

**MINUTES of the Planning Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016 at United Church, Melksham at 7.00 p.m.**

**Present:** Cllrs. Richard Wood (Council Chair), John Glover (Council Vice-Chair), Mike Sankey, Alan Baines, Rolf Brindle and Gregory Coombes.  
**Officers:** Teresa Strange (Clerk) and Jo Eccleston (Assistant Parish Officer).

21 members of the Public

**Apologies:** Cllr. Paul Carter.

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

476/15 **Declarations of Interest:** Cllr. Wood declared an interest in applications and items relating to Berryfield as a resident of Semington Road

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

477/15 **Public Participation (1):**  
**15/12454/OUT – Land to the North of Sandridge Common, Sandridge Road, Melksham, Wiltshire.** Outline Planning permission for residential development of up to 100 dwellings associated infrastructure, open space and landscaping, with creation of new vehicular access from Sandridge Common.  
There were 10 members of the public in attendance with objections and concerns to this planning application. These were:

- This new development is outside the Settlement Boundary as per the Core Strategy, and thus is development in open countryside.
- The current properties in Lansdowne Close and Bream Close which abut the proposed site are bungalows with views of the fields. Any development along this boundary will result in no view and a loss of light to these gardens and properties.
- The footway between nos.37 and 38 Lansdowne Close is not a public right of way, and residents strongly object to any pedestrian access from the proposed new development being created here. They feel that it has the potential to increase the amount of dog fouling and that elderly residents would feel insecure as they would lose the area as a quiet Close. Additionally residents report that there is a query over the ownership of the “ransom” strip of land.
- Residents have serious concerns over drainage, both surface and foul. The current foul drainage system cannot cope and sewage has bubbled up into the sinks of some of the properties in Lansdowne Close. In periods of heavy rain, storm water is going into the sewage drains. A resident of Beam Close has had to have 60% of her garden dug up due to flooding issues. The Residents state that any houses built on this proposed site would be lower than existing properties, and thus would be even more prone to drainage issues. They feel that the additional properties created by this proposal will overload the existing sewage system.

- There are concerns over the height of the proposed dwellings, and Residents quoted a report by James Taylor, Wiltshire Council Planning Officer, where he stated that “affordable rental properties should be bungalows and houses, not flats”.
- A resident felt that Melksham should not be allowed to expand anymore.

*The Council reconvened.*

Cllr. Wood stated that dredging and water course improvements planning in the application will help with surface water issues, but not foul drainage.

Cllr. Baines reported that at the pre-application consultation the Parish Council made the point that the adjoining land was mostly bungalows and as such they did not want tall dwellings abutting and overlooking existing properties. It was noted that this was an outline planning application and if successful, types and heights of dwellings would be considered under a reserved matters application. The safety of the roads and crossings for children attending Forest & Sandridge School should be addressed by any S106 funding by the provision of additional street lighting for Sandridge Road and a suitable pedestrian crossing.

Cllr. Sankey felt that the Council should make the point to the developers that residents did not want any pedestrian access into Lansdowne close.

It was noted that the settlement boundary had been drawn around the town and had made no provision for further development. This site had been previously put forward as a favourable SHLAA site (3103) when the Council reviewed in April 2014; and was well served with regard to facilities and access.

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

478/15

**Public Participation (2):**

**16/00497/OUT – Land East of Semington Road, Melksham, Wiltshire.** Outline application for the erection of up to 150 dwellings with access, new village hall and areas of open space (Resubmission of 14/07526/OUT).

There were 10 members of the public in attendance with objections and concerns to this planning application. These were:

- Residents have concerns over the amount of increased traffic the development will generate and report that it is already very difficult to exit from Semington Road onto the A350.
- As there is no footway on the eastern side of Semington Road and no pedestrian crossing, there are concerns over highway safety, especially for children going to and from school.
- Some residents feel that the proposed new Village Hall is in the wrong place and divorced from the play area. Additionally some feel that this new hall could jeopardise any better village hall that could be provided by the canal development.
- This development will destroy the buffer zone between Berryfield and Melksham Town, and is an unacceptable intrusion into the landscape. It will increase Berryfield by one third.
- Residents feel that there are already problems with the infrastructure of Melksham in general, especially GP surgeries and query which school children from this new development would attend.

- A resident queried the ecological issues and that any bat surveys due to be carried out should be done now.
- Berryfield has a high water level and there are concerns that too much concrete and non porous surfaces will create flooding

*The Council reconvened.*

Cllr. Sankey considered that visual coalescence did not apply to this application as when travelling along the A350 this proposed development would not be visible from Melksham. Additionally he felt that Semington Road could accommodate the traffic created by 150 dwellings as prior to the building of the bypass this had been the main trunk road with a much larger volume of traffic travelling along it.

Cllr. Baines concurred with this view on coalescence, and stated that there was ribbon of development along Semington Road. He said that this application should be considered on its own merits irrespective of any future canal development plans that may be submitted.

Cllr. Glover stated that there was a requirement for 650 homes to be found in the Melksham area, and that the provision of 150 homes on this site needed to be looked at. He reported that when SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment sites in the parish were considered by the Council on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2014, this site (648) “seemed a suitable extension of Berryfield to the east” and the least worse to develop on.

479/15 **Planning Applications:** The Council considered the following applications and made the following comments:

a) **15/12454/OUT – Land to the North of Sandridge Common, Sandridge Road, Melksham, Wiltshire.** Outline Planning permission for residential development of up to 100 dwellings associated infrastructure, open space and landscaping, with creation of new vehicular access from Sandridge Common.

Applicant: Robert Hitchins Limited

**Comments:** *The Council wish to make the following comments:*

- *Provision of footway along the entire frontage length of the A3102 is required.*
- *The developers to respect in the detail of this site that the existing adjoining properties are bungalows. Only bungalows or two storey dwellings to be built along this boundary with the rear gardens of any new dwellings abutting the gardens of the existing bungalows to avoid any loss of light amenity.*
- *Children from this development would likely attend the new Forest and Sandridge School and as such a pedestrian crossing would be needed across the A3102 and that this should be lined up with the current entrance to footpath MW22. The Parish Council recommends that S106 funding is used to provide this. Additionally there should be a barrier at the end of the footpath that exits onto A3102 to prevent children from running out.*
- *There are no street lights from the Murco garage to the roundabout and any new housing would be on the left hand side of this section of the A3102. The Council wishes to see street lights from the 5 newly*

*installed at Skylark Road up to the roundabout on Sandridge Common on the northern side, and recommends that S106 funding is used to provide this.*

- *Apart from the school there is a lack of any community building and a small hall would benefit all the residents living in the East of Melksham.*
- *No pedestrian access from any new development into Lansdowne Close as residents do not wish to lose the identity of this being a Close.*
- *There are concerns over the adequacy of the sewage system and seek reassurance over the suitability of foul drainage. The existing sewers in Churchill Avenue and Lansdowne Close are already subject to problems and thus the Council wish to see foul drainage connected to the sewerage system in Sandridge Road.*
- *The Council note that in the absence of the New Housing Allocations DPD that this proposal is outside of the current Settlement Boundary.*
- *The Council wishes to see this application considered by the Western Area Planning Committee and will be asking its Wiltshire Councillor to call it in.*

**b) 16/00497/OUT – Land East of Semington Road, Melksham, Wiltshire.**

Outline application for the erection of up to 150 dwellings with access, new village hall and areas of open space (Resubmission of 14/07526/OUT).

Applicant: Strutt & Parker.

**Comments:** *The Council wishes to reiterate its previous comments made on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2015 on the amended plans of application W14/07526/OUT:*

*“The Council welcomes the change of access on the amended plans to enable the preservation of the original farm house and willow trees in order to safeguard any bat roosts, and the provision of a new Village Hall and play area. The Council acknowledges that initial concerns and comments raised in a letter to Wiltshire Council on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2014 were addressed by reports and information provided. The Council had previously identified this site (648) as favourable for development when reviewing SHLAA Sites (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) in the Parish on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2014.”*

*Additionally, it wishes to see a Footway provided on the Eastern side of the A350, and suitable fencing erected on the boundary of the Mobile Home Park to ensure that parishioners residing here are not disadvantaged.*

*The Council notes that this proposal is outside of the development plan for a small village and does not meet some elements of the Core Strategy.*

*The Council wishes to see this application considered by the Western Area Planning Committee and will be asking its Wiltshire Councillor to call it in.*

- c) **15/12269/FUL – 26, Belvedere Road, Bowerhill, Wiltshire. SN12 6AJ.**  
Proposed rear extension & replacement conservatory. Applicant: Mr. Nigel Gibbs.  
**Comments:** *The Council OBJECTS as it considers the proposal to be over development of the site and inappropriate, and that there will be a loss of parking. Additionally there are concerns that this proposal is creating a separate dwelling.*
- d) **15/12309/FUL – RECONSULTATION DUE TO CHANGE OF DESCRIPTION - 17Brookfield Rise, Whitley, Wiltshire, SN12 8QP.** Proposed one and two storey rear extensions (including dormer windows) and front dormer window. Applicant: Mr. Claudio Viveiros  
**Comments:** *The Council have no objections.*

- 480/15 **Planning Appeal Decisions:** The Committee noted the following planning appeal decisions:
- a) **15/03555/PNCOU – Unit 2 Oakley Farm, Forest Lane, Lower Woodrow, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 7RB.** Prior notification for change of use of Agricultural Building to Dwelling House. *Appeal allowed and approval granted.*
- b) **14/10213/CLP – Sandridge Park House, Sandridge Park, Sandridge Common, Melksham, SN127QU.** The stationing of a mobile log home to provide ancillary staff accommodation. *Appeal is allowed and use of mobile log home is considered lawful.*
- 481/15 **Planning Enforcement: 16/00036/ENF – Former Forest and Sandridge Church of England school, Sandridge Common, Wiltshire.** Breach of W13/00524/FUL – commencement of works prior to discharging of conditions. The Clerk reported that following complaints from a resident she had called in planning enforcement. There had been a breach of conditions with regards to drainage. Wessex Water had now accepted the developer's proposals over drainage as they felt that there were no other viable options. However the Parish Council still had concerns about the solution to the drainage issues and so these concerns were being followed up by the Wiltshire Council Principle Drainage Engineer.
- 482/15 **New Premises Licence Application for Co-operative Food Group LTD, east of Melksham Local centre, Verbena Court, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 7GS, for Retail Off Sales of Alcohol, daily 7.00 – 23.00.** The Committee noted this premises licence application.
- 483/15 **Request for Pre-application Consultation with Pegasus Group re: Proposed Anaerobic Digester on land at Snarlton Farm:** Cllr. Sankey considered this proposal to be a good idea as it is a renewable energy source and an alternative to fracking. Cllr. Baines expressed concerns over the proposed 38,000 tonnes of feedstock being delivered to the site. This was proposed to be transported by tractor and trailer and would generate a lot of vehicle movements in and out of Praters Lane onto the A3102. **Recommended:** *The Council take up the offer from Pegasus Group to discuss this proposal further and invite Pegasus group to the next Planning Meeting.*

484/15

**SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) Sites in the Parish:**

The Committee considered new SHLAA sites added since the last review. The Clerk reported that she did not have individual reports on each of the new sites, unlike the sites previously considered. The Neighbourhood Plan Housing Task Group have looked at all of these sites and scored them according to the site scoring criteria applied to all sites in the Melksham Designated Area for the Neighbourhood Plan. The Housing Task Group were presenting their findings at the next Steering Group meeting to be held on Weds 24<sup>th</sup> February. **Recommended:** *The Council review the recommendations of the Neighbourhood Plan Housing Task Group on these SHLAA sites..*

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

485/15

**Melksham Link Canal Masterplan:**

a) **Latest Provisional Plan:** Cllr. Wood gave residents an update on this latest plan, explaining that the line of the canal now went further to the west and delineates another housing estate. He invited comments from residents. A resident queried why the line of the canal had changed. Cllr. Wood replied that a couple of the landowners did not wish to sell their land, and thus the line of the canal had to be redrawn. He stated that there was support for land for the Melksham Link project, but not necessarily all the dwellings that would accompany this, and it was about finding a balance. A resident stated that this plan would change the entire make up of Berryfield, and queried how traffic would access this proposed development. Cllr. Wood replied that the plans were that only existing residents of Berryfield would have access to the village and that access to any new development would be via the bypass. Another resident felt that this would make the already busy A350 gridlocked at commuter times.

*The Council reconvened.*

Cllr. Brindle expressed concerns with regard to Cllr. Wood chairing this part of the meeting and any future meetings where the Canal Masterplan was discussed. He felt that although Cllr. Wood had declared an interest in this agenda item at the beginning of the meeting, it would be more appropriate to have a disinterested party to chair this agenda item.

Cllr. Wood passed the Chair to Cllr. Glover (Council Vice-Chair). Cllr. Glover sought procedural advice from the Clerk. A vote was taken over whether Cllr. Wood should continue to chair this meeting and future meetings where the canal masterplan is discussed; 2 voted for this proposal and 2 against. Cllr. Glover then had the casting vote; he voted for Cllr. Wood to continue chairing the meeting as considered Cllr. Wood was impartial and had declared an interest.

**Resolved:** *Cllr. Wood to continue chairing the meeting.*

The Committee discussed the Masterplan at length. The northern area of housing on the draft plan appears to have access from the old Semington Road and part of Western Way, which would be completely unacceptable. The proposed area of housing here is development in open countryside as it falls in neither Melksham Town or Melksham Without Settlement Boundaries. The southern area of housing is not associated with the current Berryfield Village and again is development in the open countryside and appears to have no

connection to the main part of Berryfield as it is separated by the proposed canal. It was queried why the canal route veered to the east, cutting through the existing play area and village hall site, compromising the entrance to Berryfield and running in front of existing properties that have no vehicular access. It was questioned why the canal route did not go to the west of Berryfield completely, in a more direct north to south route, which would allow Berryfield to remain as a village settlement. It was noted that a previous argument for the canal not taking this western route was due to the expense as the land here was much wetter and would require the canal to have a concrete lining. Trimac Waterways Ltd., the company proposing the canal masterplan stated that all landowners affected by these plans were "on board", but this is not the case, as the parish council owns land here and no agreement has been made with them.

The Clerk advised that the Council formulate a corporate opinion on the masterplan in order to support and steer representatives from the parish council. It was noted that the Neighbourhood Plan Housing task Group was only looking at SHLAA sites against its criteria. This masterplan includes pubs, restaurants, a marina, glamping and a nature reserve; all these elements should be considered by Full Council. **Recommended:** *The Canal Masterplan is put onto the next Full Council Agenda for consideration and that the Planning Committee does not make any recommendations for approval.*

- b) Informing Melksham Neighbourhood Plan on the Parish Council Views on the Masterplan:** **Recommended:** *The Council give their view on the Masterplan to the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan after their decision at the next Full Council meeting, to be held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2016*
- c) Melksham Link Masterplan map:** The Clerk sought clarification from the Council as to whether the map provided by the developers could be shared with residents. As the map of the Masterplan was given out at a public meeting (Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting 13<sup>th</sup> January), it was agreed that therefore this document was in the public domain.

Meeting closed at 9.18pm

Chairman, 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2016