

Meeting of Charlbury Town Council held on Wednesday 23rd September 2015  
at 7.30pm in the Corner House.

**Members Present:** Mr P Kenrick (Chairman), Mr R N Potter, Mrs S Finch, Mr R Fairhurst,  
Ms L Reason, Mr R Prew, Mrs K Broughton, Mr T Skelton,  
D A Merry.

**Apologies:** Mr W Hackmann, Mrs V Pakenham-Walsh, Ms H Baldwin.

Prior to opening the meeting, the Chairman welcomed the members of the public present and reminded them that they cannot speak (other than by prior arrangement with the Clerk).

**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 R Fairhurst and agreed.

**2. To deal with matters arising.**

**Dean Pit possible replacement.** A meeting to discuss this matter will be held on October 9th. The Chairman and Clerk will attend this exploratory meeting.

**Owen Jenkins/verge maintenance.** A reply has been sent asking for costed details/plans for further consideration.

**C.I.L.** Draft schedule is now being reviewed along with the local plan. Details on WODC website. Any comments to Clerk by 9th October.

**Pension regulations.** OALC paper awaited to clarify the matter.

**Defibrillator training.** Two sessions have taken place with some twenty attendees. A very good and useful presentation. Seek further training in 2016.

**OCC Budget meeting (Oxfordshire Together).** Mr Fairhurst and Ms Reason reported on their attendance at this meeting. OCC are seeking to use parishes to provide some highway services in return for a financial contribution based on their costs to provide the service. Cuts to budgets of some £160m were outlined. It is intended that services will be no worse than at present. It was agreed that this matter should be discussed in more detail at the next working group.

**WODC Design guide.** Generally a good document. Some comments received from Mr Potter.

**Corner House.** Street Fair combined profit likely to be circa £12k in total. Letter of thanks to Chairman and helpers.

**Watery Lane.** Dr Merry - temporary work to relieve flooding needs to be made more permanent. Soil/rubble needed.

**Wilderness.** Chairman to chase re post event local meeting.

**NAG.** Neighbourhood Watch meeting. Report from Mrs Pakenham-Walsh was circulated.

**N/H Forum.** Seeking street champions to deal with questionnaire.

### **3. Declaration of Interest.**

Mr Potter expressed his concern at being lobbied re the Rushy Bank application by named letter. He believed that this did not constitute an interest.

### **4. To sign orders for payment/receive report.**

The Clerk explained the accounts to pay list as circulated. Mr Potter proposed that the accounts be paid, this being seconded by Dr Merry and agreed. Accordingly cheques were signed by three Councillors.

### **5. To receive a report from the Planning Committee.**

The committee met on Monday 21st September and Alan Field of GWR addressed those present. He provided an update on various issues and a useful question and answer session followed.

### **Planning Applications.**

The following plans were considered:

**15/03175/HHD** Alteration and erection of single and two storey extensions at Brockwell House, Spelsbury Road.

1. We have no objection but ask that the visual impact on the approach to Charlbury, both from the road and public footpaths, be carefully considered, particularly in respect of materials used

**15/03178/HHD** Erect a rear conservatory at 19 Sandford Park.

1. Can the neighbours views/concerns be taken into consideration?  
2. Otherwise no objection.

**15/03099/FUL** Rushy Bank.

The Chairman had been tasked to provide draft comments for consideration. These were dealt with individually with the following set of comments agreed:- see inserted sheets over.

Ms Reason proposed that the amended comments be agreed, this being seconded by Mrs Broughton and agreed.

## **Comments of Charlbury Town Council re: Planning Application 15/03099/FUL**

Residential development of 25 dwellings and a 12 bed supported living facility with associated access, parking and landscaping on land south of Forest Road, Charlbury, Oxfordshire

Charlbury Town Council does not wish to explicitly endorse or oppose this application, but would ask for the following comments to be taken into consideration:

1. **Overview.** We recognise this application as an innovative and commendable scheme and we welcome its aims to address the major challenges of housing affordability at various levels, the maintenance of and support for a socially balanced community in Charlbury as well as the needs of those suffering from young onset dementia. However, we wish to ensure that a number of issues set out below are adequately addressed and we do also recognise genuine concerns with regard to the site location (see item 6 below).
2. **Public Consultation.** We applaud the level of public consultation carried out by the applicants and acknowledge the efforts made by them to address issues raised.
3. **Housing Affordability.** Housing affordability is recognised as a key issue for Charlbury in the emerging WODC Local Plan 2031, page 193, paragraph 9.6.5. This scheme seeks to address this issue in an innovative way, aiming to help maintain a socially balanced community in the town. In addition to social affordable units, this scheme includes other homes that we understand will be offered at discounted prices with priority given to local people. We applaud this initiative but seek to ensure that it provides a sustainable benefit to the town which can only be achieved if the affordability and local priority conditions are maintained in perpetuity and not just for early occupiers of the site. We therefore ask that a Section 106 agreement (or other instrument) be put in place to secure this benefit and we also ask that the Town Council be involved in the negotiations for such an agreement.
4. **Social Affordable Housing Needs in Charlbury.** We ask that this proposal be considered alongside the deferred proposal for housing at Little Lees, Charlbury (15/00567/FUL) or any resubmission of it, particularly with reference to the provision of social affordable housing and the identified need.
5. **Social Housing Mix.** The scheme is also proposing a number of units that will be for self-build consistent with a government commitment to providing more housing for self-build communities on the basis that these provide lower cost housing which also tends to be delivered to high standards of sustainability.
6. **Location.** We are concerned that the proposed site, on the western approach to Charlbury, lies within a very sensitive landscape within the Cotswold AONB and is beyond the natural boundaries formed by the river and railway (although we acknowledge that a small industrial estate is already located beyond this boundary). The Town Council has previously questioned whether this is the best site for this commendable development and has attempted to identify alternative sites including land adjacent to Ticknell Piece. To date this initiative has not been successful and so we are constrained to comment on the current application on the Rushy Bank site. With regard to this site we note *inter alia* that:
  - a. the West Oxfordshire SHLAA dated June 2014 (Page 49, Site ref 266) states that this site was not taken forward to detailed site assessment because it was too distant from the settlement.
  - b. the draft West Oxfordshire Design Guide 2015 (section 5 page 13) states that “development is constrained by the river Evenlode and the railway line to the south-west”.
  - c. the distance from the settlement of Charlbury is no greater than for other proposed and consented developments in the town (e.g. Ditchley Road and Little Lees).
7. **Precedent.** We remain concerned that this development may provide a precedent for further development along the Forest Road and seek further assurances that this would not be the case.

8. **Visual Impact.** We acknowledge that the applicants have taken considerable efforts to minimise and mitigate the visual impact of the site, especially in this latest application. In particular, we appreciate the removal of houses bordering the Forest Road and the introduction of bollard external lighting to reduce light pollution. However, we note that the view from Grammar School Hill (LVIA page 38, Viewpoint M) may still have a moderate impact in winter and will still give a sense of detachment from the town.
9. **Safety of Pedestrian Access.** We are concerned that the safety of pedestrians walking between the site and the town may be a serious issue due to the need to cross the road twice *en-route* to the town, the narrowness of the pavement (there appears to be no practical opportunity to widen it, especially over the railway bridge) and the likely speed of traffic approaching the town downhill from the west. Please can this issue be given a high level of scrutiny and appropriate measures be included to address the issue.
10. **Play Area.** It is clear that families with children will be a significant part of the demographic expected to occupy this development. Given the distance and pedestrian safety issues (see 8 above), there is a clear need for some kind of play area on the site and we ask for this to be included.
11. **Provision of Community Transport.** It is important that the community feels itself to be connected to Charlbury and that residents do not automatically use their cars to get into town. We suggest that Young Dementia UK be required to provide a minibus to take residents into town.
12. **Archaeology.** We note the inclusion of an archaeological desk based report and ask that the report's recommendations be carried out in full including a site evaluation and the forwarding of the report to the Oxfordshire County Archaeologist. This area, in the vicinity of Walcot, is locally recognised as being of archaeological and historical significance and as the Rushy Bank site has not been ploughed or otherwise disturbed in recent times a thorough site evaluation is essential in our opinion.
13. **Infrastructure.** Can an evaluation be carried out to determine the impact that the development will have on local infrastructure such as school places?
14. **Public comments.** A large number of comments have been received from local members of the public and these are divided fairly evenly between those supporting and those objecting to the application. This underlines the levels interest and concern engendered by this application in fairly equal measure. We ask that careful consideration be given to all of these comments.
15. **Section 106.** We ask that agreements be sought in the following areas and that the Town Council be involved in the negotiations:
  - a. Securing the affordability of homes in perpetuity (see 3 above);
  - b. Contributions to the costs of community facilities and infrastructure;
  - c. Measures to improve pedestrian safety (see 9 above);
  - d. Provision of a play area on the site (see 10 above);
  - e. Contribution to the cost of community transport between the town and Rushy Bank (see 11 above).

In view of the significance and level of public interest in this application we ask that it go to committee for decision and we also suggest that a further site visit be considered to enable committee members to assess the impact of the changes introduced in this current plan.

## **6. To deal with Correspondence.**

**Oxfordshire Assoc. for the Blind.** Grant request to November meeting.

**Allotment request.** Add to list.

**Playgroup.** Card to thank for grant noted.

## **7. To receive reports with reference to Charlbury.**

**a) County Councillor.** Rodney Rose reported as follows:

He reported that the highways response to the Rushy Bank proposal mirrored the concerns of the Town Council.

Section 106 monies could be used to support bus services (perhaps station bus).

He went on to refer to cuts which OCC have to make to services which are not statutory responsibilities.

There is a need to consider cluster group working and for parishes to help if possible.

**b) District Councillors.**

Liz Leffman reported as follows:

There is to be a meeting to explore possibilities to replace Dean Pit.

HWRC - WODC are putting forward a reply to the consultation.

Fly tipping may be a knock-on effect.

Household Waste Collection service being reviewed.

Andy Graham reported as follows:

Charlbury Youth Theatre has been launched at The Shed for a variety of age groups.

Refugee issue - public meeting held recently.

Elderly persons have asked him to request that seats be provided on the Enstone Road.

## **8. To consider the Neighbourhood Forum.**

Moving slowly forward. Thoughts are being gathered as to how the process could be made quicker.

**9. To consider a letter to the Government objecting to the extension of Right to Buy to affordable homes owned by Housing Associations.**

Chairman and Clerk to prepare a revised version, incorporating comments received, for approval at the October meeting. Agenda Item.

**10. To appoint a Councillor to the Allotment committee.**

Carry forward to October agenda.

**11. To consider Councillor surgeries.**

Next surgery is October 3rd. Mr Fairhurst and Mr Skelton will be present to deal with issues raised.

**12. To receive a report from the Traffic sub-committee and consider further actions.**

To October agenda

**13. To consider an agenda for the working group on 14th October. 8.00pm.**

The Chairman proposed that the following be discussed:

Council procedures - discuss/review - How Council operates.  
OCC services - local impact. TC role.

Other matters:

TC room in Corner House.  
Mayor/Leader of Council.  
Those without access to electronic communication.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.50pm.

Signed.....  
Chairman.