

MINUTES of the Short Full Council of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 17th August, 2015 at Crown Chambers, Melksham at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Richard Wood (Chair), Alan Baines, Rolf Brindle, Mike Sankey, Paul Carter, Pat Nicol, Terry Chivers, Jan Chivers, Ian Tait and Gregory Coombes.

Apologies: Cllrs. John Glover (Vice Chair), Mike Mills and Steve Petty.

Housekeeping: Cllr. Wood welcomed all to the meeting and explained the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire.

181/15 **Declarations of Interest:** Cllr. Coombes declared an interest in agenda item 4b as he lives in Corsham Road.

The Council agreed to suspend Standing Orders for a period of public participation.

182/15 **Public Participation:** There were 15 members of the public present who wished to give their views on the SHLAA sites considered by the Planning Committee on 20th July 2015. Cllr. Wood explained that this was not a response to any planning applications, but was the Council's considerations with regard to Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) sites. The SHLAA provides information on a range of potential housing sites and gives an indication of how dwelling requirements could potentially be met. On this occasion Parish Councils had been invited by Wiltshire Council to comment on the suitability of SHLAA sites in "Large Villages". For this exercise, Wiltshire Council considered Shaw and Whitley together as a "Large Village". . The exercise was being carried out by all parish and town councils in Wiltshire with "Large Villages".

Residents expressed their views on the following:

Site 3177 – Land to the South of the Villages of Shaw and Whitley (on both sides of the A365): Residents were concerned that development of this site would effectively more than double if not triple the size of the village of Shaw. Additionally the land on this site to the north of the A365 is on a flood zone.

Site 3459 – Land South of First Lane (North of brook and Site 1023) and Site 1023 – Land South of brook (South of Site 3459): Residents reported that previous attempts to develop on this parcel of land had met with mass resistance, as was recognised by the Planning Inspectorate in 1998. The fields here provide an effective and pleasant separation between the two villages. These fields serve as a flood plain, many residents had been affected by the severe floods in recent years, something that was getting worse not better.

Site 3148 – Middle Farm, Corsham Road: Residents had concerns over road safety with this site, reporting that the road was in a poor state of repair and not adequate enough to take the increased volume of traffic created by development. Additionally there are high voltage overhead cables at this site.

Development of sites in general: Some residents did not object to housing development as they understood that it was needed in the area, however, they had concerns over South Brook and flooding that continues to be a serious issue that would need to be addressed before any development could take place. Traffic is a

problem in Westlands Lane and on the Corsham Road outside of the school, with some residents feeling that they are just waiting for an accident outside of the school. With the current infrastructure any development would just exacerbate these problems.

Michelle Tattershall, Chair of CAWS (Community Action: Whitley Shaw) stated that CAWS hoped to represent all the thoughts and feelings of the residents of both villages. Residents had lots of different views and reasons why they did not want development, but recognised that some development may happen. She said that consultation would be needed between both villages to look at the most suitable locations. Cllr. Wood responded that this was what the Neighbourhood Plan was designed to address. The Clerk informed that the current feedback is a response to an informal consultation with parish councils; in the autumn the Site Application DPD will be released and there will then be a public consultation where residents will be able to give their views to Wiltshire Council. Cllr. Wood urged CAWS to take a good look at the DPD.

The Council re-convened.

183/15

Minutes, Planning Committee Meeting 20th July 2015:

- a) Resolved:** *The Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held 20th July 2015 were formally approved by the Council and signed by the Chairman as a correct record with the following amendment:*
Min: 178/15)2), changed from “there are approximately 700 properties in Shaw and Whitley so this would equate to 60 – 70 dwellings across both villages” to “there are approximately 550 properties in Shaw and Whitley so this would equate to 50 - 55 dwellings across both villages”.
- b) Resolved:** *The Recommendations detailed in Min.176/15 and Min. 179/15 were formally approved.*
- c) Resolved:** *The Recommendations detailed in Min.178/15 – response to Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document – Further Consultation with Large Villages – Review of SHLAA Sites in Shaw & Whitley, were reconsidered in view of recent public response:*
- i) Min.178/15)2):** Response to question 5 of the consultation by the deadline date of end of August 2015 – “Do you have an understanding of the level of housing growth that would be locally acceptable in your village between now and 2016?”

The Clerk had informed that previously an assumption had been made that there were 700 houses across both villages as this was the distribution quantity of the Connect Magazine. There are approximately 550 properties across both villages and as such the feedback to Wiltshire Council Spatial Planning Policy Department against question 5 should read “No more than 10%; there are approximately 550 properties in Shaw and Whitley so this would equate to 50 -55 dwellings across both villages”. Cllr. J. Chivers felt that this is too many for the current infrastructure and that 25 over both villages would be better. Cllr. T Chivers stated that he didn't have a problem with 50 houses over both villages, but as there was currently no information as to where any future potential housing may be he was not going to “sign a blank cheque”. Cllr. Carter disagreed with Cllr. T Chivers as he felt that it

was not unreasonable for Wiltshire Council to ask for an estimate of what would be acceptable. **Resolved:** *The Recommendation detailed in Min.178/15)2) with the amendment as per Min.183/15a) was formally approved. Cllr T Chivers wished his vote against this recommendation to be recorded.*

ii) Min.178/15)1): Response to question 4 of the consultation by the deadline date of end of August 2015 – “Do you have any views on the possible identification of housing sites?”:

1. Site 312 – Corsham Road (South of Site 3148 & North of Site 3248

There could be access problems with this site as this land is currently accessed across a private driveway. This land is on a flood plain and has been the subject of flooding issues although these have now been resolved. However, development on this land could create flooding issues further down stream to existing properties in Corsham Road. The site is identified for higher density housing than on other sites and it was felt that this would not be in keeping with the surrounding existing properties. **Resolved:** *The recommendation detailed in Min.178/15)1) for Site 312 was formally approved.*

2. Site 318 – Land South of Folly Lane (A365)

This is a Brownfield Site. Access to this land is via a narrow track and historically other properties situated on this track have suffered from flooding. In order for this site to come forward some revision of access onto the main road is required. **Resolved:** *The recommendation detailed in Min.178/15)1) for Site 318 was formally approved.*

3. Site 325 – Land South of Shaw Hill (A365) and West of Norrington Lane

This site is considered wholly unsuitable. It is on the wrong side of the village of Shaw for access of facilities and would be inappropriate for social housing. There is no decent part of the road to cross as a pedestrian as it is on a bend and visibility is poor. The camber of the road is such that access onto the main road is already difficult for vehicles exiting Norrington Lane. Historically this land is believed to be contaminated as it was used to bury diseased cattle. **Resolved:** *The recommendation detailed in Min.178/15)1) for Site 325 was formally approved.*

4. Site 1023 – Land south of brook and Site 3459 (Land South of First Lane)

This site is considered to be broadly favourable as long as due consideration is given to the fact that this site is on a flood plain and mitigation is put in place.

Cllr J Chivers reported that she had sought the views of residents of both villages. She had been overwhelmed with negative responses from residents who wished the space between Shaw and Whitley to remain to maintain the individual identities of both villages. In 1999 a proposal for a light industrial site on this land was turned down. This site is opposite the village school and traffic is a problem, it is outside of the village boundary and not compliant with the Core Strategy, and there are pylons and overhead high voltage cables. There are serious flooding issues, the school has been flooded from water overflowing from the brook and some residents have still been unable to return to their homes and drainage is not coping; residents of Roundponds are concerned over the impact that any further development will have on downstream flooding. She asked that these comments from all the villagers are put forward by the Council.

Cllr T Chivers concurred with Cllr J Chivers. He felt that the Council's previous objection to the development of sites in Pathfinder Way, prevention of coalescence, should apply to Sites 1023 and 3459.

Cllr Baines said that any development here would have to be subject to an urban drainage scheme and attenuation pond to limit the rate of run off. This site is not all flood plain, and the area which is flood plain does maintain a gap between the two villages. Certain parts of this parcel of land could sustain some development without affecting the flood plain and potential run off. He suggested adding additional wording to the response stating that development should not encroach on the existing floodplain and that it should remain.

Cllr Tait was against development of this site. He stated that there was a well used public footpath across this land that could disappear. There is currently a smallholding on this land and in the summer months children take advantage of being able to see these animals. He reported that when the school flooded last it was due to the excess water coming off of these fields. If these fields are development he feels that that future flooding of the school will be more likely.

Cllr. Coombes stated that he had lived in Whitley for 50 years and that the flooding of the school was not a new thing, however it was getting worse and more frequent.

Cllr Sankey felt that any development of the site should be south of the public right of way to protect it and that engineering and drainage work should be carried out to mitigate flooding.

Cllr Wood had concerns over all the flooding issues and the potential amalgamation of the two villages should these fields be developed. He considered that potential developers would not respect the flood plain.

Cllr Baines put forward an amendment to the recommendation to add the following additional wording : *"Development of this site is only acceptable if the area of flood plain and the public right of way is maintained and protected with open land around it"*. This amendment to the wording was approved, however the proposal to submit the response as per the recommendation fell. **Resolved:** *The following response to be given against Site 1023 – "This site is considered unsuitable for housing due to longstanding flood risk and the significant encroachment of land between the two villages"*.

5. Site 3148 – Middle Farm, Corsham Road

This site was previously recommended for affordable housing and is considered suitable for an extension of the residential area of Whitley. This is more suitable for higher density housing than Site 312.

Cllr T Chivers stated that he considers this site to be a breach of the village limits. The Clerk advised that the Village Limits were to be reviewed as part of this consultation process. **Resolved:** *The recommendation detailed in Min.178/15)1) for Site 3148 was formally approved.*

6. Site 3177 – Land to the South of the Villages of Shaw and Whitley (on both sides of the A365)

This site is considered unsuitable. This site is exceptionally large and is considered to be infill from Norrington Common, and would erode the separation of Shaw and Whitley from Melksham. The southern side of the site is on the wrong side of the main road from the village facilities and would constitute an urban extension into open countryside. This site forms part of flood zone 2 and historically has been the subject of severe flooding, with southbrook being unable to cope with the volume of water. Any development would need to be subject to a flood alleviation scheme. Shaw primary school is fully subscribed and has no capacity for expansion. The A365 is a very busy and congested at commuter times; highways improvements would be needed if any further development of this area took place. **Resolved:** *The recommendation detailed in Min.178/15)1) for Site 3177 was formally approved.*

7. Site 3246 – Land East of Corsham Road (opposite First Lane)

This site has been previously recommended and is considered suitable for an extension of the residential area of Whitley.

Cllr T Chivers was against this site.

Cllr Carter felt that the whole consultation process was meaningless if the Council says no to all sites and potential development.

Cllr Tait considered that of all the SHLAA sites this was the best option and concurred with the comments of Cllr Carter, adding that if the council say no to all the sites that its comments would be ignored and that it would be overruled by Wiltshire Council.

Cllr Wood stated that the Joint Neighbourhood Plan would look at these sites much more closely and that this was an ongoing process.

Cllr Baines supported the comments of Cllr Tait, considering that if the Council say no to smaller sites then large developers could steam roller Wiltshire Council into accepting larger developments that would be unsuitable for the area. He stated that the Council needed to demonstrate that the Community is not against all development.

Cllr J Chivers urged residents of both Shaw and Whitley to get involved in the Joint Neighbourhood Plan in order to have their say and give their input.

Resolved: *The recommendation detailed in Min.178/15)1) for Site 3246 was formally approved.*

8. Site 3459 – Land South of First Lane (North of brook and Site 1023)

This site is considered unsuitable for housing due to longstanding flood risk and the significant encroachment of land between the two villages.

It was noted that this site and Site 1023 are effectively the same site and the same arguments apply to both. The development of these two sites together would constitute coalescence. **Resolved:** *The recommendation detailed in Min.178/15)1) for Site 3459 was not approved. The following response to be given against Site 3459 –*

“This site is considered unsuitable for housing due to longstanding flood risk and the significant encroachment of land between the two villages”.

9. General note re: all SHLAA sites in Shaw & Whitley

Civil Engineers, Atkins, have been engaged by Wiltshire Council to conduct a flood mapping exercise of both villages following severe flooding on 5th August 2013, 24th December 2013 and 18th September 2014. All of these flood events have been fully documented. Many properties were flooded, some people were evacuated from their homes and a couple of families to this date have been unable to return to their homes. Wiltshire Council Principle Drainage Engineer described all three of these flooding events as 1 in 150 year storms. The Parish Council remains concerned that any further development of either of the villages could negatively impact further on the flooding issues that have yet to be resolved.

Shaw Primary School is currently at capacity and unable to extend its building any more. The general infrastructure of Melksham with regard to GP surgeries, dentists, and secondary school places are considered insufficient to support additional development. Additionally, all GP facilities are on the wrong side of Melksham for residents of Shaw and Whitley. **Resolved:** *The recommendation detailed in Min.178/15)1) for General note re: all SHLAA Sites in Shaw & Whitley was formally approved.*

Meeting closed at 8.06 pm

Chairman, 14th September 2015