

LITTON CHENEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 10 October 2018 at Litton and Thorner's Community Hall, Litton Cheney

Present: W. Orchard (Chairman), S. Kourik (Deputy Chairman), K. Brooks, J Firrell, A. King, A. Spurrier, M. Walsh (Clerk), A. Stone (agent), A. Romans (applicant), District Cllr J. Russell and 18 local residents.

1. **Apologies:** T. Mulhall and 2 local residents
2. To consider planning application **WD/D/18/001959** – land west of Tithe Barn House – erect new dwelling and garage
3. **Declarations of interest:** the Chairman had received one request for dispensation from Cllr Spurrier, who owns Cross Trees House in Chalk Pit Lane. The definition of pecuniary interest was "reasonable likelihood or expectation of an appreciable financial loss or gain". In his view, Cllr Spurrier's property was sufficiently far away that this did not apply and he proposed that dispensation to both discuss and vote on the application be granted. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Kourik and carried unanimously by the Parish Council. There were no other declarations of interest.
4. The Chairman invited the applicant's architect/agent Andrew Stone (AS) to present the details of the planning application to the Parish Council and those attending. AS gave an overview of the proposed development and circulated copies of plans:
 - It was a small/average sized 3 bedroom house of 140m².
 - He had designed it to look like a traditional labourer's house.
 - It followed the building line of other properties in Chalk Pit Lane.
 - It utilised the existing site entrance used by Wessex Water during their recent works in the village.
 - The site would be screened by the existing hedge and new trees planted.
 - There would be a timber framed garage to the front of the house, behind the hedge.
 - An oil tank would be located between the garage and the hedge.
 - The recent Housing Need Assessment had shown substantial need for a property of that size.
 - The proposed site seemed a "natural" location for a dwelling to him.
 - He was conscious of the need to preserve the landscape but felt the proposed house would not make an impact.
5. The Chairman invited those attending to use "democratic time" to ask questions of AS and Andy Romans (AR) prior to the Parish Council going into "closed session" to consider their submission to WDDC. Questions and statements (Q) and the agent's/applicant's responses (R) are summarised below:

Q. Why was the proposed dwelling 2 storey when others along Chalk Pit Lane were single storey?

R. 2 storeys were more appropriate to the village than a bungalow.

Q. The site was elevated and the proposed dwelling would appear prominent when viewed from across the valley, compared to other buildings in Chalk Pit Lane. Had levels been taken?

A. AS did not believe the design was excessively high. Levels had been taken but there were no plans showing levels.

Q. The proposal was in the wrong location within the AONB. It was understood that issues with the 5 year housing land supply may result in applications for infill development within the village but this was outside the village – if this were allowed where would it stop? Concern about precedent/further proposed dwellings beside/behind the proposed dwelling or elsewhere outside the village.

R. AS agreed that the countryside should be protected but felt the balance was currently wrong – new housing was needed – where else could it be built? There was always a risk that properties may lose countryside views through further development.

Q. Why this particular site and not others within the applicant's ownership that might be considered more appropriate?

A. AS had not chosen the site and was not aware of any other sites. AR the question was not relevant: the meeting was to discuss the current application.

Q. The large employer referred to in the planning statement employed predominantly transient foreign nationals. There was considerable agreement that there should be more affordable housing for young families in the village, but that the proposed dwelling would not be affordable to them. Concern that the proposed house would be purchased as a second home.

A. AS agreed that anyone would be able to purchase the dwelling.

Q. The purpose of the HNA was to determine the type of affordable housing needed at Charity Farm and could not be applied to the current application for market housing. Of the 22 who had indicated a housing need within the village, only 3 said they could pay more than £180,000.

Q. There were already 12-14 houses for sale in the parish, some had been for sale for some time.

A. Houses for sale did not equate into an increase in housing stock.

Q. The proposed house was actually quite large, not small/average as claimed. Nor was it accurate to represent it as a labourers building – historically, farm workers would not have occupied such a building

A. The design was intended to be traditional rather than modern. AS accepted that farm labourers would not traditionally have occupied such a dwelling

Q. Proposals for new dwellings should include renewable energy such as solar panels, heat exchange.

Q. Why was the proposal for a rendered dwelling rather than stone, which was felt to be more in keeping?

A. Render was less costly and was also traditional.

Cllr Orchard invited Cllr Russell to give his views: he had nothing to say about the application but confirmed that decisions were being taken on the basis of the Local Plan at present.

Cllr Brookes had recently attended a WDDC Planning Briefing and reported that villages with no Defined Development Boundary would be expected to take a minimum growth of 2% over a 20 year period. This equated to approximately 5 houses for Litton Cheney and the 7 dwellings due for approval at Charity Farm already exceeded this.

6. There being no more questions or comments, Cllr Orchard ended democratic time to enable Parish Councillors to consider the comments made.

Cllr Orchard reminded Parish Councillors that Local Plan Policy was that villages such as Litton Cheney with no Defined Development Boundary should have no new dwellings other than affordable dwellings. It was suggested that other dwellings on Chalk Pit Lane had infilled up to, but not past Tithe Barn House. Parish Councillors discussions echoed the views of villagers, specifically that

- The proposed house was in the wrong location outside the village limits. Had it been within the village it would have been viewed more favourably.
- The site was in a prominent location within an AONB.
- There was also concern that the agent had implied that the site was brownfield – AS clarified he had said it seemed a “natural” location for a house and had not suggested it was brownfield.
- The application did not meet any criteria of either the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) nor the Local Plan.
- Applications were currently being determined in accordance with Local Plan Policies.

Last year, Litton Cheney residents voted not to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan on the basis that the Local Plan provided sufficient protection against inappropriate development within the village.

- The housing need assessment referred to by the agent had been to determine the type of affordable housing most appropriate for the Charity Farm development. It could not be used to justify the need for market housing. Parish Councillors questioned the need for market housing within the village, given the number of properties for sale.

It was therefore proposed by Cllr Orchard, seconded by Cllr King and carried unanimously that the Parish Council OBJECT to the proposed application for the following reasons and to include additional requests should the Local Planning Authority be minded to approve the application.

1. The proposed dwelling would lie beyond the existing built limits of the village in open countryside, and within an AONB. The proposed dwelling would be neither affordable nor of “exceptional quality”, nor is there any evidenced need for an agricultural dwelling. The proposal is therefore contrary to NPPF paras 79 and 11.
2. The Local Plan allows only for affordable housing in villages with no defined development boundary, such as Litton Cheney. The proposed dwelling would therefore be contrary to policy SUS2 of the adopted Local Plan.
3. The proposed dwelling would occupy an elevated position within an AONB and would be prominently visible from footpaths W12/10 (Chalk Pit Lane to the pub); W12/4 (School Lane to Cox's Lane); W12/11 (Chalk Pit Lane to West End Farm). The site is also visible from various locations in the village including the White Horse PH, School Lane, Ashley Chase Estate (Park's Farm) and Cox's Lane. From further afield, the site is visible from Looke Lane and from Puncknowle.

In 2017, Litton Cheney residents voted not to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan, instead placing their trust in Local Plan Policy. Should WDDC be minded to approve the application, the Parish Council ask that the Local Planning Authority

- (a) request additional plans showing site levels and, if significantly higher than other properties further down Chalk Pit Lane, seek a reduction in height.
- (b) require the building to be constructed in stone, rather than rendered, as it is felt stone is more in keeping with the village vernacular.

7. Meeting closed.

Maggie Walsh
Parish Clerk