



THURLASTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 31st December 2020 - a virtual zoom at 10.30am

Present: Parish Councillors: John Bretherton (JB) - Chair
Helen Creery (HC)
Norman Line (NL)
Keith Boardman (KB)

Parish Clerk: Sylvia Jacques (SJ)

Attending: Dr. Ashley Bowes of Cornerstones Barristers

Meeting with Ashley Bowes (AB), Barrister to discuss the Thurlaston Meadows (TM) planning application.

AB - A need to decide what we want from this meeting.

JB – What to include in the response on 6th January 2021. Planning Committee in March. What is the best approach? To represent us at the Planning Committee. Discuss precept/ legal fees.

AB – Observations:

1. Applicant site is outside boundary so prevents development.
2. Applicant partly in and partly out of conservation area. Site has a particular aspect.
3. Impact on character of area, visually appreciated. Lack of details. No landscape and visual appraisal.
4. Outside of settlement and conservation area. Details of the need for this development. Local Plan show housing need for over 50's housing and assisted housing. How relevant is this development and how relevant to meeting the needs of the 5-year plan to October 2020? Haven't met needs for specialist housing. Merit in having landscape architect. Engage chartered planner to review housing need – difficult to predict how housing need will be interpreted by RBC Planning Committee. Ask RBC for extension to respond beyond 6th Jan.

NL - Local Plan and dbSymmetry areas of development. How many houses are needed to build by 2031? RC has not carried out a study or identified specific areas and will rely on developers to come forward.

KB – the documents submitted show weaknesses in technical omissions, no housing needs assessment, no traffic analysis and poor heritage report. Is this the time for a legitimate complaint.

AB – Have to be careful to pick battles. In rural settlement, it is outside of the area specified for development in the Local Plan and it is an unsuitable area for a development for Older People. No heritage statement and the applicant accepts the proposal will result in a level of harm to environment. Need to look at transport, parking, highways network. RBC will get advice from

highways department. For parking the site would be good. Need a transport statement, vehicle movements morning and evening but could be a costly waste of money. It was recommended that investing a larger degree in landscape and heritage would be more likely have an impact. Remind RBC of the refusal of planning permission elsewhere in Thurlaston Parish.

AB – Response needs to be specific. Reports on landscape and planning. No more than 20 pages. Covering letter of 5 pages to outline refusal. Report one week before planning committee, write again to planning committee. Section 106, could ask for things to be provided. Would not be lawful to ask for repair to Church roof but could approach developers directly. Either accept the development which negates deals or refuse.

JB – AB could write the covering letter.

KB – The current care home fails on a number of points, only 80% occupancy of home. Site not well maintained. The developers, Eastdene, are a paper company to support TM. How to mitigate the success or failure of the site. Should there be a due diligence exercise? Sustainability of this area?

AB – Not relevant. Harm weighed against project, is relevant and may dictate whether scheme goes ahead or not, does the scheme outweigh harm?

Outline planning application. Strict time limit. After approvals, they can go ahead. Community should have a voice. Changes the village to a retirement village which is contrary to the development plan. The developers have to prove a need. The public documents are quite old. Strongest argument against is from the inspector of the Local Plan.

JB sent pdf to AB of survey, showing the impact will not be good for biodiversity. Felling 70 trees, not a good outcome.

AB – will supply names in letter but Neil Pearce of Avon Planning is probably the best option, given he is conversant with how RBC behaves.

NL – Forty couples, moving to village, no car, no bus route, no shop but would provide a stepping stone to downsizing and the Home is there to follow on but not a good application for the scheme and not the right place. Can send through refusal of previous planning application.

AB – Persuade overturn of recommendations by local politicians. We should try to ensure the broader swell of opinion is on our side, because that will be important to local politicians.

If approved an appeal cannot be lodged by us. Keep checking planning portal website. Applicant may not do anything but there are some legal errors. Contact planners after the Planning Officer's report, which may be as little as one week before the Planning Committee meeting. Can check with case officer for date of committee meeting.

JB thanked AB for a very useful session.

The meeting finished at 12.00pm

Follow on meeting with Councillors only.

Depressing, need best tactical approach. AB has knowledge of process and planners will take notice of a barrister. AB will prepare response.

Discussed costs to be incurred. Barrister, Avon Planning, Landscape Architect.

Agreed that we should try to make sure we have sufficient money from the Precept to pay for

the professional help to produce a good quality response to 1026 and 1030. We should think about extra funds from fundraising (perhaps with help from PWG) and neighbouring PCs, but we cannot rely on this if we need to follow through beyond March, when we might need to deal with appeals and detailed planning applications.

It was agreed unanimously that we should request £20,000 for costs associated with responding to R20/1026 and R20/1030, in addition to £7,500 for other Parish Council costs, making a total of £27,500 for the 2021-22 Precept request. Proposed by KB and seconded by NL.

Meeting finished 13.30pm

Signed by.....Chair John Bretherton Dated.....