tabled by Ms Reason.

Transparency Working Group. Terms of reference to be prepared to renew transparency, efficiency and effectiveness. Mr Puttick to draft these.

Mr Fairhurst proposed the Group to consist of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Mr Morgan, Mr Puttick and Mrs Burroughs, 2nd Ms Reason. T of R report to January Council meeting.

Dr Merry proposed that cheque signatories be reduced to two from three and that additional signatories be sought. Clerk to speak to Bank re the process for this, seconded Ms Reason and agreed nem con.

Monday meetings with Planning only with speakers as invited.

General Report to be omitted and questions to Chairman added at end of the Agenda.

There followed a brief discussion on the work of the Town Proud Group and the extent of its work.

9. To consider the Neighbourhood Forum.

Two papers had been circulated prior to the meeting outlining progress of the N H Plan group and the Community Action Plan.

10. To consider 20mph speed limits.

Mr Morgan proposed that the Council proceed with this scheme using the Section 106 traffic order paid for the developer at Elmstead, Pooles Lane. This was seconded by Mr Fairhurst and agreed nem con.

Clerk to make necessary arrangements with Mr Kirkwood of OCC.

Report areas to be considered for inclusion in January.

Speed measurement The Slade. Clerk to contact Paul Wilson of OCC.

11. To consider the appointment of Gifford Trustees.

The Town Council can nominate up to 3 Trustees and one in place at present (Paul Jenkins). Mr Puttick expressed an interest and Mr Morgan agreed to explore with Steve Andrews any interest he may have.

Mr Prew proposed these two names go forward (subject to Mr Andrews' interest), this being seconded by Mr Morgan. F. 8, Abst. 1. Wait for confirmation.

12. To consider ad-hoc grants.

The Clerk reminded those present that there was £500 in the budget for this. The following applications had been received:

Oxfordshire Association for the Blind.

Dementia Friendly Charlbury.

Marie Curie.

Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire.

Volunteer Link Up West Oxfordshire.

Mr Prew proposed that £100 be given to each of the above, seconded Mr Morgan and agreed nem con. Cheques to be signed in December.

13. To consider the receipt meeting (December 7th)

The Clerk reminded Councillors that papers will be issued in due course and that the meeting starts at 8pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.10pm.

Signed.....

Chairman