

**MINUTES of the Planning Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on
Monday 20 July 2020 at 7.00pm**

**(DUE TO THE ON-GOING COVID 19 PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS THIS WAS A
VIRTUAL MEETING – MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WERE ABLE TO ATTEND THE
MEETING AFTER CONTACTING THE CLERK FOR INFORMATION ON HOW TO
ACCESS THE MEETING. THIS MEETING WAS ALSO STREAMED VIA YOUTUBE)**

Present: Councillors Richard Wood (Council & Committee Chair), John Glover (Council Vice Chair) from 7.39pm, Alan Baines (Committee Vice-Chair), Terry Chivers, Greg Coombes, Mary Pile and David Pafford

Also in Attendance: Wiltshire Councillors Phil Alford and Nick Holder

Adam Withers, JMB Solar

Members of Public Present: 14 Members of public present

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

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly members of the public and reminded those who had not previously attended meetings, that members of the public would be invited to speak under public participation at which point Councillors may wish to ask questions. Once public participation had finished the meeting would go into closed session and members of the public would be muted. However, if Councillors wished to consult with members of the public on a particular item they would be unmuted.

012/20 Apologies

Councillor John Glover due to a previous engagement gave his apologies as he was expected to arrive late or not be able to attend which Members noted and approved.

013/20 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 reminded those present the Parish Council had a standing dispensation relating to the Berryfield Village Hall planning application, which would be discussed later in the meeting regarding public art.

014/20 Invited Guest: Adam Withers, JMB re current public consultation on proposed Wick Solar Farm, Beanacre

Adam explained that unfortunately, Harry Ramsden, Pegasus Planning was unable to attend and informed Members, following the previous meeting, the deadline for public consultation had been extended and an advert placed in Melksham News, as requested by the Parish Council to inform residents.

Adam explained following comments received by both members of the public, the parish council and other stakeholders, several changes had been made to the design and were available on the Wick Farm Solar Farm website. The revisions to the plan were as follows:

- Reduction to the number of panels surrounding Daniel's Wood.
- Provision of a minimum buffer around the wood has been increased to 15m to help bat foraging and minimise the encroachment of the panels on the Wood itself.
- Removal of a large proportion of panels from the raised areas which are more visible to local residents.
- Setting back panels from Westlands Lane to reduce visibility to road users and a Grade II Listed property.
- A hedgerow will be planted from Westlands Lane to Daniel's Wood to screen views from the West, and provide further natural habitat.
- Commitment to mitigation screening along Westlands Lane to reduce visibility of the development, maintaining the hedges to a suitable height as to best screen from the road, with additional planting used to fill any gaps.
- Removal of inverter and battery containers from the Flood Risk Zone to reduce run off of water. Investigating Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDs) design to help alleviate the impact of flooding on Westlands Lane and residents in Beanacre.
- Reduction to the number of panels close to Catridge and Wick Farm to reduce visual impacts on local residents.
- Improvement to footpath amenity for local residents with improved surfacing, wider tracks, new signage and information boards.

- Increased field buffers to protect important margin ecology, including installing an 8-acre wildflower meadow.
- Inclusion of improved road safety measures within the Construction and Traffic Management Plan.
- Addition of bat and bird boxes around the site to further encourage suitable nesting habitat.
- Relocation of inverter stations away from local residents to reduce noise impact. Acoustic fencing will be installed.
- Provide natural screening.
- Reinforcement of existing field boundaries across the site to minimise visual impact.
- Installing a 0.5 high bund in the southeast corner of the site adjacent to Westlands Lane. The bund will have the ability to hold water, which will help to attenuate the flow of heavy rainwater towards the residents in Beanacre.

Clarification was sought on changes around Westlands Lane and Adam clarified that panels would be removed nearer Westlands Lane, approximately 8 acres of panels and equipment, this area to be laid to a wild flower meadow, this will also lessen the impact on an adjacent Grade II Listed building.

Screening along Westlands Lane would be improved with the current hedgerow reinforced and allowed to grow to approximately 2 metres, this would also protect visibility from the Grade II Listed Westlands Farm opposite the site.

Concern was raised by several Councillors that residents in Whitley were unaware of proposals as they had not received a Melksham News recently nor the public consultation leaflets which were distributed and asked if the public consultation period could be extended.

Adam expressed disappointment this was the case as an advert had specifically been placed in Melksham News to make residents of Whitley aware of proposals and would therefore contact Melksham News as to why this was the case and undertake a review of the consultation which had taken place.

Regarding extending the public consultation period, Adam explained he would be happy to continue to engage.

Councillor Baines welcomed the reduction of 8m of panelling around Daniels Wood, the various improvements around Westlands Lane,

particularly flood mitigation measures, but felt more improvements could be made.

Adam agreed to forward a list of all the changes for Members information.

015/20

Public Participation

Wick Farm Solar Farm

A resident of Whitley explained she had joined the meeting regarding another item and was not aware of proposals for a solar farm and sought clarification on the size of the proposed site and how many panels would be installed.

Another local resident asked if a list of changes could be provided and felt the issues around proposals near Westlands Lane had not been dealt with in the revised proposals, particularly with regard to flooding. They also expressed a concern that due diligence had not been carried out regarding public consultation.

Adam clarified the site was approximately 200 acres in size with proposals for 180,000 panels, dependent on the mega wattage used in the final scheme.

Regarding the comments raised by the second resident, Adam explained he was happy to provide a list of the various amendments to the plans.

Referring to public consultation and whether due diligence had been applied, Adam explained that an area of 1-1.5km from the site had been targeted with publicity, including several letters being sent to those closest to the site, as well as a leaflet drop, a website on proposals being available and an advert in Melksham News and was happy to hear how public consultation could be improved in these difficult times and reassured those present that a review of what public consultation had taken place would be undertaken.

Regarding flood risk, Adam explained solar farms did not increase flooding and was confident the Flood Risk Report would reiterate this. However, there were proposals to provide betterment to the scheme to reduce potential flooding.

There had been a reduction in the scheme adjacent to Westlands Lane to reduce the impact on residents to improve the visual impact in both the South and North part of the scheme.

Councillor Chivers sought assurances that in the event of gaining planning permission that during the construction period delivery times were staggered in order to alleviate the impact on surrounding roads, given previous experience whereby roads in and around Melksham were gridlocked due to solar panel deliveries to a nearby solar farm.

Adam explained the main access to site for deliveries would be from Folly Lane, Lacock to the North of Westlands Lane, and there would be a commitment to stagger delivery times and indeed the Construction and Traffic Management Plan would include the use of a permanent banksman and staged deliveries in order to reduce the impact on the local highway.

Adam explained it was hoped the plans would be submitted in August for consideration by the Planning Authority.

Councillor Pile asked if investigations had been made regarding the presence of a Roman settlement and road on the site.

Adam explained a geophysical study had taken place and confirmed their presence. Trial trenching would take place in September and any findings sent to the County Archaeologist for advice and would be happy to feedback these findings.

Toast Office, Whitley

A representative of Community Action: Whitley & Shaw Group (CAWS) attended the meeting to comment on behalf of the group on the various planning applications which had been submitted recently in Whitley.

This information had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting.

The representative stated members of CAWS had raised a concern that due to current Covid-19 restrictions the usual practice by Wiltshire Council posting green notices to inform people of planning applications had not taken place, therefore residents were not aware of several applications in the village and therefore were not having an opportunity to comment on them within the required deadline, including adjacent neighbours.

Therefore, CAWS asked if the Parish Council could approach Wiltshire Council to extend deadlines during the current health crisis, in order to give people extra time to respond to planning applications.

The CAWS committee had voted on proposals for the Toast Office with the outcome of a small majority in favour of the proposals. Several had responded recognising and having sympathy for the extensive efforts that the current owner had made to make the business a success and did not want to see the current owner and their family suffer further unnecessary financial detriment. However, equally as strong was the desire to have a shop and Post Office in the village.

Within the village there is widespread support to see the retention of a 'community hub' offering both a village shop and Post Office services, with several people within the community willing to undertake various roles in support of a community enterprise and were asking for more time to test the option of taking on the shop as such an enterprise, with many lodging objections at Wiltshire Council to allow more time for this option to be explored.

It was understood a meeting had taken place with members of the Community Hub team and the current owner to discuss options and that the current owner was exploring options to market the property as a going concern.

CAWS wished to commend the hard work of the group and hoped that they could market test options with a view to taking something forward and hoped they would be able to work collaboratively with members of CAWS.

It was reiterated CAWS were extremely concerned about the loss of a community hub, but were not wedded to having a hub based in the current location if an alternative solution could be found elsewhere in the village that did not result in the current owners having insolvency proceedings against them and invited the support and assistance of the Parish Council and County Council to explore options.

Councillor Glover arrived at 7.39pm

The Chair invited Councillor Holder to respond to the comments raised.

Councillor Holder explained the various options open to those concerned at the lack of consultation by Wiltshire Council such as contacting the Planning Officer to seek an extension or contact their local Councillor, Phil Alford to do it on their behalf, as well as asking the Parish Council to do the same.

The current owners of the Toast Office explained he had no choice but to seek a change of use, given his current financial circumstances and had sought professional advice on his options and it was concluded that to continue the business in its current location was not viable.

They had met with representatives of the Community Hub Group to discuss options and had agreed to look at ways to market the business and therefore had sought professional advice all of whom had stated a similar business at this location would not be viable and would not be worth marketing the site unless aimed at developers for residential use.

They had also obtained quotes to get the premises into a good state as utilities were currently shared between two properties, if one was to be rented out as a shop, with the costs amounting to £30,000, unfortunately, they would be unable to secure a loan to undertake this work, given current debts which had accrued.

The current owner explained they had also approached several local agents to seek advice on whether it was possible to market the premises for commercial use with feedback as follows:

- There has been no demand for general retail or commercial premises in villages for many years.
- No parking is available.
- The current layout is poor for most profitable use as a convenient store.
- The Post Office element has been catered for in Atworth and a mobile one coming takes away any income generator.
- Not a busy road.
- Small catchment area
- Close to Melksham which already has several convenience stores.

One stated "...Having assessed the previous business model and although not experts, this appears to be a well-used business model which would ordinarily work, especially in mind of the reviews and awards the business has received. Given that you have utilised a tried and tested business model we believe that no new occupier running a similar model would be successful even with the variations of said model.

With the site being approximately 1,400sqft, this unit requires significantly more footfall than is feasible when taking into consideration the parking on offer.

Having reviewed the publicly accessible financial information of the current and previous businesses, combined with the constraints highlighted above, we also believe it is highly unlikely to be taken on for community use, especially in the wake of Covid-19 restricting footfall further.

In our experience, we would suggest it is only viable to market the property to developers interesting in pursuing a residential use, as there is no demand for a commercial building of this size or type in the area.

The current owner stated he should not be collateral damage for the community not supporting his business and reiterated the number of shops within the vicinity of Whitley, including to farm shops, as well as the various supermarkets in nearby Melksham.

Regarding the Post Office, the current owner explained he was current looking at the provision of a mobile one within the village.

The current owner explained he had improved the return from the previous owner of the shop, however, did not make a significant profit and indeed had to work over 80 hours a week sometimes to keep the Toast Office open and running and felt volunteers would not be able to put in the same level of input required to keep a shop open in order to break even. It would also be difficult to raise money for the venture as this would be against current and previous financial reports of the business.

The current owner reiterated the only reason they were seeking planning permission was due to their financial position and no requirement for a shop as demonstrated by local residents who did not support the shop previously.

A member of the 'Community Hub Group' attended the meeting to explain a group of around 50 local individuals with varying professional experience had formed in response to this application seeking to oppose the change of use in order to protect access to a shop and Post Office which were a vital community asset. It was felt the application was seeking exemption from Core Policy 49 of the Core Strategy which required every avenue to be explored before such a change of use could be granted.

Engagement had taken place within the village, which had identified there was support for a 'no frills' convenience store and Post Office and not repeating what was there before. There was evidence elsewhere, that a not for profit community shop could work well within the village. The 5-year success rate of community shops was 94% compared to 46% for small business rate.

It was stated there was significant business interest from experienced business owners in the retail sector in taking the business on and in line with Core Policy 49 should be marketed at the commercial rate, not the price it might reach as residential use to enable people to come forward and purchase it at a reasonable price. It was also felt it was not realistic or reasonable to expect a new venture to also take on the liabilities of a previously failed business.

It was stated there were several objections to this application on the planning portal which should be borne in mind when considering this application and gave examples of the impact the loss this business would have on the village.

The Member of the group explained the previous owner of the local pub had stated their reason for selling was because locals did not support it, however, 5 years on felt it was a thriving pub.

The Chair asked how long the group needed, to put a plan together for a 'Community Hub'. The Member of the 'Community Hub Group' felt 6 months was needed to put together a case and properly market the premises as a community shop.

The Chair asked with Members permission to move the Toast Office planning application and others pertaining to Whitley further up the agenda, which was agreed by Members.

Before starting the Clerk reminded Members of the application to register the Toast Office as an Asset of Community Value, which had been presented at a previous meeting and the comment from Simon Day, Performance & Service Development Manager, Economic Development & Planning, Wiltshire Council:

'...I have been made aware of the planning application and I will inform the case officer for the application of this nomination for them to consider. However, this nomination will not hold up the process of determining the planning application. It is important that local residents concerned with the proposed change of use application should send their objections to the planning application by 23 July and should not

believe that this ACV nomination puts a hold on the planning application being decided’.

The Chair read out the rest of the communication from Simon Day for Members information:

‘...I have suggested to the nominator they back up their nominations with reasons why they believe Whitley Village shop meets the criteria that the current use (or use in the recent past) of the building, furthers the social wellbeing of social interests of the local community and reasons as to why they believe it is realistic to think that now or in the next 5 years, there could continue to be non-ancillary use of the building or other land which will further (whether or not in the same way as before) the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community.’

016/20 To consider the following Planning Applications:

20/04525/FUL: The Toast Office, 116 Top Lane, Whitley. Change of use of existing buildings from mixed A1 shop, A3 Food & Drink and A4 drinking establishment to C3 residential use, creating two dwellings, with associated works. Applicant Luke Johnson

Councillor Chivers supported the comments raised by the representative from the Community Hub group and felt the previous business was thriving and raised a concern that the lack of opening hours may have contributed to the lack of support.

Concern was expressed the location of the premises was not right by several Members and lacked adequate parking and with better bus connectivity residents, particularly elderly with concessionary bus passes could shop elsewhere and indeed were.

Councillor Glover reminded Members, whilst an emotive issue, keeping a village shop was separate to the planning application, which had to be considered separately.

Wiltshire Councillor Alford arrived at 8.05pm.

Councillor Pafford stated if there was support for a community hub within the village, why residents had

not showed its support for the Toast Office previously. Consideration also needed to be given to the impact of online food shopping deliveries, which particularly had increased during the current health crisis.

Councillor R Wood expressed sympathy with all concerned, but also noted that parking was an issue outside the Toast Office and Covid-19 was impacting the retail sector particularly.

Whilst it was noted the current owner had demonstrated it was difficult for a shop to thrive at this location it was noted in other areas, community shops had thrived with dedicated volunteers, therefore it was possible a community hub could thrive in an appropriate location elsewhere in the village.

The Chair invited Wiltshire Councillor Alford to speak to this application.

Wiltshire Councillor Alford explained this was a difficult situation for everyone and noted as the premises were not marketed as a commercial premises, this would make it difficult for residents to buy as a shop.

Councillor Chivers asked if Councillor Alford would be calling this application in to which Councillor Alford stated he was unable to answer at present and would need to speak to the Planning Officer.

Councillor Baines reminded those present that a community shop did not need to exist on the current site and therefore, Members needed to consider the application as presented for change of use to residential.

The Chair invited the representative from the Community Hub Group to speak and they reiterate they felt this application did not meet Core Policy 49.

Comment: Members, whilst recognising the passion from a group of local residents in wishing to keep the Toast Office as a 'community hub', also acknowledged the current business had not been well

supported by local residents and lacked adequate parking provision.

Members commented the provision of a 'community hub' in Whitley could be provided elsewhere in the village, in a more accessible location with adequate parking, if residents wished to pursue this venture and therefore, had **No Objection** to this application.

Councillor Chivers asked for his vote against this proposal be recorded in the minutes.

20/04458/FUL: Land rear of 39 & 40 Eden Grove, Whitley. Proposed Two new dwellings & landscaping – applicant Barry Poolman

Comment: Members objected to this application on highway grounds. Access to the proposed dwellings is via Brookfield Rise and very narrow.

Members felt it would be very difficult to have two cars passing at the same time via this narrow access.

Wiltshire Councillor Alford offered to speak to the Planning Officer regarding the access.

The Clerk reminded Members the deadline for comments on this application was that day, but the Parish Council had received an extension until the following day and in line with what the representative from CAWS stated with regard to lack of consultation due to Covid, asked whether members wished to ask for a further extension and whether they wished the application to be called in.

Members asked that this application be called in by Councillor Alford due to inadequate access.

Councillor Chivers agreed to attend a Planning Committee meeting of Wiltshire Council, when this application was to be considered.

20/04949/FUL: Church Farm, Bath Road, Shaw. Erection of extension to commercial premises. Applicant Mr A Hillier

Comment: No objection.

20/04986/FUL: Shaw Country Hotel, Bath Road, Shaw. Change of use from hotel and two residential units to hotel or dwelling and two residential units for holiday letting. Applicants Mr N and Mr P Lewis

It was noted that since the issuing of the agenda the application details had been changed to: **Change of use from hotel and two residential units to dwelling and two residential units for holiday letting.**

Comment: No objection.

20/03811/FUL: 47 Wellington Square. Side extension above existing garage. Applicant Andrew Stevenson

Comment: No Objection

20/03543/FUL: 27 Beanacre Road. Detached four-bedroom House with detached double garage. (Revised Plans) - Applicant Mr & Mrs N Townsend

The Clerk explained when submitted previously, it had been agreed to contact Wiltshire's Drainage Team to make them aware of the application, following flooding in the lane earlier in the year.

The Clerk agreed officers would chase this up with the Drainage Team at Wiltshire Council.

Comment: Whilst having no objection Members asked the proposed new property be moved back by 2m in line with adjacent dwellings.

20/04431/FUL: 39 Duxford Close. Proposed new fence. Applicant Ryan Bewley

Comment: No Objection

20/04792/FUL: 28 Kingfisher Drive, Bowerhill. Front and rear extensions. Applicant Mr K Green

Comment: No Objection.

20/04922/FUL: 31 Duxford Close, Bowerhill. Two storey side extension. Applicant Mr & Mrs Voogd

Comment: No objection.

20/05197/FUL: Tan House Barn, Redstocks, Seend. Change of use of agricultural land to domestic garden. Applicant Mr Simon Cottle.

Comment: No Objection.

Councillor Glover declared an interest in this item as he knew the applicant.

The Clerk explained that revised plans had been submitted for Whitley Brow and as Members only had 14 days to consider these and the next Planning meeting was scheduled for 17 August asked whether Members wished to consider these, as Whitley Brow was on the agenda with regard to Tree Preservations order, which was agreed.

20/04234/FUL: Whitley Brow, 178 Top Lane, Whitley. Minor development of 2 new houses in the land to the rear of Whitley Brow. Applicant Stainer. (Revised Plans)

Comment: No Objection.

017/20 Correspondence

- a) **To note correspondence from Wiltshire Highways regarding removal of hedge, filling in of ditch and fence erection. The Beeches and Shaw Hill**

It was noted that the Wiltshire Highways had no concerns regarding the above.

- b) **To note correspondence from Clara Davies, Head of School Place Commissioning. Regarding Planning application 20/01938 for development of 144 dwellings on Semington Road**

Correspondence had been received from Clara Davies, Head of School Place Commissioning responding to concerns raised within the education

report submitted in response to this application, it stated that Aloeric School was within a safe walking distance which the council disputed.

Within the correspondence it stated '...when considering planning applications, Education seek advice from transport colleagues to ascertain which schools are classed as being within a safe walking distance and officers do not make a judgement themselves and had asked the Council's Road Safety Team to visit the location and formally assess the safety of the walking route to Aloeric School and would update the council on findings in due course'.

Members noted Bowerhill School, Melksham Oak, the proposed new school at Pathfinder Way and St George's, Semington were also classed as within a safe distance, which Members disputed.

Recommendation: To ask Council's Road Safety Team to assess the safety of the walking routes from Bowerhill Primary School, Melksham Oak, the proposed new school at Pathfinder Way and St George's School, Semington.

c) To note correspondence regarding possible breach of enforcement at Land East of Spa Road

The Clerk informed Members that it would appear the area that had been cleared of hedgerow was for the new relief road, however, it was still unclear whether there was a breach with regard to the removal of the hedgerow during nesting season and this was being taken up with Enforcement.

d) To note a Tree Preservation Order has been made regarding Whitley Brow, 178 Top Lane, Whitley

Members noted Tree Preservation Orders had been made regarding two Indian Horse Chestnut Trees to the rear of Whitley Brow, 178 Top Lane.

e) To note correspondence from David Cox, Planning Officer regarding planning application 20/04259/FUL regarding 406c The Spa

Councillor Holder explained he was aware of various correspondence between the applicant and the Planning Officer and local residents.

The Planning Officer had asked if he would consider rescinding his original 'call in', however given the detailed response to this application by

the Parish and the various comments from residents, he had not rescinded his 'call in'

It was understood this application would be considered at a Wiltshire Planning Committee meeting in September which residents were invited to attend and asked if the Parish wished to send a representative also.

Councillor Wood agreed to attend the Western Area Planning Committee when this application was due for consideration.

f) Proposed stopping up of highway adjacent to 168 Littleworth Lane, Whitley

i) To consider a request to Wiltshire Council for proposed stopping up of highway adjacent to 168 Littleworth Lane

The Clerk reminded Members this item had been deferred from the Full Council on 6 July.

Recommendation: To inform Wiltshire Council, the Parish Council had no objection to this request.

ii) To note correspondence from Area Highway Engineer regarding this application

Members noted correspondence from the Area Highway Engineer regarding a request to stop up part of the highway adjacent to 168 Littleworth Lane, Whitley.

g) Change of use of Whitley Toast Office and Closure of Post Office

i) To note correspondence from The Post Office re closure of Shaw Post Office at the Toast Office, Top Lane, Whitley

Members noted the various correspondence from The Post Office regarding the closure of Shaw Post Office at the Toast Office, Top Lane, Whitley with a reassurance they would be continuing to work to find a solution that would provide a Post Office service to the community.

Regarding the various correspondence below, Members noted the information contained within them had been raised previously under public participation.

- ii) **To note notes from CAWS regarding closure of the Toast Office**
- iii) **To note, notes from meeting held with Whitley Community Hub Group regarding closure of the Toast Office**
- iv) **To note comments by local resident regarding closure of the Toast Office**

018/20 Neighbourhood Plan

- a) **To receive update on Neighbourhood Plan & Regulation 14 Consultation**

The Clerk reminded Members the Regulation 14 consultation was currently underway and was due to end on 27 July.

Around 40 responses had been received so far from statutory consultees and residents.

The Clerk said she was happy to undertake public consultation in the Market Place bearing in mind social distancing rules. Concern was raised that a Risk Assessment needed to be undertaken.

The Clerk and Councillor Baines as Chair of Staffing agreed to undertake a Risk Assessment prior to the consultation in the Market Place the following day.

019/20 S106 Agreements and Developer meetings: (Standing Item)

- a) **To note update on ongoing and new s106 Agreements**
 - i) **To note, notes of meeting held on 25 June with Diana Hatton regarding Art Project for Bellway Development on Semington Road (Bowood View) and working Group Notes of 2 July 2020**

Members noted the notes of the meetings held on 25 June and notes of the Working Group meeting held on 2 July 2020.

The Clerk informed Members a further meeting was due to take this week, but unfortunately had to be re-arrangement therefore

she sought a preferred date from Members for the following week.

It was agreed to arrange the meeting for 30 June at 10.00am by Zoom.

b) To consider any new S106 queries

No new S106 queries had been received.

c) To note any S106 decisions made under delegated powers

To note no S106 decisions had been made by the Clerk under delegated powers.

d) To note any contact with developers

i) To note, notes of meeting held on 25 June with Ashford Homes regarding proposals for 9 dwellings, First Lane

Following a request from Ashford Homes to meet with the Parish Council to discuss proposals for a small development on First Lane, Whitley and in line with its Pre App Policy, the following Councillors and officers met with Stuart Morgan, Ashford Homes to discuss proposals: Councillors R Wood (Chair of the Council); Glover (Vice Chair of the Council); Baines; Pafford and Pile, Teresa Strange (Clerk) and Lorraine McRandle (Parish Officer)

The Clerk explained as was protocol any meeting notes from developers are presented to members of the Planning Committee for their information.

The notes from the meeting are as follows:

‘Stuart Morgan, Ashford explained community engagement was currently taking place on proposals for 9 dwellings, consisting of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom homes on land between Lagard Farm and No 78 First Lane, which they felt represented infill and to submit an outline application shortly to Wiltshire Council, with all matters reserved except for access.

The materials to be used would be a mixture of stone and brick to fit in with surrounding development, set in a comprehensive scheme of hard and soft landscaping. A large part of the site would remain undeveloped, keeping buildings out of the flood zone and providing space for wildlife to thrive.

It was proposed to offer up part of the land in the flood zone to the community which could be used as a car park or potential play area and this site would be subject to a separate planning application.

Councillors made the following comments:

Drainage

- That this application did not exacerbate flooding issues within the village and what mitigation measures would be installed to help with surface water drainage.
- Could some additional funding be provided as part of any community gain to alleviate flooding elsewhere in Whitley?

Car Park provision for Shaw School

- The car park would only be available at certain times of the year, given its location in the flood zone.
- Number of spaces available.
- Who would provide it?
- Who would be responsible for it and maintain it?

Other concerns:

- Extent of public consultation within Whitley.
- Management of open space to encourage wildlife areas.
- Concern parts of the site (Western end) are overcrowded and detrimental to the street scene.
- Eroding gap between Shaw/Whitley

In response to the points raised above, Stuart explained he was happy to look at reconfiguring the size of houses in order to provide more space between each dwelling, bearing in mind the various constraints on the site such as trees, particularly to the Western boundary which would need to be retained.

With regard to drainage, Stuart explained this had been looked at by a drainage consultant, and proposals looked at to mitigate against drainage issues, such as reconfiguring the ditch to channel run off to the existing culvert, installing a hydro break system or Swale.

Regarding contributing towards flood mitigation measures elsewhere in the village as part of community gain, this would be looked into.

Stuart explained Ashford Homes were looking to provide the land for a car park for the school, as they were aware of the parking issues at drop off and pick up times. Whilst he had spoken to the Head about this, the Head whilst not opposed to the application had raised a concern at the impact this development would have on the school regarding flooding.

Any plans for a car park would be subject to a separate application and as yet, no one had come forward wishing to build it and envisaged it would have a gravel surface with its own drainage to drain into the brook.

Regarding the open space this would be retained by Ashford Homes (Doric Group) and managed accordingly.

The Clerk asked when the application would be submitted. Stuart explained, he would review the plans following the various comments made and hoped to submit the plans within the next week.

Once the meeting closed Members discussed the proposals as follows:

Discussion ensued on appropriate community gain. Concern was raised that the land for a car park could be left empty for quite a few years with no one wishing to build it, or if built, maintain it in the future. It was felt it would be a missed opportunity not to ask for flood mitigation further up the village in Top Lane, as well as asking for an attenuation pond on the site to alleviate flooding in the area.

It was agreed at the meeting to forward the public consultation document to Whitehorse Academy and the Head of Shaw Primary School for their information and to ascertain their views

on the car park and whether they would be prepared to get this built and take care of future maintenance.

It was also agreed the notes of the meeting be sent to Members of the Planning Committee for approval, which was given and to forward these to Ashford Homes as the Council's response to the consultation, as soon as possible, given the outline planning application would be submitted within the next week, rather than have a meeting to formalize the response as would be normal practice.'

ii) To note correspondence from Ashford Homes following meeting held on 25 June

Ashford Homes had written to inform Members following feedback from the meeting and public consultation, a revision had been made to the layout and outline plans would be submitted to Wiltshire Council in the near future.

iii) Notes from public meetings/CAWS regarding proposals by Ashford Homes to erect 9 dwellings on First Lane

Councillor Pile clarified the meetings which had taken place were with a group of residents and not a CAWS meeting.

Members noted the information contained within the notes.

a) To note any contact with developers

The Clerk informed the meeting developers had contacted the Parish Council prior to lockdown wishing to put forward a scheme to the N/E of Melksham and sought guidance from members if and when they wished to meet to discuss the proposals.

Resolved: To arrange a Zoom meeting as soon as possible with the developers.

The meeting finished at 9.38pm

Chair:.....
Approved at Full Council Meeting
held on 27 July 2020