

LITTON CHENEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 18th May 2017 at Litton and Thorner's Community Hall Litton Cheney

Present: W. Orchard (Chairman), S. Kourik (Deputy Chairman), Mrs K. Brooks, A. King, Dr H. Lantos, Mrs A. Spurrier, Clerk J. Firrell, Clerk Designate Mrs M. Walsh, Dist Cllr J. Russell and 26 local residents.

1. **Apologies:** None.
2. **WD/D/17/000850 – The Orchard – Retention of Double Garage – Certificate of Lawfulness.** The matter had been overtaken by events, and due to there being no objections or proof provided that the garage had not been in existence in excess of four years WDDC had granted approval.
3. **To Consider Planning Applications WD/D/17/000758 & 59 – Charity Farm –** Erection of 6 no. dwellings and conversion of redundant agricultural building to a dwelling, and dismantle pig barn.

The Chairman invited the applicant's architect and agent Andrew Stone (AS) to present the details of the planning applications to the Parish Council and those attending. Andrew Stone gave a general overview of the proposed development, and felt many would have referred to the planning documents which were available on the Dorset for You website, and would therefore be au fait with the proposals. The second application (000759) dealt with the pig barn and redundant bull pen under a Listed Building label due to being within the curtilage of the nearby tithe barn. AS explained that it was the intent to make three of the new dwellings affordable and the applicant would be willing to enter into an S106 agreement setting out the parameters for this to be established. Various other aspects of the development were enlarged upon and AS indicated he was prepared to answer questions from the Parish Council and local residents.

The Chairman invited those attending to use this “democratic time” to ask questions of Andrew Stone and Andy Romans (AR) prior to the Parish Council going into “closed session” to consider their submission to WDDC. It was later explained that “closed session” did not mean “in secret” but that local residents would not have the same opportunity to contribute to the debate as during “democratic time”. Mr F Spicer took the opportunity to ask about the colour of the pig barn roof once it had been relocated. The indications were that it would be black (its original colour) although Mr P. Dyke whose property it would be adjacent to preferred the current “rustic” finish. Mrs M Anderson asked for confirmation that construction transport during building and residents vehicles would not use the current northerly access which runs alongside her property up to the tithe barn. Both AS and AR gave an absolute assurance this would not happen. Mr P. Dyke queried whether what is now 6 proposed dwellings whereas previously it had been three are necessary in a Conservation Area and ANOB with a reducing infrastructure. A number of people raised the possible spectre of inadequate parking at the development which might lead to vehicles being parked on Main Street. AS suggested that more parking spaces might be possible. Nicola Chitson had been led to believe that the spaces might be rented

to those who require them, but that was considered unlikely. AS pointed out that the piece of land earmarked for the development was “not a beautiful site”, nor suitable as agricultural land, although others pointed out it was in partially in a conservation area. James Williams highlighted the fact the applicant had indicated their intent to incorporate the “affordable” criteria within an S106 at which point AS explained further what that meant indicating the applicant would be willing to work with WDDC and the PC on the eligibility factor. AS was asked if a level of housing need had been formally established to determine if affordable housing was required in the village. He stated that the “need” was based on anecdotal evidence, rather than a specific survey.

Charles Innes expressed concern about the boiler (biomass) house that would provide heating and hot water to the properties, and how its appearance and emissions would impact on the surrounding properties. AS stated that once installed it would be eco-friendly/carbon neutral and fuelled by wood pellets along the same lines as that installed at the tithe barn. Andy Romans offered to give interested parties a tour of the biomass installation at the tithe barn. AS stated that more landscaping and planting could be carried out to lessen the impact of the new dwellings on nearby residences. After further comments a commitment to amend the drawings to include a solid fence along the east boundary was given by AS. It was confirmed that other than the two car ports in the pig barn there would be no garages or other car ports as part of the development.

The subject of access via the tithe barn track was raised again, with mention that several people had shared and right of access along this track, it being owned by a third party (CG Fry & Son). Its width and state suggested it was not suitable for additional access during construction should the development go ahead, or indeed access given to the new owners of the dwellings. Again it was confirmed that access would be restricted both during construction and subsequent to the dwellings being occupied, and access would only be via the southern entrance, the new road being constructed before work commences. AR admitted that the track and kerbing needed attention.

The Chairman, in the absence of further comments from the floor, invited councillors to ask questions of the agent and applicant. Dr Hugh Lantos enquired further about the car parking situation and how it equated to the information contained in the Design & Access Statement. AS indicated that the spaces would probably not be rented but at least one space provided for each dwelling. The Chairman asked how additional cars such as second cars, visitors and trade vehicles would be accommodated, echoing the concern of many that excess vehicles would be parked in village lanes not suited for such purpose. The use of cars in the village was always going to be a concern in a situation such as exists in Litton Cheney and was likely to get worse with the demise of the bus service. Several councillors raised the matter of the neighbourhood plan, the village having decided in a recent survey that they felt a NP was not required believing that the Local Plan would guard against any unwanted development. In a village that did not have a defined development boundary it was difficult to see how a development of “open market” housing albeit with affordable elements would fit with the Local Plan. AS felt the Local Plan was somewhat opaque, given indications that WDDC did not have sufficient building land available to fulfil their housing quota. It was pointed out that a revised Local Plan was out for consultation indicating where additional houses would be built in order to fulfil WDDC's quota, and that until that was adopted the current Local Plan would be applied. Steve Kourik wondered if the Local Plan had total relevance in Litton Cheney, while others questioned the affordability aspect of the proposed dwellings, and the density of the development within the space available. James Williams on a point of order stated that he felt the Chairman, Bill Orchard, had a pecuniary interest in the matter at hand, given he

owned a property nearby and should therefore not play any further part in the decision process. The Clerk directed that it would be for other members of the Parish Council to decide if indeed there was a personal or prejudicial interest when the meeting went into closed session.

After an hour and a half of discussion, with everyone having had a chance to put forward their view, it was announced the Parish Council would now discuss the matter in a closed session, which would preclude members of the public from speaking unless they were invited to by the Parish Council. At this point there was a mass exodus by local residents, leaving only a few people including the applicant, agent and associate.

The first matter to be resolved was the question of conflict of interest. After a relatively short discussion, not involving the Chairman, and perusal of a map it was proposed by S. Kourik, seconded by Mrs K. Brooks and carried unanimously that no conflict of interest existed in this instance.

The Clerk reminded councillors that they had three options with regards to the planning application response – support; object; comment. Aside from those local residents who had spoken at this meeting, there were also comments made online and councillors had kept abreast of these comments. Several consultees had yet to respond including Highways and Housing Enabling Team Leader. Individual councillors after considerable discussion were asked to highlight their concerns. S. Kourik saw no reason to object, but several councillors continued to echo their concerns about parking and the impact of the development on nearby houses despite the assertion by the applicant that he would address these concerns and incorporate subsequent resolutions within the application documentation. Material considerations as identified by WDDC planning department (spatial policy) were gone through one by one and it was apparent that most had been satisfactorily covered, and those that were not including highway safety, traffic generation, local, strategic, regional and national planning policies and disabled access would need to be addressed by others. The question had yet to be answered – how did this application fit with the Local Plan? It was agreed by all that should WDDC be minded to approve the application, the Parish Council must surely be involved in putting together the terms of the S106 agreement along with the applicant and planning department.

Overall, it was agreed that on several fronts insufficient information and the need to formally commit to additional undertakings by the applicant directed the Parish Council to unanimously agree that at this point they would submit their response under the heading of “Comment”. This should not be taken as a negative response, indeed it should give the applicant the incentive to improve on the application in consultation with the case officer, place in writing the various undertakings verbally given at the meeting and hope to conform to any necessary requirements requested by other consultees.

4. There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.30 pm.

After note: A submission has now been made to WDDC and can be found on the Dorset for You website.

J. Firrell
Parish Clerk.