

UPTON BISHOP PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a parish council meeting held on
Tuesday 4th June 2019 in the Millennium Hall

Present: Councillors: Keith Cornwall (Chairman), Alison Feist, Chloe Rusby, Brian Spencer.

In attendance:

Acting Clerk – Lynda Wilcox (HALC), Ward Councillor Barry Durkin, 16 local residents.

1. **Apologies for absence** ... There were none as all councillors were present.
 - 1.1 It was noted that Tony Chudziak had not completed his acceptance of office form and was therefore disqualified from office. Herefordshire Council's election office would be notified and the vacancy advertised with the appropriate forms.
2. **Declarations of interest & written requests for dispensation** ... There were none.
3. **Adoption of Standing Orders**
 - 3.1 The meeting adopted draft standing orders prepared by the Acting Clerk and in line with the NALC model document.
4. **Co-option**
 - 4.1 In the absence of a parish specific co-option policy, it was RESOLVED to co-opt in accordance with NALC good practice, which was to invite each candidate to say a few words as to why they wished to be a parish councillor, followed by a council vote.
 - 4.2 Four local residents had volunteered to fill the three vacancies arising out of the election process. In the light of the additional vacancy reported in 1.1 above, one of the four candidates withdrew his application. One candidate, Mike Robins was unable to be present and his resume was read out by the clerk. The remaining two candidates both outlined their background. It was RESOLVED to co-opt all three candidates:
 - i) Paul Newman.
 - ii) Hazel Strange.
 - iii) Mike RobinsCouncillors Newman and Strange signed their declarations of acceptance of office and joined the meeting. Councillor Robins was given dispensation by the parish council to complete his form as soon as possible.
5. **Minutes of the previous meeting** ... 22nd May 2019

It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes subject to the following amendments:

 - 5.1 Deletion of 'Memorial' in the heading and replacement with 'Millennium'.
 - 5.2 Item 17 ... 'Deletion of Monday 3rd' and replacement with 'Tuesday 4th'The chairman initialled the amendments and then signed the minutes as a true record.
6. **Open Session**
 - 6.1 Ward Councillor Barry Durkin gave an update which included:

RKC

- 6.1.1 All animals had been removed from Foxhall but the equipment and buildings still remained. Councillor Durkin was therefore urging planning officers to press ahead with a prosecution for planning infringement but this would be a slow process. A local resident praised Herefordshire Council and the outgoing parish councillors for their pursuance of this matter.
- 6.1.2 The agents were considering proposals that had been put forward by a local resident. Councillor Durkin commended the amicable way that the objectors were working with the applicant.
- 6.1.3 Details of the recent elections at Herefordshire Council.
- 6.1.4 Purchase of new heavy-duty equipment for cleaning streets.
- 6.1.5 The Traveller Site Development Plan was going ahead, following consideration by a Planning Inspector.
- 6.2 A local resident suggested setting up a Community Speed Watch scheme which would need a minimum of two volunteers. The matter would be placed on the July agenda.
- 6.3 The parish council was thanked for changing their meeting space to the main hall rather than the much smaller committee room.
- 6.4 A resident raised concerns about an ongoing planning application for a barn conversion at the Crews which was considered inappropriate due to drainage problems and asked for parish council support in opposing the development. It was noted that the previous parish council had objected to the application and Ward Councillor Durkin reported that the application was to be considered at a planning committee when the parish council would have an opportunity to voice their concerns. Councillor Newman volunteered to speak at the committee, if required.

7. Planning

The meeting considered comments on the following applications to be determined by Herefordshire Council:

- 7.1 Land at Windy Hollow – application P191581/U-Certificate of Lawfulness (Existing).
Change of use of land from agricultural use to use for siting of 5 caravans to provide residential accommodation for those employed to fulfil temporary/agency type contracts.

It was RESOLVED to strongly object to the application, for the following reasons:

- 7.1.1 The application was to regularise five caravans yet aerial photos had actually identified seven caravans on the site, therefore the information supplied by the planning applicant to Herefordshire Council was at best misleading or worst, false.
- 7.1.2 There does not appear to be any link between the occupants of the caravans and temporary/agency employment with Windy Hollow
- 7.1.3 It had been reported that loud music was being played from the caravans, particularly at weekends, which disrupted the quiet enjoyment of local residents within their own homes, as well as those tending local allotments.

7/19

7.2 Land between Leeward House & Millennium Hall – application P191187/O. Outline application for erection of 9 houses & improvement of existing access to serve development.

It was RESOLVED to strongly object to the above application for the following reasons:

- 7.2.1 The density of the proposed development is not in keeping with the area e.g. there are only 7 properties on a similar sized piece of land – Pomona Drive.
- 7.2.2 The size of the additional bungalow is very large and out-of-keeping with the other dwellings.
- 7.2.3 There is a very large drain which gets rid of wastewater from the hill and therefore this land becomes very boggy.
- 7.2.4 There is mention of foul sewage being removed by mains sewer but there is no mains sewer.
- 7.2.5 Planning permission for the Millennium Hall took several attempts and was finally permitted because of community need and the fact that there would be no complaints about noise because it was a distance away from local homes. To now consider development alongside the Millennium Hall land would result in noise objections from the new householders to the normal activities – weddings, parties etc - of a well-run community building.
- 7.2.6 Access to and from the site is in close proximity to a very dangerous bend and would therefore constitute a road safety hazard.

Further points against the development of this land include:

- 7.2.7 Objections have previously been raised to any development of this land for a variety of reasons including detracting from the rural character and appearance of the surrounding area – nothing has changed since this ruling.
- 7.2.8 The land is designated RA3 and is currently in use, and has been for many years, as grazing land. The tenant would need to be served notice to quit good quality agricultural land to allow this development. A call for sites later this year as part of the NDP is hoped to yield more appropriate sites.
- 7.2.9 In the rejection of the last appeal, Herefordshire Council cited problems associated with noise from the adjacent village hall as follows:

‘Numerous local people and the parish council have objected to the development. In addition to the main issue, they are concerned that the development, if allowed, would prejudice the full use of the village hall, the siting of which was deliberately chosen away from housing. Excessive noise and disturbance from activities associated with the use of the hall could be controlled by other legislation. But nevertheless, I agree that the location of the proposed dwellings, in close proximity to the village hall, could give rise to complaints from the future occupiers of the development, concerning noise and general disturbance arising from activities associated with its use.’

If anything, the hall is now more frequently used for parties and weddings utilising the outdoor space, especially at weekends and during the evenings. It would inevitably lead to complaints from the new residents which will cause conflict and division in the parish.

RKC

- 7.2.10 Although the application does not contain a drawing showing the proposed site layout, the Ecological Section shows potentially 10 properties, not 9 a clear difference with the application. Six of these could have their rear gardens facing towards the Hall and this will inevitably cause problems associated with noise.
- 7.2.11 The proposed housing layout shows the 9 properties requested in the planning application but an additional bungalow is also located on the land which is not mentioned elsewhere. Clearly if this is a development of 10 properties, provision is required for affordable housing. It appears that the development is being engineered in such a way as to avoid this but still build 10 properties.
- 7.2.12 The piece of land is smaller than the footprint occupied by seven of the new houses/bungalows at Pomona Grove. It is unclear how ten properties, including 2/3 detached 4-bedroom houses and a detached bungalow can fit comfortably on this site. If this is a serious application, it would be reasonable to see a proper layout of the proposal.
- 7.2.13 Although the Parish NDP is still in progress, feedback from the Open Day in November (which is publicly available on the Parish website) indicates that developments of this size are not the preference of the Parish. A further questionnaire has been postponed to September, but this will be a chance for Parishioners to say more about how they want to see the Parish develop. This Planning Application pre-empts the chance of the Parishioners to state their preferences.
- 7.2.14 The proposal will impact on the privacy and outlook of Leeward House. The NDP Steering Group is keen to avoid development that impacts on existing residents.
- 7.2.15 There is a huge concern that this is a part development of the field in question with only 1/3 being used. If the remainder were to be developed in the same way, up to 30 houses could be built. The PC does not believe that the evidence from the Open Day would justify this, but it is hard to imagine that this is not likely to happen. Upton Bishop as a Parish is comprised of a variety of properties, many of a distinctly individual style. The addition of 4 smaller housing developments has contributed to a change of balance in Crow Hill but not detracted from its character. The oldest of these is Powell Croft with 22 properties, The Pastures is 9 properties, Spring Meadow 8 and Pomona Grove 10 including 2 flats. The addition of a large estate of ultimately up to 30 properties (25% increase) would be completely alien to the village structure and would change the visual impact completely. It also conflicts with the recent introduction of smaller developments and the desire of parishioners to see smaller 4/5 properties in the Parish.
- 7.2.16 The land in question falls between Crow Hill and Upton Crews, the two Settlement Areas identified in the core strategy. A map showing these has been sent to the PC for ratification for inclusion with the questionnaire. The steering group is of the view that Crow Hill and Upton Crews should be clearly kept separate and this development is a step towards reducing the independent nature of the settlements and their separate identities.

- 7.2.17 The steering group was also of the opinion that open space should be maintained around the Millennium Hall and this development will encroach on this desire which is to be incorporated into the NDP.
- 7.2.18 None of the properties appear to have garages, only parking spaces. This appears to be a way of forcing more properties into a relatively small area.
- 7.2.19 The transportation report suggests that there is ample opportunity for walking and cycling around the Parish. This takes no account of the hilly nature of the locale and the lack of footpaths and is a view that cannot be supported.
- 7.2.20 Egress from the site will be up a steeply ramped road exiting onto a bend that gives poor visibility in both directions. The traffic survey talks about average speeds of 32 mph but takes no account of buses and cars that often travel at 40 mph past this new exit.

8. Finance

- 8.1 Adoption of Financial Regulations ... It was RESOLVED to adopt Financial Regulations for Upton Bishop Parish Council which had been prepared by the Acting Clerk and were in line with the NALC model.
- 8.2 Bank balances remained the same as the previous month because the issue of new signatories had not yet been resolved.
- 8.3 Members considered all outstanding payments, including:
 - 8.3.1 Forward payment of hall-hire charges for 2019/20.
 - 8.3.2 HALC membership in the sum of £503.02 (this was a ratification payment as the previous council had issued a cheque prior to discussion).

9. Lengthsman

- 9.1 It was RESOLVED to continue with the services of the current Lengthsman for the financial year 2019/20. Clarification would be required as to the hourly rate agreed by the previous parish council.
- 9.2 It was noted that the general monthly duties of the Lengthsman should be listed on a contract which also allowed for additional work. Councillors would consider what was required but would also be mindful of the financial situation of the parish council following years of no increase in the annual precept.
- 9.3 It was RESOLVED that the Chairman and the Acting Clerk would liaise with the Balfour Beatty Localities Officer so as to ensure that the Lengthsman's work did not overlap with any scheduled works to be undertaken by Balfour Beatty.

10. Highways Issues

- 10.1 The Acting Clerk had circulated proposals by the previous parish council re white lining in and out of Crow Hill on the B4221 and B4224. There was general support for the proposals, subject to any increase in the costings which would be clarified by the Chairman and Acting Clerk with the Balfour Beatty Locality Steward.
- 10.2 Signage (including a 'Play Area' sign) and hedge works would be considered in July.

RJC

11. Footpaths

Two local residents had offered to share the role of Parish Footpaths Officer, reporting direct to the parish council and liaising with Balfour Beatty on behalf of Herefordshire Council. A vote of thanks was accorded to Andy Parr & Jack from Cottage Garden Services.

12. Website ... This item had been discussed and resolved at the May meeting.

Parish Councillors accorded a vote of thanks to the parish website manager and reiterated their intention to continue to support that site as well as the new parish council one.

13. Neighbourhood Development Plan

13.1 Vice Chairman, Brian Spencer, gave a detailed presentation of discussion at the Annual Parish Meeting which was available to view on the parish website. New volunteers were coming forward to join the Steering Group.

13.2 The next meeting of the Steering Group would be held on 11th June at 20.00.

14. Date of the next meeting ... Noted as 2nd July.

2019 Meeting dates: 6th August, 3rd September, 1st October, 5th November and 3rd December.

A resolution was passed to exclude the public for the following confidential item

15. Recruitment of a new Clerk/RFO

Members considered all matters relating to the outgoing Clerk and the new Clerk/RFO.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 21.30.

SIGNED

DATE ..02-2nd.. 2019.