

**MINUTES of a Planning Committee Meeting of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at Crown Chambers, Melksham Market Place at 7.00 p.m.**

**Present:** Cllr. Richard Wood (Chair of the Meeting); Cllrs. Alan Baines; Rolf Brindle; Gregory Coombes; John Glover and Don Millard. Cllr. Mike Sankey attended from 8.10 p.m.

Cllr. Pat Nicol attended this meeting as an observer.

Mr Glen Godwin (Pegasus Planning), Nicholas Glass (Wiltshire Council); Christopher Sheppard (Salisbury Diocese); John Kirkby (Stride Treglown – Architect) and Anna Wilcox (Head teacher of Forest & Sandridge School) attended the Meeting to address the Council about plans for a new primary school as detailed in PA W13 00489 – Construction of a new dual-phase primary school of land south of Sandridge Road and W13 00524 – Redevelopment of the existing school site to provide 15 dwellings and access.

A number of residents also attended the Meeting.

**Apologies:** Cllr. Mike Mills

- 457/12 **Declarations of Interest:** Cllr. Coombes declared an interest in PA W13 00424 & 00522/LBC for change of use at The Coach House, 214 Corsham Road as a neighbour of the applicant. Cllr. Pat Nicol declared an interest as a Governor at Forest and Sandridge School.
- 458/12 **Introductory Comments:** The Chair welcomed everyone to the Meeting.  
**Resolved:** *It was agreed to suspend Standing Orders to enable the Pegasus Planning/School Group to make a presentation*
- 459/12 **New school plans - presentation from Pegasus Planning:** Glen Godwin explained that two linked planning applications had been submitted which the Parish Council may wish to review together. These were the planning application to build a new school and the application to develop the existing Forest and Sandridge school site for housing so that there would be enough funding for a larger school which could take pupils from both the new development and the existing Forest and Sandridge School. The latter was an “enabling development” to provide the necessary funds for the project. The S106 Agreement had originally stipulated that a one form entry school for 210 pupils would be built for the new development east of Melksham. However PA W13 00489 was for a phased two form entry school for 420 pupils. The intention was to initially build an 11 class 1.5 Entry school to ensure core facilities were in place when expansion was necessary. In the past several 1 form entry schools had been built without planning for the future and then it had been found core facilities were insufficient for capacity. The proposed new school would include a larger hall which could be let out for community use as well, instead of providing a community hall on the Local Centre Land. The 1.5 entry school would allow for the replacement of the existing school, if the alternative funding could be provided through developing the existing site. Persimmon had had great success in building new schools in the county. A public consultation held at the school in December 2012 had been attended by 130 people and had resulted in 76

written responses being received. Of these 75% supported both developments while a further 8% supported having a new school but had expressed concerns about the loss of the old school building.

Christopher Sheppard explained the existing Church of England school was not only for the church but for the whole parish. He had received strong support for replacing the old building with a new school which would be fit for purpose. In 2004 the S106 Agreement funding would have gone along way towards building a large enough school to take pupils from Forest and Sandridge as well as the new development but now it was not worth so much, so the Diocese was working in partnership with Wiltshire Council and Persimmon to find additional funding, and a large enough hall was being incorporated into plans for the new school which could be used by the community in the evenings and possibly in the day as well. There would also be community fields on the new school site. The intention was to make the new school the heart of the community. Both needed each other because otherwise Forest and Sandridge school could not be replaced. The existing school had a Trust Deed and if the site was sold just as a school, the value would be far less. However if it were traded as a residential site, a replacement school could then be provided in a safer place, rather than remaining at its present main road site with difficult access.

Anna Wilcox emphasised that she had been Head Teacher of Forest and Sandridge School for eight years and when she had taken up post, she had been told a new school would be provided the following year. Forest and Sandridge School desperately needed to be replaced as it was literally falling to bits and maintenance was very expensive. It was an excellent school. The last Diocesan Statutory Inspection for Church Schools (SIAS) rated the school as Outstanding. At the last Ofsted Inspection, the school had been awarded Good status and inspectors had said that if staff had been able to put the same energy into teaching as was required to maintain a very old building, the Ofsted would have been Outstanding. Although the core size of the school was for 60 pupils, there were now 206 on roll and she was having to turn away families very week due to lack of space. For this September, 72 families had favoured the school for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> choice and it was now at a point where the school may have to turn away siblings. She was proud of the school and its reputation but it needed a fit for purpose building to match it. Being in such an isolated place it could not be part of the community where it was and the building was just too old.

Nicholas Glass emphasised Wiltshire Council very much wished to be part of the project and to support the relocation of Forest and Sandridge School to the new site. His role was to address school place planning and a 1.5. entry was needed for the extra space. The birth rate in Melksham was rising. He had personally seen the difference modern and excellent facilities made to learning when George Ward School had been replaced by Melksham Oak. The building had to be in good condition with room for the necessary specialist facilities for education to flourish and Forest and Sandridge School had a poor building and was not large enough.

The Chair, Cllr. Wood thanked the speakers for their presentation. He emphasised the Planning Committee had to consider the planning applications on their planning merits rather than act as a Finance Committee for Wiltshire Council. He then invited residents to make comments and ask questions

## **Public Participation - New School and Existing School sites - Comment and Questions**

David Grimstead reported he had no objections in principle to having the new school or developing the old school site. When he had viewed original plans in 2000, he had been pleased to see green space behind his property but he was now very concerned about having two football pitches behind him which would change a quiet area into a noisy games area. Part of the conditions for approval had to include safeguards for existing residents. There was very little space between his garden and the pitches.

Mrs Manoli expressed concern about the use of Snarlton Lane as a future rat run to the new school.

Ms. Lyn Barrows strongly objected to having her property backing on to the school play area. It would be completely open and with plans for 24/7 community use and lighting for the school field as well, residents would suffer a lot of noise and have no quiet at all.

Anna Wilcox, (Head teacher) explained there were only junior pitches. There would be no lighting or use by adults, although there would be some weekend and lunch-time use. They would not be used every day. At present there were four short periods during a school day when children played and there was noise.

Chris Sheppard (Salisbury Diocese) explained there was more likely to be community use of the hall and car park. The pitches would be used less outside school hours.

Nick Glass(Wiltshire Council) emphasised his colleagues in Wiltshire Council Leisure Dept. were keen to move out of school leisure to Melksham Oak. School. Governors would be in control of access to facilities for community use. The pitches would be grass and the school would be keen to protect them from community or heavier overuse at the weekends, so they could be used for school games. He understood the issues about open space and confirmed community use would apply to the hall rather than to outdoor space.

Paul Stapleford asked the Pegasus Planning Architect to confirm his boundary was at least 10 metres from the school boundary. He was unhappy the 10 metre gap would be used for access to the school

The Architect John Kirkby confirmed there was a 10 metre distance. There was an existing right of way which had to remain.

Cllr. Baines emphasised there did not need to be access from the right of way into the school grounds.

Tony Charrington expressed concern that if the existing school site were developed for housing, this could set a precedent for the gap between the site and the new distributor road to be developed for more housing. He understood the new distributor road was to be the boundary for housing.

Glen Godwin emphasised this was not the case. The school site plan was an “enabling development” to provide funding for the new school. The new school would not be expanded until after the housing had been delivered. This development was sustainable in terms of what it enabled to happen as regards the new school. Even if the existing site were not developed for housing, as a brown field site, something would replace the school there. It should not provide a precedent for development of other green space.

Cllr. Glover emphasised that under the existing Structure Plan it was correct to state there would be no development outside the distributor road. However planning changes taking place now meant there were not the same safeguards.

Glen Godwin emphasised that for Melksham the draft Core Strategy stipulated that all existing policy boundaries would remain unless changes were made through the Neighbourhood Planning process. It was not open to future development.

Mike Keen reported he farmed the area around Forest and Sandridge School. He was concerned about drainage if 15 houses were built on the site. There were already flooding problems in this area and during the last flood he had to do earthworks to enable water to flood into his field. He was amazed that, with the amount of traffic on A3102 there had not been a fatal accident at the corner by the school. He was already suffering trespass as a result of the new housing and if another 15 houses were built on the school site without any facilities for children there to play, they would be straight into his fields. He felt, out of courtesy Pegasus Planning should have made a visit to him to explain their plans as he did not know anything about it until the public consultation.

Glen Godwin denied charging on with plans without letting others know. The public consultation had been well advertised. He had commissioned a Transport Study which was with the Parish Council. There would be no more chaos than at present with dropping and picking up from school.

Mike Keen emphasised it would be a nightmare for him as a farmer, what with children in his woods, youngsters from 15 houses straying on to A3102 with the dangerous corner and an increase in cars going in and out of the site. Was the structure of the land around the new school now being developed and infilled sound enough to prevent flooding? He could not understand why Forest and Sandridge School kept expanding if it did not have room for the existing pupils?

Glen Godwin emphasised there was no guarantee of having less traffic coming to and from the site, if it were redeveloped for commercial use. The 15 houses were at a low density of 25 houses per Ha much lower than on the East of Melksham development. Car traffic would be less than expected. He lived in a similar development and car traffic was not a problem.

Mike Keen emphasised traffic problems would be far worse than expected. Lorries came around the corner and down the hill at tremendous speed. If cars came flying out there would soon be an accident. Had anyone done a proper valuation of how much money would be raised if the School were sold off as a Victorian building with the land?

Chris Sheppard emphasised he had done a valuation and the amount would be significantly lower.

Paul Carter emphasised the school had an interesting history. Would it not be possible to keep the historical aspects of the site within the new development? Years of preparation went into housing developments. It had been obvious for many years that a bigger school was needed. Why hadn't the Salisbury Diocese made preparations for it?

Chris Sheppard explained the S106 Agreement had guaranteed £2 million for the new school but the costs of building the school had now gone up. The S106 Agreement had been negotiated a few years ago.

Paul Carter asked why hadn't the S106 Agreement been index-linked? House prices had gone up.

Cllr. Baines reported that the S106 Agreement as signed in 2008, mentioned a commuted sum that would be index-linked to provide enough funding for a 1 form entry school as part of the East of Melksham development. Forest and Sandridge school was a separate issue. There was going to be a school anyway regardless of what happened about the Forest and Sandridge School site.

Nick Glass explained there were two indices; the Public Sector Index and the Buildings Index and both had gone down in terms of indexation, so the sum of money was less than in 2008. The new estate required a 1 form entry school and another 1 form entry school was needed to replace Forest and Sandridge School. Wiltshire Council knew the old building was not fit for purpose and so wished to join the two schools together to make a 2 form entry school. Extra money was needed to do that.

Cllr. Wood asked why the Diocese had not been putting money aside to cover the project.

Chris Shepherd explained that originally in the 1870s, local parishioners had funded schools up until 1944 when the state then gave funds from the public purse as well. Voluntary aided schools were given funds but there was never enough money to replace buildings. The reality was that building costs exceeded what local people could put in the plate. Church schools were now run with combined funding from state and parish and a large amount came from everyone's taxes. For Wiltshire there were 196 church schools. It would cost £millions to replace them.

Glen Godwin reported that a lot of people had asked if elements of the old building could be retained to have a mix of historic and modern build. However Persimmon felt this would be unviable because they would have to build 2-3 houses less and there would not be enough funds.

Jason Mack (School Governor for Forest and Sandridge) emphasised he wished to endorse all that the Head Teacher had said. The school was too small, in poor condition and uneconomic to run and both teachers and pupils suffered as a result.

David Grimstead asked whether if a dual school were to be built the planned Local Centre Land would then be used for housing.

Glen Godwin replied that it was to have been used for retail, a doctor's surgery and flats. It would have been tight to get a Hall on the land anyway.

Mr Langsford expressed concern about the footpath from Snarlton Lane south and the fact that it could put at risk his security and boundary. He had no objection to the right of way but there was a lot of waste ground and this land needed to be tidied up. He did not think anyone owned it.

461/12 **Public Participation – other issues**

- a) Breach of Hedgerow, Snarlton Lane: Ms Manoli reported that a breach had been made in the hedgerow from the Taylor Wimpey development into Snarlton Lane. The hole had been made during construction. Recently it had been enlarged and a gate installed at the Snarlton Lane end. The pathway emerged into Snarlton Lane at a dangerous part of the road and now children were using it and being put at risk. The hedgerow was protected and the hole needed to be reinstated and the gate removed.

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council along with the Town Council had taken up this matter with the developers several months ago and she presumed it had been addressed. She would make enquiries and report back.

- b) W13/00467 New dwellings, 188 Woodrow Road (Revised application from W12 2026) Resident Mr Gibbons of 187A Woodrow Road reported he had just found out about the re-submitted planning application and Wiltshire Council was still failing to get his address correct. His objections to W12 02026 applied to the new application as well. There were no measurements to indicate the size of the new houses or distance from his boundary. The old house to be demolished had birds nesting in the chimney. The area was a floodplain and traffic moved very fast along Forest Road.

The Planning Committee advised Mr Gibbons to make his objections direct to Wiltshire Council and send a copy to the Parish Council. Teresa offered to send Mr Gibbons an email with Cllr. Mark Griffiths' contact details so that Mr Gibbons could ask Cllr. Griffiths to call in the application.

*The Chair invited Council members to put their comments and questions to Pegasus Planning and the School Group*

462/12 **Proposed new school and existing school site – comment and questions from Councillors:**

Cllr Brindle noted there were 205 pupils at the present school and it would take time to build the new school. What rate of increase was anticipated? He was concerned that by the time the new school was built, it would already be full.

Anna Wilcox replied that the capacity of the existing school was 210, until it moved to the new site. Then the reception class would be increased to 45 and as that class moved on additional pupils would filter into the system.

Nick Glass emphasised Wiltshire Council did not wish to see children from existing schools in Melksham moving over just because there was a new school. It would not be larger than a 2 entry school. He was working with the Education Dept. to assess need as population increased to grow all schools across the town at a steady rate. There was spare capacity in the other schools.

Cllr. Wood asked if there was a fear that all schools in time would be full.

Nick Glass reported that he had just completed a Schools Organisation Plan so he knew how many children there would be in each area.

Cllr. Glover asked what would happen if permission was not given for redevelopment of the existing school site. Would it become a brown field site?

Glen Godwin emphasised Forest and Sandridge School would have to continue as it was now.

Cllr. Millard referred to the fact that the original land had been given by a local family to build a school and asked what the Deed required, if the land was not used for a school.

Chris Sheppard reported that the Trust Deed stipulated that the site should be used to educate the poor and needy and if Forest and Sandridge School transferred to the new school site, the Deed would transfer with the school. The Deed was binding and the same purposes would apply to the new school.

Cllr. Millard informed that he and his children had attended the school in the past. He was concerned that there was no transport infrastructure to serve the new housing. There was only 1 bus per day. Where would all the excess water drain to, as a result of the new houses?

Glen Godwin referred to the fact that a full Drainage Study had been done.

Cllr. Millard asked how many metres of hard standing would there be from the new housing at the existing school site.

Glen Godwin emphasised there was a lot of concrete at the site already; it would be less than existed at present.

Cllr. Millard emphasised the design was wrong. The corner was dangerous and sewerage would be inadequate. For every 3 bed house there would be at least two cars.

Resident Tony Cherrington interjected that if the drainage survey for the existing school site had been done at the same standard as in the new development, it would be inadequate.

*The Council re-convened.*

463/12

**W13 00524 Forest and Sandridge School, Sandridge Road, Melksham. Redevelopment of existing school site to provide 15 no dwellings and associated access and infrastructure.**

It was noted that this application had only just arrived in the Council office that day and Members had not had time to examine the plans or reports.

**Resolved:** *This application be deferred for consideration until the next Council Meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> April.*

464/12

**W13 00489 Land north-east of Snowberry Lane and south of Sandridge Road, Melksham. Construction of a new dual-use two form entry Primary School with associated access and landscaping.**

The Planning Committee noted relevant information circulated in respect of the adopted Development Brief 2004, the S106 Agreement signed 2008 and Melksham area population estimates (Census 2011).

It was noted that the proposed new school was similar to the primary schools built by Persimmon and designed by Stride Treglown at Westbury Lea and Old Sarum, with red brick and shiny roof. The Councillors felt it would be better to have a green roof so that the school would not be so visible from Sandridge Hill. It was also noted that the existing school bus would be discontinued as the School would have a Travel Plan to encourage pupils to walk to school where possible. Cars would be able to enter the school site and drop pupils off for about 20 minutes each morning but parents would pick up off the school premises. There was concern that there was insufficient parking which would mean that cars would park along nearby roads to pick up school children. Cllr. Baines proposed that the gate on the new school boundary from the right of way off Snarlton Lane should be kept locked at all times. This was put to the vote and not supported. The Clerk drew the Council's attention to comments and letters received by the Council prior to the Meeting. A letter of concern was also received from David Grimstead at the Meeting. It was agreed to submit additional comments to Wiltshire Council together with copies of letters from residents. It was also noted that the Town Council had drawn attention to erroneous rights of way information on one map. The Town Council had also raised concern about having a pedestrian access via Snarlton Lane and asked if something could be done to discourage this.

**Resolved:** *The following comments be submitted:*

- 1. The Parish Council welcomes the new school and its excellent design.*
- 2. There should be a 20 m.p.h. speed limit outside the new school.*
- 3. No school parking should be permitted in Snarlton Lane under any circumstances.*



4. *The diverted right of way/cycleway adjacent to the open space and pitches should be constructed of the same materials as the existing right of way it linked into; viz a bound wide tarmac path.*
5. *There needs to be better linkage with pedestrian pupils coming from the established high density estates to the left of the site (the Foresters park and Blackmore Road area). There needs to be an east –west footpath/cycleway to the school (via Westbury View) to discourage overuse of Snarlton Lane.*
6. *There are no pavements in Snarlton Lane and thus this should only be used for pupils to cross over from the north side to the south side.*
7. *High invisible netting together with soft landscaping is required along the boundary of the pitches to prevent balls from going into residents' gardens and to provide a sound buffer.*
8. *There is an error in the map showing the right of way Diversion MW18.*

Other comments received are as follows:

9. *There are no planning notices at the site.*
10. *A recently constructed electricity sub-station is not marked on plans.*
11. *There is very poor pedestrian visibility where the footpaths emerge into Snarlton Lane.*
12. *Signage is required at the entrance to Snarlton Lane to make clear there is no vehicular access to the School.*
13. *Plans state that community changing facilities are available at the nearby Melksham Oak School. Does this mean pitches will not be formally let to the community or formal games played?*
14. *The right of way at the back of the Snarlton Lane houses is not shown on the correct alignment. Security for properties adjacent to the footpath leading to the school is being compromised.*
15. *Pitches are too close to peoples' houses as to put windows at risk through flying balls. Given their proximity to peoples' homes they should not be let out of hours.*
16. *There is no sound attenuation for pitches.*
17. *The plans state solar control glazing is likely to be provided. This seems woolly and vague.*
18. *Reference is made to a fruit orchard – where is it on the plans?*
19. *Bicycle and scooter racks are needed in addition to car parking spaces.*
20. *Should the old school be demolished, the architecturally attractive bell tower and entrance doorway should be transferred to the new school site and made part of the design.*

465/12

#### **Other planning applications:**

1. W13 00288 Shaw Pet Centre, Bath Road, Shaw SN12 8EF Proposed new detached dwelling to replace existing accommodation block and new kennels to replace existing garage building.

It was noted that this application had been deferred pending information as to whether the new house would be tied to the business. The Clerk reported that the new property would be tied to the existing business by S106 Agreement. Although

trees had to be taken out to allow for the new dwelling, four new oaks were to be planted to replace them.

**Resolved:** *No objections*

2. W13 00454 & 00522 LBC Coach House, 214 Corsham Road, Whitley. Change of use of ancillary residential building to new dwelling including the formation of new vehicular access.

**Resolved:** *No objections*

3. W13 00467 John Stainer, 188 Woodrow Road, Forest, Melksham SN12 7RF  
Proposed demolition of existing detached house and erection of two new detached dwellings (*Re-submitted plan from original W12 02026*)

It was noted that the proposed new dwellings were now positioned further back from the road. A Bat Survey showed no evidence of bats in the old house.

**Resolved:** *No objections*

4. W13 00612 A.W. Doel & Son Ltd., Land east of Forest Lane, Lacock.  
Retrospective application for a permanent mobile home.

It was noted that a new house was being built on site.

**Resolved:** *Temporary permission only be given and the caravan be removed when the new house is finished.*

466/12

#### **Planning Correspondence**

- a) **Appeal re W12 01587 Use of land for Mobile Home, Tanhouse Farm:**

**Resolved:** *As the Council had made no objections to this application it was agreed not to object to the Appeal.*

- b) **New houses, Hawthorn Road – no fencing or lighting:** A complaint had been raised at the Community Safety Meeting that there was no fencing or lighting outside the social housing run by Westlea Housing Association which was adjacent to the footway, in Hawthorn Road. The Clerk reported she had written to Planning Enforcement who had rung to say that as there was no fencing shown on the planning application (W09 02383) developers were not obliged to provide any fencing. As regards street lighting, this would be installed when the road was adopted by Wiltshire Council and enquires were being made as to progress re the S38 Legal Agreement for adoption.

**Resolved:** *The Clerk find out the postal address of these properties.*

467/12

**Core Strategy Examination May – July 2013:** The Planning Committee considered a paper circulated by the Clerk to indicate the matters on which the Council had submitted comments on the draft Core Strategy and relevant questions to be discussed with the Inspector. The Clerk asked for clarification on which sessions the Council would attend and on who would attend them to represent the Council.

**Recommended:** *1. Members present would provisionally indicate sessions they wished to attend and that the matter be reconsidered at the full Council for others to put their names forward if they so wished.*

2. The Clerk give a full copy of Council comments and the Inspector's Examination Schedule and Questions to those who would be attending the Examination.

**(NB: This Examination Schedule has now superceded)**

<b>ISSUE</b>	<b>POLICY</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>REPRESENTATIVES</b>
MATTER 2	Core Policy 1 <b>Settlement Hierarchy &amp; Delivery</b>	Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> May	Cllr. Baines & Cllr. Mills?
MATTER 3	CP2 and CP34 - 40 <b>Economy General</b> Employment land and employment sites	Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> May	
MATTER 4	CP2 & CP43 <b>Housing</b> Exception sites Vulnerable & older people	Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> May	Cllr. Rolf Brindle  Cllr. Pat Nicol
MATTER 5	CP2, CP48 -49 <b>Resilient Communities</b>	Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> May	
MATTER 6	CP41 & 42 <b>Climate Change</b>	Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup> May	
MATTER 7	CP50 – 56 <b>Natural Environment</b> Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure, Canals	Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> May	Cllr. Rolf Brindle
MATTER 8	CP57 – 59 <b>Built Environment</b>	Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	Cllr. Alan Baines & Cllr. Rolf Brindle
<b>MATTER 9</b>	<b>MELKSHAM COMMUNITY AREA</b> CP15 & CP 16	Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup> June	Cllr. Alan Baines, Cllr. Rolf Brindle and Cllr. John Glover
MATTER 10	IDP, CP3 & CPS 60 – 69 <b>Infrastructure</b> Sustainable transport, Transport and development, Impacts on transport network, Transport strategies., Movement of goods, Strategic transport network, Flood risk	Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> July	Cllr. Glover & Cllr. Sankey?

Meeting closed at 9.47 p.m.

Chairman, 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013