

**MINUTES of the Planning Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held  
on Monday 19 October 2020 at 7.00pm**

**(DUE TO THE ON-GOING COVID 19 PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS THIS WAS A  
VIRTUAL MEETING, WITH MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC BEING ABLE TO  
ACCESS THE MEETING VIA THE PUBLISHED ZOOM INVITATION. THIS  
MEETING WAS ALSO LIVE STREAMED VIA YOUTUBE)**

**Present:** Councillors Richard Wood (Council & Committee Chair), John Glover (Council Vice Chair), Alan Baines, (Committee Vice-Chair), Greg Coombes, Mary Pile and David Pafford

**Members of Public Present:** No members of public present

**Officers:** Teresa Strange (Clerk) and Lorraine McRandle (Parish Officer)

**117/20 Welcome, Announcements & Housekeeping**

The Clerk welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**118/20 To receive Apologies and approval of reasons given**

The Clerk informed the meeting that whilst Councillor Chivers was awaiting to join the meeting, he had left prior to the meeting starting.

**119/20 Declarations of Interest**

**a) To receive Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**b) To consider for approval any Dispensation Requests received by the Clerk and not previously considered**

None.

**c) To note standing Dispensations relating to planning applications**

The Clerk stated the Council had a dispensation lodged with Wiltshire Council dealing with Section 106 agreements relating to planning applications within the parish.

However, there were none for discussion this evening.

**120/20      Public Participation**

There were no members of public present.

**121/20      To consider the following Planning Applications:**

[20/06715](#)**/FUL:** Plot 4 New Road, Melksham. Siting of 2 temporary shipping containers to store tractor and tools – applicant Nicholas McGuigan

**Comment:** Whilst having **No Objection** to this application, Members asked if the shipping containers could be camouflaged in some way (ie painted green) so as to blend in with the rural environment.

[20/08289](#)**/FUL:** Snarlton Farm, Snarlton Lane. Infill slurry compound and erect grain store – applicant T and J Stainer

**Comment:** No Objection.

[20/08556](#)**/FUL:** 2 St Athan Close, Bowerhill. Extension and alteration to dwelling – applicants Mr & Mrs Keegan

**Comment:** No Objection.

**122/20      Lack of 5 Year Land Supply**

**a) To note response from Wiltshire Council regarding lack of 5 year land supply (if received)**

The Clerk explained due to pressures of deadlines for the Neighbourhood Plan, she had not been able to contact Wiltshire Council regarding the Parish Council's concern at the impact of a Lack of 5 year land supply on the parish, but would do so at the earliest opportunity.

**123/20.      Revised Plans.** To comment on any revised plans received within the required timeframe (14 days).

None had been received for consideration.

**124/20      Planning Enforcement:** To note any planning enforcement queries raised.

The Clerk explained there were a few issues within the parish which had been referred to Planning Enforcement and was waiting to hear back.

125/20

## Planning Policy

### a) Planning for the Future

#### i) To note comments made by Semington Parish Council

The Acting Chair of Semington Parish Council had forwarded Semington Parish Council's response to proposals in the Planning for the Future document for Members' information.

Members commended the comments made by Semington Parish Council.

**Recommendation:** To write back to Semington Parish Council commending and supporting the comments they raised as part of their response to proposals within the Planning for the Future consultation document.

#### ii) To receive update from the Clerk following discussions with Michelle Donelan MP

The Clerk explained she met with Michelle Donelan MP (on a different matter) the previous week the day after Parliament had met to discuss proposals in the Planning for the Future document.

Michelle had a clear understanding of the lack of 5-year land supply and the impact this was having on Melksham and also understood concerns councillors had regarding proposals within the Planning for the Future document.

126/20

## S106 Agreements and Developer meetings: *(Standing Item)*

### a) To note update on ongoing and new S106 Agreements

The Clerk informed the meeting there were no updates regarding ongoing and new S106 Agreements.

### b) To consider any new S106 queries

The Clerk informed the meeting there were no new S106 queries, however, had noted that information on the public art brief for Berryfield Village Hall had been received earlier that day and would place this on the Full Council agenda for 26 October.

### c) To note any S106 decisions made under delegated powers

The Clerk informed the meeting no S106 decisions had been

made under her delegated powers.

**d) To note any contact with developers**

**i) To receive feedback following meeting on 6 October with Savills and Hallam Land Management re proposal for 240 dwellings on Land to the South of Western Way**

In line with the Council's and Neighbourhood Plan Pre-App Policy, Members of both the Parish Council and Town Council had met with representatives of Savills and Hallam Land Management to discuss their proposals for 240 dwellings on Land South of Western Way

The notes of the meeting were as follows:

Those present: Councillor Richard Wood, Chair of Planning & Melksham Without Parish Council; Councillor Alan Baines, Vice Chair of Planning, Melksham Without Parish Council; Councillor Paul Carter, Melksham Without Parish Council; Councillor David Pafford, Melksham Without Parish Council; Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder, Melksham Without South; Councillor Adrienne Westbrook, Chair of Economic Development Committee; Melksham Town Council; Teresa Strange, Clerk, Melksham Without Parish Council; Lorraine McRandle, Parish Officer, Melksham Without Parish Council; David McKnight, Economic Development Manager, Melksham Town Council; Lawrence Dungworth, Development Surveyor, Hallam Land Management; Dan Yeates, Associate Director, Savills and Nick Matthews, Savills

Lawrence explained plans for the site had already been submitted to Wiltshire Council. Proposals included:

- 240 dwellings (indicative 1-5 bed, mix of semi-detached and detached)
- 70 bed care home.
- Retention of hedgerow through the centre of the site
- 30% Affordable Housing
- Access off the A365 (Western Way) with a potential for another access via Pathfinder Way to the East
- North of the site to include recreational area providing a MUGA, LEAP and allotments.
- A potential community orchard
- Attenuation Basin to the North West of the site
- Crossing West of the site across the A365
- Pedestrian access to A365

- Planting scheme around the site

Lawrence explained discussions were taking place with Highways regarding access off of Western Way, as well as with the landowners of Pathfinder Place regarding access to the adjacent site.

Regarding drainage for the site, discussion had taken place with Wessex Water on a suitable scheme for the site and discussions would continue with Drainage Officers at Wiltshire Council.

Lawrence noted that whilst employment opportunities had been suggested in a previous scheme, due to Covid it was felt there would be a lack of interest in small business units, therefore it had been decided to remove the employment offering from the South of the site, adjacent to existing employment units on Bowerhill Industrial Estate.

The main access would be off of Western Way with a proposal for a 3m shared footway connecting to an existing informal crossing to the West which would be upgraded to a toucan crossing and to the East a 2m footway connecting to the new crossing proposed as part of the Pathfinder Way development. A Transport Assessment had already been undertaken to look at the connectivity of the site.

Lawrence reiterated that the access to the site from the adjacent Pathfinder Place development was subject the outcome of discussions with the existing landowner.

Councillor Wood stated the Parish Council would have preferred the site be allocated as economic land rather than residential, given its' proximity to the existing Bowerhill industrial estate.

Concern was also expressed at the viability of a care home on the site, given how isolated it would be from existing facilities and the town centre, particularly if residents wished to walk into town.

Frustration was expressed by Councillor Wood, Melksham was currently the victim of a lack of 5-year land supply by Wiltshire Council with a current influx of applications for development on inappropriate sites, which this one was, given how isolated the site is.

Councillors from both councils concurred with the comments raised by Councillor Wood.

Councillor Holder expressed disappointment that an application for residential development had come forward again, given the comments raised by the Parish Council previously and also expressed a concern that access to the site was off of a very busy road, particularly at rush hour in both the morning and early evening.

Regarding the care home, Councillor Holder asked if there was a guarantee this would be built; whether a care home provider had come forward to manage it and whether there was a need for one. He also expressed concern at the distance from the town, as some residents would wish to walk into town, but given the distance would be put off.

Councillor Westbrook stated when looking at a map the site probably seemed sensible. However, it is separated from Melksham by the A365, a major road and very busy and expressed a concern at pedestrians having to cross this road to access the town and other facilities.

Councillor Baines stated the site was neither an extension of Bowerhill or Melksham but an isolated site and also expressed concern at the impact on the already busy A365 and the safety of pedestrian crossing the road and stated the access from Pathfinder Place was vital if this application were approved, particularly as a new primary school was proposed adjacent to the site, which children from the site would attend and asked:

- If the new footway proposed could be a shared path to allow for students cycling to Melksham Oak secondary school.
- What proposals there were for connecting to foul drainage, as aware due to the Pathfinder Place development that a large sewerage connection pipe had been installed across the A365.
- The viability for selling houses South of the site adjacent to industrial units.

Councillor Pafford raised a concern at the potential for an extra 500 vehicles generated from this site and the strain this would put on the already busy A365 and whilst an entrance

from Pathfinder Place was ideal, there would be an impact for new residents of Pathfinder Place who would not be aware of a potential for an access road coming through to the adjacent site.

The Clerk asked if Wiltshire Council were minded to approve this application if consideration could be given to the following:

- Sound proofing provided for those dwellings to the South to mitigate against any potential noise from the adjacent industrial units.
- Provision for equipment for teenagers in the recreational area.
- Provision of paved circular walks around the site with the inclusion of benches and bins.
- Allotments. The provision of water, security fencing, provision of parking and who would manage these?
- Would this development contribute enough towards the cost of building the primary school on the adjacent site (Pathfinder Place development) where land had been earmarked; to ensure it could be built?
- If access was agreed into the adjacent development, could consideration be given to easier drop off/pick up routes for the proposed primary school. The Parish Council are aware of another primary school in a new development, located on a dead-end, which makes it difficult for people maneuvering their vehicles and thereby holding up other traffic. The parish council have already asked Taylor Wimpey for some sort of provision to allow easier movement of vehicles during drop-off, pick-up times.

If this application were to be approved by Wiltshire Council, the Parish Council ask:

- LEAP/MUGA. They wish to enter into negotiations for taking on the ownership and management of the equipped play areas.
- Where will these children go to secondary school, as Melksham Oak is currently full. Understand even with current extension taking place, will be full by 2023.

- Pedestrian access to the site be provided off Western Way.
- Shared Spaces are delineated clearly i.e. different levels or different coloured paving, as this has caused conflict between pedestrians and vehicles in other new developments locally.

Councillor Holder felt it important to express that the primary objection to this site would be the loss of potential employment land with any access/highway issues being secondary.

Lawrence and the Savills team clarified a few points raised:

- The site had not been allocated in any development plan for employment use and due to Covid, felt it would be hard to sale industrial units on this site, however, it could be used for distribution purposes, but residential use was the most appropriate.
- A Noise Impact Survey had been undertaken recently with most businesses open, following lockdown and no issues highlighted, which would impact on any future residents. It was proposed to include thicker glazing in properties adjacent to the A365.
- The site is sustainable with any potential residents being able to walk to town, school or employment.
- It was agreed that providing connectivity to Melksham Oak would be looked at such as providing wider pathways for shared use.
- It is anticipated the site would be connected to Berryfield Sewerage system and discussions were currently taken place regarding connectivity and capacity.
- Happy to look at transferring the LEAP/MUGA to the parish council.
- Provision could be made for a teen shelter or some form of hybrid play space.
- There are already proposals for footpaths around the site, however it was anticipated these would be chippings or



hogging, however, there was flexibility to look at a more durable surface.

- Parking will be provided for the allotments, there would also be a water supply and could look at having some sort of fencing around the site.
- School drop-off. Unfortunately, cannot influence this as it is on another site, but if permission is given to have an access road, this could be something that could be looked at.
- There will be pedestrian access onto the A365.
- Understand the need for pedestrian access to the adjacent site to enable children to access the proposed new primary school.

Councillor Holder raised a concern at the pressure this development would put on education provision within the town. The nearest primary school, Bowerhill was currently full. Therefore, most people would have to use a car to travel to the next nearest primary school, until the school at Pathfinder Place was built, but it was unclear when this would be. Melksham Oak was also currently full, even with a proposed new extension it was understood this would be full by 2023.

Lawrence explained Wiltshire Council had a piece of land allocated for a Primary School in the adjacent site and had 10 years to build one, or hand back the land it was understood, but currently there was insufficient funds to build one. This site would not generate enough primary school children to build a new primary school, however, the Pathfinder Place development would be contributing towards it and CIL funding from future development elsewhere in the town would contribute towards it, including this development, in time to accommodate the majority of students from this application.

Regarding secondary education, Lawrence stated this would be looked into, as looking at consultee responses to other planning applications in the area, it was felt there was enough capacity in Melksham Oak, if this application were to be approved, if not, would make suitable contributions to enlarging the secondary school.

Councillor Wood expressed a concern the site was not sustainable given the various concerns raised at the meeting.

Lawrence reiterated he felt the site was sustainable, given the provision of crossings and new pathways into town and other facilities.

Councillor Holder expressed a concern as to where staff and visitors for the care home would park and felt 50 car parking spaces at least would be required.

Lawrence explained a care home of the size proposed would need at least 20 employees, 35 car parking spaces would be required, which also include visitor parking, cycling racks would also be provided. However, there was enough space to look at providing additional car parking spaces.

With regard to connectivity to the town centre, Councillor Westbrook felt a 2km walk was too excessive for a lot of people, therefore, there would be a reliance on a car, which would put more pressure on the local road infrastructure. She also expressed a concern if people had to use their cars anyway, they may choose to do their shopping elsewhere and therefore not support local traders.

Councillor Wood asked if traffic lights would be provided at the entrance to the site, particularly if people wished to turn right towards Devizes. It was explained the access would not be light controlled, however, a filter lane for the estate would be provided coming from the West and drivers could turn right out of the estate.

Councillor Westbrook stated people rather than use the main roads to access the town centre, would try and use the estate roads opposite, such as Conway Crescent and asked what form of provision could be provided to assist with this.

It was explained that the provision of pedestrian access to the West could be looked at to come out near the crossing which crossed over to Conway Crescent.

Councillor Holder noted if this development were to go ahead it would mean three pedestrian crossings on a short length of the A365 between Bowerhill and Berryfield and the impact this would have on the flow of traffic and whether Highways had been consulted and approved this.

Lawrence explained that modelling, with the provision of 220 dwellings initially had been undertaken and Highways had been happy with the results of this modelling.

Several Councillors reiterated this stretch of road was particularly busy, especially at rush hour and the impact these crossings would have on the flow of traffic, which would be a particularly hard sell to the residents of Melksham. Councillor Holder stated he would discuss these proposals with the Highway Department and the impact on traffic flow.

Councillor Wood asked, given experience elsewhere, if the MUGA and any teen facilities could be located away from the LEAP and elsewhere on the site, in order to avoid conflict with younger children and adjacent neighbours.

Councillor Baines expressed a concern the LEAP did not seem to be close enough to properties to allow for parents to keep an eye on their children, raising child protection issues.

Lawrence agreed this could be looked at and whilst the MUGA needed to be at the proposed location, the location of the LEAP could be looked at.

It was suggested a teen shelter or adult gym equipment or something similar could be erected in the area vacated by the LEAP.

Councillor Westbrook felt it was very important that any teen shelter/adult gym equipment should provide connectivity.

Councillor Baines explained Wiltshire Council could insist on a footpath connecting to the adjacent site as they had done with a recent application in order to connect two residential areas.

Councillor Baines also noted the nearest bus stops, would be those currently being installed on Pathfinder Way, therefore access via the adjacent estate was essential, otherwise people would have to access these via the proposed new footpaths on the main road which was not ideal, with the next nearest bus stops being at Berryfield.

Lawrence confirmed even with a pedestrian access this required discussions with the current landowner from a legal point of view.

Councillor Pafford left the meeting at 11.26am.

The Clerk asked if it was possible to have access from the South of the site to enable residents to access Bowerhill Industrial Estate, Bowerhill Sports Field, School of Gymnastics, Bowerhill Primary School, the Village Hall and local shop.

Lawrence explained this had been investigated, but unfortunately it was not possible to do this, due to the various land ownerships involved.

David McKnight asked what provision had been made regarding access to health care in the town, including dentists, bearing in mind there was a shortage of dental places in Melksham.

Lawrence explained this had not been looked at, but as part of any planning permission, would be asked to contribute towards health care provision in the town.

Lawrence expressed a wish to continue discussions during the planning process, in order to help mitigate any concerns Councillors had.

An invitation was extended to both Hallam Land and Savills to attend a Planning meeting of Melksham Without Parish Council on Monday, 9 November and the Town Council Planning meeting on Tuesday, 10 November.

The minutes of this meeting would be available for the Parish Council Planning meeting on 19 October to inform Members of the outcome of the meeting.

## **127/20      Neighbourhood Plan**

- a) To recommend approval of the draft Neighbourhood Plan prior to the Full Council adopting on 26 October 2020 in order to submit to Wiltshire Council for Regulation 16.**

A copy of the Plan had been circulated prior to the meeting for Members' information.

The Clerk informed members of the work Melksham Without Parish Council officers were currently undertaking prior to the plan being submitted to Wiltshire Council.

Members thanked officers and the Steering Group for their hard work in producing the plan and getting it ready for submission to Wiltshire Council.

It was noted there was a sentence missing from Page 85 of the plan regarding Priority Statement for Levels of Growth & Infrastructure. The Clerk agreed to make the consultants aware of this.

**Unanimous Recommendation:** The Full Council meeting on 26 October 2020 adopt the Neighbourhood Plan, in order to submit to Wiltshire Council for Regulation 16.

Meeting finished at 7.28pm

Signed .....  
By the Chair, 26 October 2020