
ELMSWELL PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of full Council held on
Monday 6th March 2017 at 7.30pm
at The Blackbourne

Present: Cllrs Burch, Edmonds, Friend, Hawes, Ms Indurain, Pallett (Chairman), Mrs Taber, Wiley

Attending: District Council Ward Member Mrs Sarah Mansel
Parish Clerk Mr Peter Dow
28 members of the public

17.03.01 **Noted:**

1.1 Apologies for absence for this unscheduled meeting were accepted from Cllrs Barker, Pratt and Schofield who each had a prior engagement.

17.03.02 **Noted:**

That when any Members' Declarations of Local Non-Pecuniary Interests and/or Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in subsequent agenda items were invited none were forthcoming and that there were no additions, deletions or alterations to the Council's Register of Interests.

17.03.03 **Noted:**

That the only correspondence to the Meeting related directly to 2 of the applications on the agenda and would be dealt with at the appropriate juncture.

17.03.04 **Noted:**

That when the Meeting adjourned and public comment or questions were invited on agenda items, none were forthcoming.

17.03.05 **Noted:**

Planning applications as notified by Mid Suffolk District Council.

05.1 **0614/17**

Erection of a conservatory 3 Malting Field

Councillors agreed to support this application.

05.2 **0412/17**

Demolition of existing UPVC conservatory to rear of existing two storey semi-detached dwelling and erection of new two storey extension to provide new kitchen & first floor bedroom (Retrospective application) Old Manor House, Hawk End Lane

Councillors agreed to support this application.

05.3 **0210/17**

Application for Outline Planning Permission for the development of up to 120 residential units with all matters reserved except access Land to the East of Ashfield Road.

Councillors agreed to support this Application with the proviso that the following comments should form a substantive part of their formal Response:

- 1 Councillors take account of the long-standing initiative on the part of this developer to build on this site and to mitigate the effects on infrastructure in the community by offering land sufficient for the siting of a primary school a health centre and land to allow the effective doubling of recreation space at the Blackbourne, the adjacent community centre and playing fields.
- 2 These proposals were first formally tabled in 1997 and have since been properly noted at various stages of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan re-drafting process, including the 2002 Structures Report. They have, throughout this time, been the subject of consultations related to Strategic Planning at both County and District level together with formal presentation to the Elmswell Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. Recent meetings convened by MSDC to address the problems of development pressure on the 'A14 corridor' CS3 villages of Elmswell, Woolpit and Thurston have noted the scope afforded in the proposals for providing extra primary school places.
- 3 Although not part of the formal red line application, the Applicant has made clear in the Planning Statement and elsewhere that the historic offer still stands, including the possibility of the adoption of the estate access road as a Northern approach to the existing Blackbourne site allowing the introduction of a one-way system serving this busy community focus with a 50% reduction in traffic using the current single vehicular access via Blackbourne Road.
- 4 It is noted that, as previously when this developer made over the 11 acres on which the Blackbourne now stands as part of the Blackbourne estate development, the land benefits would be gifted without impinging on any other infrastructure provision via s106 and / or CIL.
- 5 There have been serious reservations raised regarding shortcomings in the treatment of storm water drainage given that the site currently carries considerable volume from Ashfield Road as far north as Oak Lane where flooding has, historically, posed problems. The Applicant is addressing this, but Councillors support the view of nearby residents that proposed amendments dealing with the issue are fully scrutinised by the appropriate agency.
- 6 The assurance of Anglian Water that they will fulfil their statutory obligations with regard to foul water drainage deserve careful monitoring. The current requirement for tanker assisted disposal from the sewage facility on Ashfield Road towards Grove Lane causes considerable local nuisance. The extra loading that this application, if successful, would impose, should trigger an uplift in capacity through piped clearance and the opportunity taken to obviate the necessity for intrusive manual interventions.
- 7 The bend in Ashfield Road near to the proposed access road is a well-documented accident black spot where, as recently as February of this year, an articulated lorry jack-knifed into the ditch. Consideration should be given to addressing this problem which can only worsen in the event that these proposals go ahead. The installation of a roundabout might be constructively considered and, at any subsequent detailed Planning stage, the fronting of dwellings on to Ashfield Road with the inevitable result of on-street parking, should not be countenanced.

- 8 The Applicant's assessment of the traffic flow and waiting times at the railway crossing are noted as differing from those tabled as part similar recent applications and as not representing a fair picture of the nuisance and danger posed at this serious pinch point which splits the village in two. Elmswell Parish Council has commissioned a viability study under the aegis of the Government Neighbourhood Plan Technical Support scheme into the long-held aspirational proposal for a Relief Road bridging the railway and accessing A14. It has, in parallel, agreed funding for its own professional assessment of the current and safe available capacity of traffic over the crossing with projections forward allowing for proposed considerable expansion of rail freight. Until these initiatives are completed it renders a decision on applications such as this premature. Given the similarities in this regard, the recent decision to defer determination of the application at Borley Crescent, ref 3469/16, pending the tabling of further traffic statistics is welcomed and reinforces this point.
- 9 In the context of the recent flurry of applications outside of the development envelope as defined by the 1998 Local Plan, Councillors are appropriately aware of the NPPF strictures in favour of development which is sustainable. Set against these other applications which offer no substantive mitigation of the extra pressure on infrastructure which their proposals impose, this application is seen as, relatively, 'sustainable'.
- 10 **IN SUMMARY** Councillors support this proposal in principle having an eye to the Applicant fulfilling earlier promises of land allowing infrastructure provision outside of requirements imposed as part of any permission. However, they urge the Planning Authority to stay its hand pending on-going and imminent initiatives to independently inform the process of traffic management with reference to the community's identified aspiration for a Relief Road to address once and for all the ever growing delays and hazards caused by the railway crossing.

17.03.06

Resolved:

That Elmswell Parish Council makes known to the Professional Lead, Growth and Sustainable Planning, at Mid Suffolk District Council its views on the Planning applications on this agenda.

17.03.07

Noted:

There was discussion regarding the funding of an appropriate traffic survey to serve in testing the validity of highways related statistics presented with Planning applications.

Proposed: Cllr Hawes;

That, as a matter of urgency, Elmswell Parish Council identify an appropriately qualified professional or practice to conduct a comprehensive survey in the village of traffic flows, trip rates, junction capacities and ancillary issues related to road capacity and impacts of future development with specific reference to the railway crossing and that the Clerk report back to Council with a view to authorising the process of appointment.

Seconded: Cllr Pallett

Proposal carried

17.03.08

Noted:

The following when any other business for information, to be noted or for inclusion on a future agenda:

- 8.1 The Clerk confirmed that the protracted process of appointment of a professional practice to conduct a Relief Road viability study under the Government's Technical Support scheme was now complete and that he was in touch with Messrs Bailey Venning Associates who have undertaken to complete the work and produce a report within the month.

17.03.09

Noted:

The following when public comment was invited on further matters relevant to Council business:

- 9.1 There were representations from several members of the public present expressing disappointment at the Council's unanimous decision to approve the application for 120 dwellings at Ashfield Road on the grounds of the problems of storm water drainage which may arise, the probity of the implied community infrastructure gains attached to the application proposals and road safety .
- 9.2 There was discussion related to recent Press reports of other communities successfully resisting aggressive Planning applications pending a more strategic assessment of the local situation, but this is a process still as yet unresolved and currently awaiting Supreme Court rulings.
- 9.3 It was noted that the recent exhibition of concept proposals at School Road for 308 dwellings would, if worked up to Planning stage, potentially threaten to obviate any chance of routing a Relief Road on the currently suggested route. As there has been no liaison at all between the developer and MSDC it was accepted that this is a long term aspirational scheme with scope for remediation of any possible harm to the Relief Road routing.

17.03.10

Noted:

That the date of next scheduled meeting was confirmed as Monday 20th March 2017 beginning at 7.30pm at the Blackbourne.

17.03.11

Noted:

That the meeting closed at 9.12pm.