

# CONFIDENTIAL NOTES

**MINUTES of the Planning Committee Meeting of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday, 5 February 2024 at Melksham Without Parish Council Offices, Melksham Community Campus (First Floor), Market Place, Melksham, SN12 6ES at 7.00pm**

**406/23 S106 Agreements and Developer meetings: (Standing Item)**

**c) Contact with developers**

- i) To note feedback following pre application meeting on 31 January 2024 with Gompels Healthcare**

**Present:** Councillor Richard Wood (Chair of Planning Committee)  
Councillor Alan Baines (Vice Chair of Planning Committee)  
Councillor John Glover (Chair of Council)  
Councillor David Pafford (Vice Chair of Council)  
Councillor Mark Harris  
Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder (Bowerhill)  
Teresa Strange, Clerk  
Lorraine McRandle, Parish Officer  
Sam Gompels, Director, Gompels Healthcare  
Sasha A'Court, Operations Manager, Gompels Healthcare

Sam Gompels explained that the business was doing really well but he was struggling to store stock in the quantities required, they additionally had missed out on some opportunities like buying the stock when The Consortium in Trowbridge closed as they physically could not store it.

They have now outgrown their current site at Swift Way, Bowerhill and are looking for alternative sites. To retain their existing experienced workforce, they were looking at sites in the Melksham area, which has been difficult, given the lack of suitable sites available, with at least 20-30 ha more employment land required in Melksham. Unfortunately, they are unable to expand their site into adjacent land, south of their premises, as Gladman has an option for housing on most of the land between their site and the canal and is not keen on having discussions on alternative uses for the site. Sam had also been unsuccessful in securing the Christie Miller site despite bidding to Wiltshire Council for this on several occasions.

Sam explained other businesses on Bowerhill, including Herman Miller and Knorr Bremse were also looking to expand, with Knorr Bremse interested in extending into the Gompels site if they move. The optimum plan would be for Gompels to move to a new site with a new build for themselves and additional space for Herman Miller, and Knorr Bremse take over the vacated site at Swift Way. Sam Gompels had "letters of comfort" for this intent. There were other businesses on the industrial estate looking to expand too, such as C&P Medical, Apetito and Superior Graphics.

Gompels had met with Wiltshire Council to discuss, with among others Nic Thomas, Director of Planning, and involving Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder too. Wiltshire Council had put forward the large new site coming forward at Chippenham but Sam felt that this was not appropriate for his workforce based on the number that are very local and walk/cycle to work and could add an hour a day at least on childcare costs. He would prefer to retain the experience of the staff. If he was looking to relocate out of Melksham, then it would be more like Corby or Coventry, which is more centralised in the country with better access to the distribution network. Wiltshire Council had also put forward the 5ha of employment land at the land at Blackmore Farm site in the draft Local Plan. This was not big enough, and did not have a suitable road network for access for large lorries.

Having looked at several sites and held discussions with Wiltshire Council, the following are the top 3 sites. Wiltshire Council had encouraged Sam to engage with the parish council on their thoughts on the sites.

- **Site** [REDACTED]

This is the largest site ([REDACTED]) which could accommodate both Gompels and additional space for Herman Miller.

Discussions have taken place with the landowners, and they have been close to signing the legal paperwork after some 3 years of negotiations but as this is in the ownership of [REDACTED], it has not been straight forward. It had all been called off by [REDACTED], with some positive news on this only the previous day.

Discussions have also taken place with [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED].

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED].

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED].

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED].

- **Road** [REDACTED]

Discussions have taken place with the landowner, however, it is the smallest of the 3 sites ([REDACTED]) with only Gompels being able to relocate there.

[REDACTED]

There is debate whether the site is grade 1 or 2 agricultural land.

This site had the least constraints and would have less impact on adjacent residential development.

[REDACTED]

- **Site on A365 Devizes Road (between Turnpike Garage and Bowerhill Lane).**

This is also a small site which covers two fields owned by Sam Gompels and would only be large enough for Gompels to relocate to, with access off of the A365.

Plans proposed had taken account of a potential route of the proposed A350 Eastern By-pass.

MWPC members commented that with a new dedicated access to the site, this could open up access for potential housing on the land adjacent at Old Loves Farm (owned by others) that had been discounted by the NHP team due to its poor, narrow access via Bowerhill Lane.

- Other sites discussed at the meeting were [REDACTED] which Wiltshire Council said was a flood zone/risk and [REDACTED].  
[REDACTED] A site at [REDACTED] had also been looked at but Wiltshire Council had objected to this site. Councillor Baines also suggested the [REDACTED] site. A site on [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**PLANNING APPLICATION FOR EXTENSION OF CURRENT SITE**

Given the time involved in submitting a planning application and building new premises (if approved), Gompels propose to extend their warehouse further south on their existing site in the meantime and an application will be submitted shortly (later that week).

Meeting closed at 5.55pm