

**MINUTES of the Planning Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held  
on Monday 22 February 2021 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 OR VIA  
YOUTUBE**

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

**Also Present:** Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder (Melksham Without South)

**Members of public present:** 1

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

**335/20 Welcome, Announcements & Housekeeping**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Clerk stated that the meeting was being live streamed via YouTube and would be available until the day after the minutes were approved.

**336/20 To receive Apologies and approval of reasons given**

It was noted Councillors Coombes and Chivers were not in attendance and no apologies had been received.

Note: Councillor Coombes arrived later in the meeting (at 7.08pm).

**337/20 Declarations of Interest**

**a) To receive Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Pile explained she may have an interest, as she was aware Community Action Whitley & Shaw (CAWS), which she was a member of, had forwarded a copy of their response to the Local Plan Review, which was being discussed this evening.

**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**

To note the Council have a dispensation lodged with Wiltshire Council dealing with Section 106 agreements relating to planning applications within the parish.

**338/20 Public Participation**

One member of public was present and informed the meeting he was just an observer, but was particularly interested in planning application: **20/08400**: Land South of Western Way, an outline application for up to 240 dwellings and 70 bed care home.

Councillor Holder explained he also wished to comment on the resubmission of the above application, which he had already called in and would keep the 'call in' if this was still the wish of the council once they had discussed the latest plans.

**339/20 To consider holding items in Closed Session due to confidential nature** *Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business 10c as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.*

The Clerk explained this item was only if members touched on the contract details for the art project at Berryfield Village Hall.

**Resolved:** That item 10c be held in closed session if necessary.

**340/20 To consider the following Planning Applications:**

**20/11601/REM:** Land East of Spa Road, Melksham. Reserved Matters for 26 homes forming Phase 2A of outline planning permission 17/09248/VAR. Consent is sought for all outstanding matters relating to this area, comprising Scale, Layout, External Appearance, Landscaping, Internal Access Arrangements and the Mix and Type of Housing. Applicant Barton Willmore.

The Clerk stated she had placed this on the agenda again, in case Members wished to consider making further comments on the application, following receipt of a response from

the Enforcement Officer on possible breaches of planning conditions relating to the rest of the development site.

**Comment:** To add no further comments to those previously submitted.

Councillor Coombes joined the meeting at 7.08pm.

**21/00791/FUL:** 1 Kingfisher Drive, Bowerhill. Proposed two storey side extension. Applicant Emily Hayes.

**Comment:** No objection.

**21/00549/FUL:** Berkeley House, Longleaze Lane, Melksham. 3 bay oak framed detached garage and home office. Applicant Gavin Parker.

**Comment:** No objection.

**21/00540/FUL:** 31 Duxford Close, Bowerhill. Two Storey Side Extension. Applicant: Mr Voogd

**Comment:** No objection.

**21/01566/PNCOU:** Barn adjoining Green Shed, Lower Woodrow, Forest. Change of Use of Agricultural Building to 1 no. Dwellinghouse (Class C3), and for building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion. Class Q. Applicant: Mr Fry.

**Comments:** The Parish Council **OBJECT** to this application. The proposed dwelling is currently a 'metal shed' and divorced from any other buildings and isolated, therefore classed as development in the open countryside with no tie to an agricultural worker associated with the site.

**341/20 Revised Plans** To comment on any revised plans received within the required timeframe (14 days).

**20/08400/OUT:** Land South of Western Way, Melksham. Outline application (with all matters reserved except for access) for the erection of up to 240 residential dwellings (Class C3) and a 70 bed care home (Class C2) with associated access, landscaping and open space.

It was noted the main revision to the plans was the access off the A365 (Western Way) being

removed and the only vehicular access now proposed off of Pathfinder Way and not Western Way (A365).

Concerns were raised that the current application for the Pathfinder Place development on the western side was yet to be developed, and was designed with only minimal housing, therefore, it was queried whether the road proposed for this new application would be of a standard to cope with potentially 400+ vehicles a day, including delivery vehicles associated with 240 homes and a 70 bed care home.

It was noted that Highways had sent a second letter objecting to this application due to its unsustainability.

It was also noted that the Education Department had responded to say they would object to this application as there were no safe walking routes to school provision proposed in the site. It was also noted the report referred to lack of school places, stating with regard to secondary education provision this application would generate 48 places with only 36 available with regard to primary education there was no spare capacity.

It was felt future residents for the Pathfinder Place site would be prejudiced by extra traffic, not previously envisaged.

Highway safety concerns were raised regarding the proposed right hand exit from the Western part of the Pathfinder Place development, which would now be used for traffic to this new development, with Members querying whether Highways needed to look at the access to ascertain if it was feasible for taking the extra vehicles/pedestrians as it was not designed for the amount of people which could be using it in the future.

It was noted construction traffic would also have to use this access, creating difficulties for any future residents and pupils/parents walking children to the proposed new school at the Pathfinder Place development.

Councillors felt it important that the stream to the

northern edge of site should be retained and not filled in, along with hedging along the A365 and not 'scrubbed out' in order to gain access to the stream.

Whilst it was noted there was provision for an emergency access it was unclear if this was for vehicles. Members raised concern as the access to the development had been moved away from the A365, and this could cause difficulties for emergency vehicles who would have to navigate the estate road system. Of particular concern was the access of ambulances to the proposed care home.

It was noted that the NHS had commented on this application and stated they had no residual capacity within its current GP offer in Melksham, and the impact this development and the proposed 70 bed care home would have on GP services within the town.

Councillor Holder as Wiltshire Council Ward member for this area was invited to speak to this application.

Councillor Holder stated he had previously called this application in and would keep the 'call in' if Members so wished and felt the new plans did not alleviate previous concerns and therefore the previous objections should be reiterated along with concerns at the impact on GP services within the town and the impact of additional traffic through the Pathfinder Place development.

In addressing the issue of access off the A365, developers have made difficulties in accessing the rest of the site and was detrimental to the adjacent development off Pathfinder Way, highlighting that the site was unviable.

Councillor Holder also raised concern at the number of vehicles using this site daily, potentially 500 vehicles, and the impact this would have on the local road infrastructure.

With regard to proposals for a care home, it was noted there were more suitable sites within the town.

**Comments:** The Parish Council reiterate their previous objections to this development and note the concerns raised by the NHS that they have no capacity in the area and the demands this site, particularly the care home will put on already overstretched GP services in Melksham

Concerns were also raised at the impact the extra vehicles accessing this development via Pathfinder Way will have on the road network and the Pathfinder Place site (West side), particularly as the access road was not designed for such traffic and the implications this will have for potential residents and pupils of the proposed new school on the adjacent site.

This site is unsustainable and would be more suited to an extension of the existing Bowerhill Industrial Estate.

The 'call in' by Councillor Holder is kept in place.

**342/20**

**Planning Enforcement:**

**a) To note any new planning enforcement queries raised**

The Clerk explained a resident had contacted the Parish Council regarding trees cut down in The Spa, but it was unclear whether this was an enforcement issue related to new development, but was being looked into.

**b) To note action taken regarding East of Melksham issues with flooding and newts**

The Clerk explained Planning Enforcement had visited regarding potential breaches in planning conditions, the Drainage Team at Wiltshire Council were also aware of concerns of adjacent neighbours with regard to flooding and the impact on wildlife and would be making investigations.

The issues with dead great crested newts were classed as "rural crime" and therefore had to be reported to the police, it was understood a report had been sent to the appropriate agency to investigate.

Councillor Pafford asked if construction had been stopped on site, whilst investigations were underway.

The Clerk explained that this was not the case.

Councillor Holder explained he had discussed the drainage issues with the Planning Officer and it was felt the recent flooding in the area was caused by the amount of rainfall and not construction works currently taking place and therefore, there had been no breaches of the planning application and construction work allowed to continue.

Councillor Wood explained a concern had been raised by adjacent neighbours that the ground levels had been increased.

Councillor Holder explained that during his discussions with the Planning Officer they had confirmed that the planning conditions had been satisfied.

Councillor Holder explained he still had a 'call in' on the current application, but was being urged to withdraw it, as there had been no breaches of planning conditions, but stated he was still leaving the 'call in' in place for now.

As the concerns of adjacent residents lived in the Town, Councillor Holder explained he would be holding talks with Wiltshire Councillor Jon Hubbard (Melksham South Ward) as he understood he had also contacted Wiltshire Council regarding this application.

**c) To note response from Planning Enforcement re removal of trees on Pathfinder Way**

Correspondence had been received from Natalie Rivans, Planning Enforcement Officer stating, the trees on Pathfinder Way had been removed following conversations between the developer and tree officers and removal agreed before works took place. Unfortunately, this information was not fed back to the Planning Officer and not added to the application file. However, new trees would be planted in due course.

It was asked if the new trees could be more substantial than whips, possibly 2m tall to give a better start and for more trees to be planted than were taken away.

**Recommendation:** To note the information received and to ask that substantial trees are planted rather than whips with more being planted than were removed.

**d) To note response following issues raised relating to completion of items at Pathfinder Place before occupation as detailed in the s106 legal agreement**

The Clerk explained concerns relating to the completion of items before occupation at this site, as detailed in the Section 106

agreement, had been forwarded to the Section 106 Officer to investigate and would be in touch in due course with their findings.

Councillor Glover went on to explain the various infrastructure which did not seem to be in place or near completion, against the details of the Section 106 Agreement.

**343/20 Planning Appeal: 20/04259: 406C The Spa. Construction of 2no. two-bedroom bungalows and associated works.**

Members noted, following an appeal by the applicant against Wiltshire Council's decision to refuse planning permission, the Planning Inspectorate had dismissed the appeal, therefore the refusal of planning permission was upheld.

Councillor Holder explained on speaking to the planning officer the existing permission for a dwelling at the same location was due to expire on 1 May, with the applicant being made aware of this.

**344/20 Planning Policy**

**a) Lack of 5 Year Land Supply**

- i) Wiltshire Area Localism and Planning Group (WALPA): To note group (consisting of 30 town, parish councils and Neighbourhood plan groups) have contacted the Leader and Chief Executive of Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire MPs seeking support to protect the future of Neighbourhood planning in Wiltshire against a lack of 5-year land supply.**

The Clerk explained she had been made aware of this group after contacting Chippenham Town Council. At a recent meeting, Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had supported WALPA in their endeavors and had their name added to the list of supporters. Unfortunately, as the letter went out last week, it was too late to bring this to the Parish Council to add their name to the list of supporters.

**Recommendation:** To note.

- i) To consider sending follow up letter of support from Melksham Without Parish Council (Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on list of supporting groups).**

The Clerk asked if the Parish Council wished to send a letter of support to WALPA in their endeavors.

Councillor Coombes asked how Wiltshire Council have found themselves with a lack of 5-year land supply and whether other Counties were experiencing similar issues.

Councillor Baines explained the lack of 5-year land supply was due to developers receiving planning permission, but not building the houses, therefore these housing figures were not being accounted for against the 5-year land supply.

Councillor Wood stated by developers sitting on land opened up to developers submitted an opportunistic application.

Councillor Glover noted the National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) stated if a Neighbourhood Plan is not reviewed in 2 years, the 3-year protection against a lack of 5-year land supply falls, which is a concern as a lot of work goes into producing a Neighbourhood Plan for it to fail within 2 years, putting a lot of pressure on communities to keep their plans up to date, and therefore supported the actions of WALPA.

The Clerk stated WALPA had asked who else could be written to in order to support their endeavors and were aware of other organisations concerned at the same issue, and trying to get changes to the NPPF.

The Clerk explained there was another WALPA meeting the following morning if anyone wished to attend.

**Recommendation:** To send a letter of support to Wiltshire Council, and the local MP, supporting the recent press release and letter from WALPA.

The Clerk to attend the next WALPA meeting.

- b) Developer Contributions - Education Infrastructure. To note the reply from Wiltshire Council Head of School Commissioning regarding queries raised as to the start date for the new primary school at Pathfinder Place, Bowerhill and details of what comprises a “satellite” secondary school (arising from Min. 192/20d Full Council 23 Nov 20).**

The Clerk explained she had been asked to find out when the Pathfinder Place school would come on stream and to seek clarification on what a ‘satellite’ secondary school meant and a response had been received from the Head of School Commissioning at Wiltshire Council.

The Clerk explained the useful information received had been fed into the Neighbourhood Plan and also in the response to the Local Plan Review.

Within the response it was noted in order to create a brand new secondary school this required 1000 pupils, which would normally be generated from 4500 dwellings, which put into context in the Local Plan Review for what the education requirement would be for 2500 dwellings.

Councillor Glover felt any satellite school site needed to be big enough to convert into a full school at some point in the future and not built on existing needs.

Councillor Pafford noted the report talked about the declining birth rate and that the secondary school would be full by 2023 even with the extension currently being built.

The report also stated the extension would give a capacity for 1500 pupils, but there were no plans to expand the provision for the 6<sup>th</sup> form.

Councillor Pafford (in his role as Melksham Oak Governor) understood there had been more applications for 6<sup>th</sup> form for next year than in previous years. In addition, the School Principal had not been involved in discussions about a satellite school and what this meant. The Clerk noted the school had also received 6<sup>th</sup> applications from outside the catchment area.

It was noted the satellite school would not necessarily be an off shoot or subsidiary of an existing school, but could be provided by and run by a different academy trust.

Concern was raised that Wiltshire Council had conflicting evidence when it came to pupil numbers and requirements.

Councillor Holder supported the comments raised regarding 6<sup>th</sup> form and explained he was currently having discussions with the education department related to the new primary school for Bowerhill and asked if the Clerk could send the information on secondary school provision in order to seek clarity on the true figures and what is being planned for Bowerhill and secondary education provision with Melksham.

Councillor Holder informed the meeting the Council could be assured he was looking into figures and provision to get a true picture of requirement for education both primary and secondary in Melksham.

Concern was raised when planning applications come forward in a piecemeal way that the education response is usually that the application is not quite big enough to merit a new school or an extension of an existing school and they were not looking at the compounding effect of all of the small developments put together.

It was felt that it was up to the parish/town council to keep a tally of the numbers in order to go back to Wiltshire Council to say the compound effect of various planning applications have met the criteria for a new school to be built.

Councillor Pafford feared Wiltshire Council would not get an understanding of the total picture of development in the area until it was too late and the extra education provision is required before a new school/extension is built.

Councillor Glover stated the Parish Council needed to keep a watch on planning permission for the Pathfinder Way primary school and use the land for a second form entry, otherwise the land goes back for housing.

It was noted for the planning application for 240 dwellings off Western Way, that the Education Department had responded to say there were no safe walking routes to educational provision and would object to this application, unless a footway was provided to the proposed new school and to Melksham Oak, they were also seeking funding to support additional places. With regard to secondary education provision the report stated this application would generate 48 places with only 36 available, with regard to primary education and early years provision there was no spare capacity.

This was contradictory to the information received from the Head of School Commissioning.

**Recommendation:** For the Clerk to forward a copy of the Education report submitted in response to the application for 240 dwellings back to the Head of School Commissioning to say the reports contradict each other.

To forward this information to Councillor Holder.

**c) Neighbourhood Plan & Response to Local Plan Review Consultation**

**i) To note minutes of Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held on 4 February on proposals on a way forward in responding to the Local Plan Review consultation**

The minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held on 4 February and 11 February regarding proposals on a way forward in responding to the Local Plan Review consultation had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.

**Recommendation:** To note.

**ii) To receive update following meetings held on 11 February & 18 February with representatives of Melksham Town Council and Place Studio, Planning Consultants to formulate responses to the Local Plan Review and consider feedback to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting (24 February)**

The Clerk explained both the meetings on 11 and 18 February were held in closed session.

Councillor Wood explained the meeting on 18 February had been particularly useful in providing a clearer picture of direction of travel of Melksham.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of time, there had not been enough time to look at all the sites in depth or through the Empowering Rural Communities Strategy document.

It had been noted both Atworth and Community Action Whitley and Shaw (CAWS) had sent a copy of their response to the Local Plan Review to the parish council for their information.

It was noted with regard to the proposed housing allocation of 95 for Shaw & Whitley in the Empowering Rural Communities Strategy document that this equated to a 17% increase on current housing figures for the villages.

With regard to the response from CAWS to the Empowering Rural Communities document it was noted they questioned why Shaw & Whitley were classed together as a Large Village. It was noted this was already the case in the current Core Strategy, the same as

Melksham and Bowerhill are classed together in planning terms.

Councillor Pile informed the meeting she was aware that since sending their response, CAWS had since made revisions and would be forwarding their revised response in due course.

Councillor Holder left the meeting at 8.22pm

**iii) To confirm the £5000 funding agreed for the Neighbourhood Plan work is also covering the Local Plan Review Working currently underway by the Steering Group.**

The Clerk had written a report explaining that the £5,000 each pledged and budgeted by Melksham Without Parish Council and Melksham Town Council to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group work to fund Place Consultants was intended to fund any review work of the Neighbourhood Plan, but was also informing the response to the Local Plan Review (which at the time in October neither council did not yet have sight of to see the scope of work required).

The Clerk explained the resolution of the Full Council meeting of 26 October 2020, only mentioned the funding for the Neighbourhood Plan and not the Local Plan Review response (a verbal update had been given as the minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group meeting of 21 October 2020 had not been produced at that point as the meeting dates were so close together).

The Clerk clarified that this proposal was being resolved again so that the resolution fully covered the work currently being undertaken by Place Consultants; this element of worked was expected to cost between £2,000 to £3,000 to be a shared cost with Melksham Town Council.

**Recommendation:** This committee confirms the £5000 funding agreed for the Neighbourhood Plan work is also covering the Local Plan Review Work currently underway by the Steering Group.

**iv) To consider draft review of Terms of Reference for NHP Steering Group**

The Clerk explained the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Terms of Reference had been updated following a meeting on 21 January with representatives of both the parish and town council.

The revised Terms of Reference were due to be approved by the Steering Group later in the week and would be submitted to both the parish and town council (as qualifying bodies for the Neighbourhood Plan) for approval.

**Recommendation:** The council approve the revised Terms of Reference.

**v) To consider the best timescale/meeting to invite Melksham Town Council to speak to their Movement Strategy undertaken by Townswork**

The Clerk sought a steer from Members if and when they wished to invited Melksham Town Council to speak to their movement strategy.

Councillor Wood understood the parish council had asked to join the Movement Strategy Working Group, but to date had not been invited.

It was understood a movement strategy document had been commissioned by the Town Council to identify what movements occur in the town at present and across the whole Melksham Community Area and were in discussions with Wiltshire Council in their Bypass project.

**Recommendation:** The Clerk to make enquiries as to what progress has been made and invite to a future meeting before or after the May elections as appropriate.

**335/20 Operating Permit Application Planned Incinerator – Westbury.**

The Clerk explained this had been placed on the agenda to enable Members to consider a comment on the Operating Permit application for Northacre Incinerator Facility, Northacre Industrial Estate, Westbury, after noticing the Town Council had commented on the application, as well as the operating permit application, and the parish was geographically closer to the proposed site.

It was noted the deadline for comments to the Environment Agency was the previous day and due to the technical information contained within the documentation, Members felt unable to comment on this application.

**336/20 S106 Agreements and Developer meetings: (Standing Item)**

The Clerk explained a site meeting at the Pathfinder Place development was due later in the week regarding the adoption of the play area, including representation from Wiltshire Council to issue the Practical Completion certification. The Clerk explained she had asked

to see the RoSPA report prior to any sign off of the play area.

It was noted a barrier was due to be erected adjacent to the attenuation pond, opposite one of the play area gates. The Clerk explained she would raise this at the site meeting.

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

**i) Public Art Update**

• **Pathfinder Place**

The Clerk explained the art installation adjacent to the highway, was still awaiting Highways approval for the revised site.

It was explained the write up for the various RAF officers for the information boards needed to be drawn-up.

**Recommendation:** The wording for the RAF officer information board be undertaken by Councillor Baines and officers.

• **Bowood View**

The Clerk explained the draft contract for the artist for the artwork on the village hall had been approved at the Asset Management meeting earlier in the month and would be going to Full Council for approval.

It had been agreed the Council did not need to seal the contract with an agreement an electronic signature could be used to sign the contract.

• **Sandridge Place**

The Clerk explained there was no update, due to difficulties getting on site at present.

**ii) To note legal powers relating to public art**

The Clerk had provided a report following advice from the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) on the various legal powers available to the Council with regard to public art; as there was no such provision, the legal powers would have to be related to the individual items of art.

Public art on wall of Berryfield Village Hall to come under the Local Government Act 1972, Section 133 Provision of parish and community buildings.

‘A parish or community council may acquire or provide and furnish buildings to be used for public meetings and assemblies or contribute towards the expenses incurred by any other parish or community council or any other person in acquiring or providing and furnishing such a building.’

Public art panel on the highway verge on Pathfinder Way to come under the Highways Act 1980 Section 144: Power to erect flagpoles etc on highways.

‘(1) Subject to subsection (2) below, a local authority may—  
(a)erect flagpoles, pylons and **other structures on any highway in their area for the purpose of displaying decoration.**’

Public art information board with Officer Names and references relating to street naming for public open space at Pathfinder Place, it was suggested this could come under, the Town Improvements Clauses Act 1847, Section 64 Houses to be numbered and streets named or the Local Government Act 1972, Section 144 Power to encourage tourism to the Council’s area or contribute to organisations encouraging tourism.

It was noted the LGA 1972, Section 144 power could be used if the Semington Road Bowood View historic canal interpretation boards are tied into the public art part of the project, as is the wish of the public art steering group.

**Recommendation:** To accept the notes as prepared by the Clerk regarding legal powers of the Council with regards to the provision of public art.

**b) To consider any new S106 queries**

No new Section 106 queries to consider.

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

No decisions had been made under delegated powers.

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

**i) Update on Pre-App meeting with Charterhouse Strategic Re: site West of Beanacre Road (site 14 on Local Plan Review Map) for approximately 170-240 dwellings.**

As per the Council's Pre-App policy, the notes from the meeting held on 17 February 2021 (taken by Melksham Town Council) were presented to this Planning Committee for inclusion in the minutes:

Those in attendance at the meeting, Dan Angell TFA; Callum Warren, TFA; Olivia Glenn and James Millard Blue Fox Planning, along with representatives from both the Town Council, Melksham Without Parish Council and Wiltshire Councillors for Melksham Without North and Melksham Town North:

'Dan provided an introduction to Charterhouse and to the proposed development and explained a website on the application was available with a virtual meeting being held on 2 March 2021 at 7pm to answer questions. A 24/7 phone line has been created and questionnaires were available for completion.

Dan explained formal pre-app discussions had been held with Wiltshire Council in early 2020.

James explained his role was to assist in preparation of the planning application and liaise with the Planning Department at Wiltshire Council and engage with the Local Plan Review.

James gave his presentation on the proposed development with regard to opportunities and constraints and explained the developer's understanding of the site evolves during the consultation period, with the plan at the starting point.

A summary of the constraints/opportunities of the site are available on the website, with the main issues being:

- The development is accommodated within woodland with a tree belt running through the centre.
- Access will be gained via a right turn priority junction from the A350.
- The width and surface treatment of the internal roads will vary, creating opportunities for cycling and walking.

- Exit sites will be created for cyclist and walkers at the southern end of the development to increase connectivity.
- Heritage assets – Beanacre Manor, Beanacre Old Manor and Halfway Farmhouse – the significance of fabric and setting needs to be considered. However, the woodland to the North and boundary vegetation means that there will be a lack of visibility and no negative impact.
- A Visual Impact Assessment of the landscape has been carried out. The views are limited, boundaries and woodland will help to screen the site.
- The development is at minimal risk of flooding and drainage issues, being in flood zone 1. However, recent site visits have revealed a significant amount of surface water on site, meaning drainage features will be required with attenuation areas in the South of site having been earmarked as the most suitable locations.
- The presence of overhead pylons and a gas main have been recognised in the development plan.
- A tree survey of the woodland to the North and the trees in the central spine and North West corner of the site has been carried out. Trees have been categorised A, B or C. Those in categories A and B are most significant and will be protected.
- Ecology surveys have provided evidence of foraging bats, especially in the tree belt in the middle. There is no evidence of Great Crested Newts, apart from anecdotally, or of badgers.
- The developers hope to achieve a net gain in biodiversity through strengthening established woodlands and developing attenuation areas.
- A Noise Assessment identified noise from the A350 and railway. However, the levels of noise were below the thresholds for harm.
- 170 units are proposed, based on current thinking, but this figure will evolve. No housing types have been presented at this stage. There will be a mix of housing types and sizes and 30% affordable housing – rent and shared ownership with a 60/40 split.

- Technical work is ongoing to understand responses to the features of the site.

A longer consultation process, until 15 March, is in place because of the limitations caused by the Coronavirus pandemic. A virtual presentation will be held on 2 March. Fliers have been circulated to 1,413 households. A 24/7 phone line has been set up for questions and requests for hardcopy materials. The results will be reviewed after the consultation has closed. These can be shared with both councils. The planning application will be submitted in April.

### **Questions/Comments**

1. Clarification regarding access onto the A350

A: There will be a right turn lane from the Chippenham direction. Ongoing discussions are taking place with Wiltshire Council. Access has to be safe and convenient. Wiltshire Council have not raised any concerns about exiting the site at the moment. However, the plan can be developed. A roundabout structure was proposed initially but was discounted as this would be a significant development and have a significant impact on the A350.

2. Dunch Lane is a difficult junction. It is a single-track road and access to the A365 will be difficult. Northbound trains sound their horn near the site.

A: The use of Dunch Lane was declined by the Highways Department at Wiltshire Council. Charterhouse are currently liaising with Network Rail regarding the frequency and types of trains.

3. Concerns on access to the site and volume of queuing traffic on the A350. Any surveys would have been skewed because of the effects of the pandemic on traffic levels

A: The developers have been liaising with Wiltshire Council for some time. A scoping exercise will be required to understand the conditions. Wiltshire Council will try and ensure a realistic survey sample to reflect normal times rather than the current lockdown situation. Peak times are the optimum time to conduct surveys. However, Highways have to be satisfied with the quality and detail of the surveys.

4. Concerns about the location in relation to existing schools and doctors' surgeries

A: The Strategy for Movement is concerned with vehicular, pedestrian and cycle facilities with the aim of creating connectivity. Wiltshire Council have not raised any concerns regarding distances, only that the site must be capable of being accessed in a convenient and safe manner.

5. Provision of playgrounds

A: Open space and an area for play will be included. Whether this will be a LEAP (Local Area of Equipped Play) or NEAP (Neighbourhood Area of Equipped Play) will depend on the population of the development. Contributions to enhance the existing provision could also be discussed. Improved connectivity to the Beanacre play area could also be considered.

6. Consideration to equipment for teenagers such as a MUGA or a teen shelter should be given. A connection is shown to the existing Right of Way that connects to Shurnhold Fields which is good. Will the large green space to the north of the site be managed or left?

A: The importance of protecting high value trees for ecological and screening purposes was recognised.

7. The existence of a Forestry Commission scheme with managed status for the woodland to the north of the site was mentioned

A: Any new or existing schemes would be maintained and enhanced using the most effective and appropriate strategy.

8. Beanacre has no mains foul drainage. The proposed site is therefore, between Melksham with its drainage scheme and a village with no foul drainage. Any storm drains and attenuation schemes would need to drain East towards the river and South, but not West. Southbrook, which is to the West, creates a significant flooding problem at Shurnhold.

A: The developer's drainage consultant will examine the impact of the flow of surface water. This will be managed to the satisfaction of Wiltshire Council, ensuring that existing situations are not exacerbated. Their utilities consultant is liaising with utility providers. However, they have to concentrate on serving their own site and cannot focus on Beanacre.

9. Will vegetative areas be open to the public?

A: The vegetative areas are part of the place shaping strategy and access will be made available to them.

10. The possibility of a circular dog walking route around the estate was raised together with connectivity and access to Dunch Lane.

A: A link from the southern boundary of the site into Melksham with access across Dunch Lane would be created. However, this is neither attractive nor safe at the moment. The most appropriate point for a crossing would have to be determined. The aim is to create connectivity that people want to use, rather than the path beside the A350.

11. Have they looked at the policies contained within the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan?

A: The developers are aware of the stage that the Neighbourhood Plan is at. However, it is important at this stage to understand how the site will operate and function, as far as the proposed development is concerned and also to be consistent with the Neighbourhood Plan's policies.

12. Assumed that the development would be a 20-mph area? Would there be electric charging points?

A: Electric charging points are a more regular feature in planning policies. However, what is being proposed at present is an outline planning application incorporating the principle of the development and access. The requirement for all sorts of other features will be included in the detail.

The Government's Environment Bill requires different methods for heating houses in future.

13. It was suggested contact be made with Melksham Independent News for publicity purposes.

14. Is electricity supply to be above ground?

Yes.

15. The proposed development is outside the settlement boundary and therefore, does not meet the current Core Strategy, even though it is one of the sites per the Local Plan Review. It was noticed that the developer's website put forward the notion that they were assisting Wiltshire Council as part of the five-year land supply.

A: The developers will discuss mitigating the impact arising from the development at the appropriate stage.

16. Concerns were raised that this would be an isolated estate,

however, connectivity to Beanacre could be achieved by the path skirting the wood to the North and if this could emerge safely into Old Beanacre Road, which would give access to the community facilities at St Barnabas Church and the adjoining play area, and public access field.

A: The plan takes some existing public rights of way and enhances them. It also works on connectivity to Melksham. The point regarding access to Beanacre was noted and would be passed on.

It was agreed that it would be more appropriate for discussion regarding S106 contributions and community benefit to take place at council level.

It was noted there were a number of possible areas for S106 contributions to be utilised, such as a possible one-way scheme for Dunch Lane, a footway or cycleway from Aldi providing easier access to the railway station.

It was important to recognise that the current plan reflects initial concepts regarding access and links to public rights of way. Concerns raised about the A350 and access to the site were recognised. Useful comments had been received about how this might be facilitated and where. The challenge was to conceive and design the most appropriate access.

It was noted that both councils would consider their response to the pre-app consultation at future planning meetings.

Charterhouse expressed their willingness to talk to both councils in a public forum after 15 March, once the responses to the consultation had been collated and before the actual planning application was submitted.'

The Clerk suggested a response to the consultation for this site be made at a Planning meeting on 8 March, which would allow time for those residents who have only just been made aware of the application, to attend a meeting.

The Clerk explained as it was a Full Council decision, an item would be placed on the Full Council agenda on 1 March to consider potential community gain for the development.

**Recommendation:** To include the notes of the meeting as a true record of the meeting held with Charterhouse Strategic on 17 February.

ii) **Whitley Farm Site, Whitley.**

Members noted the response to Savills from the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group following a pre-application meeting with the parish council on 9 December and subsequent correspondence.

**iii) Update on meeting with Nexus Planning Re: 144 dwellings land West of Semington Road (20/ 01938) recently approved at a Strategic Planning meeting**

The Clerk explained she had written to Nexus Planning seeking a meeting prior a Reserved Matters application being submitted to Wiltshire Council, but to date had not received a response and agreed to chase this up.

The meeting closed at 8.54pm

Signed.....  
Full Council, 1 March 2021