



LIDDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on
Wednesday 6th February 2019 at 7pm at Liddington Village Hall

Present: Councillors Bunney, Cripps, Hill, Lomax (Chair), Moore, Spillane
Also in attendance: Val Curtis (Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES

Resolved: To approve Cllr Wilson's reason for absence (unavailable).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Lomax declared an interest as the Parish Council's representative on the Village Hall Committee. Cllr Hill declared an interest as a Member of the Village Hall Committee.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved: The Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 2nd January 2019 were approved and signed as a true record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Oak Tree and plaque to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Armistice – Cllr Lomax proposed that the tree be planted on the far side of the playing field. Cllr Moore seconded the proposal which was unanimously agreed.

Action – Clerk

Spinney Close green – no progress since previous update

10-minute rule bill – Email sent to Robert Buckland QC, MP and response received.

Benches in the playing field – wood has been sourced, waiting for the better weather

SBC Codes & Protocols consultation – Response sent to SBC who have confirmed receipt

Swindon Borough Local Plan Review – Cllr Moore attended the meeting on 4th February. Preparation of the revised Local Plan is fundamental to Liddington. Parish Councils were asked to participate in two key pieces of work; Open Space Audit & Assessment and Settlement Boundary Review in preparation for the new Local Plan. Liddington Parish Council has agreed to participate in both.

Community Safety Forum – Cllr Hill attended the recent meeting on 31st January. Next meeting to be hosted by Liddington Parish Council, date to be confirmed.

Safe Drive, Stay Alive – Response to the request for a grant was sent, no reply received.

Finger post in Jubilee Gardens – damaged by a lorry during recent snow. Two residents witnessed the incident and obtained the driver's insurance details. Damage has been reported to SBC for repair/replacement.

Speed sign at top of B4192 – knocked to floor and damaged beyond repair, reported to SBC, replacement ordered, delivery date unknown.

5. PUBLIC SESSION

As no members of the public were in attendance the Parish Council continued with the meeting.

6. PLANNING MATTERS

(a) To consider any planning applications:

Application: S/HOU/18/1815 (8th February)

Location: 8 Manor View, Liddington, SN4 0HP

Proposal: Erection of a single storey rear extension

Resolved: The Meeting agreed that the following comment be submitted:

Liddington Parish Council has no objections to this application

Application: S/OUT/18/1943 (8th February 2019)

Location: Inlands Farm, The Marsh, Wanborough, SN4 0AS

Proposal: A Hybrid Planning Application for a Science Park and associated works to include full details of 33,507 sqm (GIA) of Use Class B1c (light industrial), with associated access, parking, landscaping and drainage and an outline proposal for up to 32,281 sqm (GIA) of Use Class B1b (research and development) and up to 16,400 sqm (GIA) B1c (light industrial), with associated access, parking landscaping and drainage (all matter reserved)

Resolved: The Meeting agreed that the following comments be submitted:

Preliminary:

This application has two fundamental troubling aspects:

The subject matter is described as a “Science Park”. This is a misleading misdescription. A Science Park is generally defined as an area of land sponsored by or linked to a university, where companies involved in scientific work and new technology are based. Very sadly, Swindon does not have a university, indeed there is no such institution in Wiltshire. No evidence has been supplied of any involvement by, or interest in this scheme, by any university.

It is a “Hybrid” Application, i.e. it would give full permission for the first phase but would establish the principle of development for the second phase without any detail, thus leaving this open for numerous possibilities.

The result of these two factors is that this should be treated as an application to put up a large industrial building in a very sensitive site.

1 Landscaping and Countryside Issues

The site is in the Parish of Wanborough adjacent to the boundary with our own Parish, Liddington. These are two of a line of villages on the slopes of the Wiltshire Downs. These Downs form part of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and are considered both locally and nationally, of great landscape value.

We have been assisted by the contents of the letter dated 17 January 2019 from Historic England to Swindon Borough Council (SBC). That letter helpfully sets out the number of sensitive, designated, heritage assets likely to be affected. It disagrees with some of the conclusions set out in the Applicant’s Environmental Statement and expresses particular concern about the potential effect of the proposed development on the views to and from the Upper Wanborough Conservation Area. It confirms that the proposals would erode the current landscape setting of the village as rural in character by introducing a very substantial modern built environment to the currently green landscape that separates the village from the urban mass of Swindon to the west.

The point is that walkers, cyclists, and motorists leaving Swindon towards the south and east see a green landscape in front of them with the downs rising towards the villages of Upper Wanborough and Liddington isolated on the hillside. The importance of this “gap” between the houses and factories on the lowland, and the vista of the Downs rising up from the plain, is set out in SBC Local Plan 2026 and referred to as “Non-Coalescence” Policy NC3.

In our own Parish is the Scheduled monument known as Liddington Castle (an Iron Age fort) alongside the Ridgeway National Trail, and within the AONB. This area is much used by walkers and horse riders, whose view from the upland would be greatly impaired by the proposed development.

This “gap” (or Area of Non-Coalescence) would effectively be closed by the proposed development and render useless this vitally important policy. The Applicant’s own documents reveal that the proposed development would come within 230 metres of the settlement area of Upper Wanborough. This tiny space would leave very little of the Non-Coalescence area. The tree planting proposed by the Applicant would be hopelessly inadequate to protect the environment.

2 Pollution by Noise and Light

The proposal includes car parking for 141 cars, and the suspicion is that this would be a minimum number, in view of number of employees that are envisaged. Huge parking areas imposed into this rural setting would be most unsightly. Such car parks would require extensive lighting, and there would also be external lighting associated with the large industrial buildings. It appears that substantial numbers of HGVs would be loaded and unloaded on site, which would create intrusive noise.

3 Traffic

The existing roads bordering the site, The Marsh and Pack Hill, are narrow country lanes. They are most unsuitable to take the type of traffic which would result from the scheme.

These roads lead towards Common Head roundabout. As a result of extensive additional development in the Swindon area and general increase in traffic, this roundabout and flyover, and Junction 15 of the M4, are becoming overloaded and subject to traffic queues and delays.

This situation may be alleviated in due course by the proposed Southern Connector Road (SCR) but the purpose of this road, which has not been started, is to funnel traffic from the New Eastern villages towards the motorway. It is intended to be of single carriageway only and has not been designed to cope with extra traffic generated by this scheme.

The Applicant has gone to the trouble of examining all the road junctions in the vicinity in an attempt to show that they can all cope with extra traffic. However it has been conceded on behalf of the Applicant that the two junctions with the Badbury Park Estate are close to capacity. Further, since this planning application was prepared, two consents have been granted, one for an extra "up to 300" housing units at Badbury Park; the other for "up to 70" houses fed by a new access onto the A4259.

Our own Village, Liddington, has been adversely affected in recent years by increasing traffic on our narrow lanes and roads. In rush hour periods commuter traffic tends to use the village roads to avoid the delays and congestion referred to above. Also when the M4 is closed because of accidents or roadworks (both fairly frequent) traffic is diverted off the M4 and onto the B4192 that serves Liddington. This in turn leads to the Commonhead roundabout mentioned above.

Current traffic levels and excessive speed of motorists have caused us to set up a Community Speed Watch team supported by Wiltshire Police.

It is obvious that the additional traffic generated by this proposal, both in respect of collections and deliveries employing HGVs, and employees' cars, will lead to further congestion on these busy roads. It is likely, too, that the speeding problem referred to above will be exacerbated and lead to more accidents occurring on adjoining roads.

4 Water and Drainage

It is quite clear from the correspondence with Thames Water that neither water supplies nor sewage disposal via main sewers will be available for this site for a significant period. This factor is a major reason for the delay in starting the NEV. It follows that even if consent were given for this scheme, it could not be implemented for probably several years. Since it appears that the Applicant's main operating company, Wasdell Packaging Limited, for commercial reasons wishes to move in within two years, for this reason alone it seems that the company cannot be accommodated on this site.

5 Alternative Sites

It is desirable that this thriving and expanding Company should be accommodated within or near to the Borough, but it is not accepted that there are no other suitable available sites. The Local Plan allows for 77.5 hectares of employment land to be allocated, in addition to 40 hectares already allocated. There is a large area of employment land included in the New Eastern Villages (NEV) development area, which is on the same side of Swindon as the subject area of this application. Although this Parish Council has no direct information, it believes that there are areas of land at Symmetry Park and at Wichelstowe that would be suitable for this type of development, and brownfield sites at Dorcan and Cheney Manor. The fact that the Applicant believes that Inlands Farm is the best possible site for its activities is not a valid planning reason to overturn long established and vital policies. Inlands Farm is not scheduled for employment uses, and there is no reason for this to be altered.

6 Wilts & Berks Canal

This is an ambitious project that has been proceeding for many years and is likely to take a long period to achieve in full. A "protected route" has been agreed between the promoters and SBC to take the canal through the Borough including the parishes of Liddington and Wanborough. A Policy (EN11) is included to this effect in the local Plan. The Canal will be a popular and attractive feature and might also assist with surface water drainage- something that is a problem in this area. The proposed development would mean that this protected route would have to be altered, to the detriment of the Canal scheme. As a result it is understood that the Canal Trust has raised objections to this proposed development at Inlands Farm. We support these objections.

Conclusion

This planning application is very detailed, with 183 separate documents filed with SBC. The main reason for the size of the application is that it is controversial, and the applicant has to overcome numerous policy obstacles if it is to succeed. It is clear that the proposed development offends against numerous policies in the Local Plan and in the NPPF. Indeed the Applicant accepts that this is so. It seeks to show that there are "material considerations" why these policies should be overridden in this case. The view of this Parish Council, representing as it does the inhabitants of our Village (many of whom have objected individually) is that the application should be rejected. It would be a gross and irreversible intrusion into an area of high landscape value, without justification, and the scheme could be accommodated elsewhere.

Application: S/18/2065 (8th February 2019)

Location: Street House Farm, The Street, Liddington, SN4 0HD

Proposal: Construction of a vehicular access

Resolved: The Meeting agreed that the following comments be submitted:

1. As confirmed in the Parish Council's response to Planning Application S/18/1505, this is not a working farm, it is a private dwelling house. The applicant is not a farmer and does not own the field in question; it is believed a right of way over it has been granted, however the terms are not known. The field is used for grazing only, the gate is rarely used and kept locked.
2. The Council fully supports and endorses the objections raised by Highways. No splay is shown and to create one would mean intrusive works. If the proposed access track was surfaced the picturesque field would be spoilt.
3. The Street is regularly used for overspill parking when village functions are held as the Village Hall car park has limited capacity; the access would reduce the availability for street parking. The additional parking on these regular occasions would block views to and from the proposed access, posing a safety issue to pedestrians and vehicles.
4. The Council fully supports and endorses the comments submitted by the Conservation officer. As previously stated in responses to earlier planning applications for this site and confirmed in the comments submitted by the Conservation Officer on this occasion, this property is noted as a key building of interest in the Liddington Conservation Area Appraisal and the Parish Council is concerned of the impact of any changes could have on the setting of the village.
5. If this application should be granted, there is nothing to stop it being used for the main or only access to the House and/or as access to additional houses on the site. The existing access to the house is perfectly adequate and satisfactory.

It is worth noting that three of the Parish Councillors met with Applicant, (at the Council's request), in Autumn 2018 and discussed his plans for the property. Creation of a new access (or other changes to the access) were not mentioned.

In view of the above Liddington Parish Council OBJECTS to this Application.

(b) It was noted that the following application had been granted permission:

S/HOU/18/1894 – 31 Purley Road, Liddington SN4 0HA – Erection of a single storey side and rear extension - granted

7. WARD COUNCILLOR REPORT

There was no Ward Councillor's report as Councillor Sumner was unable to attend.

8. FINANCE

(a) It was resolved to approve payment of the following:

- Members Expense – Unlimited webhosting 18/01/2019 -17/02/2019 - £3.59
- Swindon Area Committee – Annual subscription 2018/19 - £14.50
- Creative Play – provision and installation of pay equipment - £12,205.21 – subject to the remedial works being completed and inspected by Cllrs Cripps and Lomax
- Adams & Watt – additional works - £1,294.68

(b) It was resolved to ratify the following payments made between meetings:

- Wanborough Parochial Church Council – Lyden Magazine for Clerk - £10.00

(c) It was **resolved** to approve payment of the following Standing Order:

- Adams & Watt – Annual grass cutting contract – February instalment - £388.70

(d) **Monthly bank account reconciliation** – two amounts in the 'Projects' line was questioned. Clerk to investigate and respond. **Action - Clerk**

9. VILLAGE MATTERS

(a) Hedge alongside B4192

Approximate cost for work required has been obtained. A request has been sent to Swindon Borough Council for a contribution due to permission granted and a cultivation licence issued against the Parish Councils wishes.

10. COMMUNICATING WITH SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Issues to be raised at Swindon Area Committee and/or Borough/Parish Meeting. Cllr Sumner to be asked for guidance in the interim. **Action - Clerk**

11. REVIEW OF IRPP FOR PARISH COUNCIL ALLOWANCES

The meeting considered the recommendation received from Swindon Borough Council in respect of paying Members Allowances. It was unanimously agreed that there would be no change in the allowances paid. All Councillors to email the Clerk formally stating that they wished to forego part or all of the recommended allowance. **Action - All**

12. REQUEST FOR A DONATION TO THE SOUTH SWINDON PROTECTION GROUP

The meeting agreed that in principle, should the application go to appeal, Liddington Parish Council will cover the cost of a specific piece of work, provided by an expert, up to the value of £500 + VAT.

Action - Clerk

13. COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Playing Field – Cllr Bunney confirmed that he had carried out the fortnightly safety inspections on the play equipment on 13th and 25th January. The minor issues from the annual safety inspection carried out by The Play Inspection Company would be actioned when the weather improves.

Community Speedwatch - There had been little activity during December and January due to the Festive season and holidays. Liddington now has a camera full time as Chiseldon Parish Council has acquired their own. No update had been received from SBC re Parish Councils sharing the cost of a Highways/Traffic Consultant. Clerk to ask Cllr Sumner for an update. **Action - Clerk**

14. PARISH MAGAZINE

The Meeting agreed to put the following in the Parish Magazine:

- Angus Macpherson – Police and Crime Commissioner guest speaker at the March meeting
- New play equipment
- Oak Tree to Commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the Armistice
- Village Clean-up date

15. CORRESPONDENCE

The meeting noted that no correspondence for information had been received.

16. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/FUTURE AGENDA

Future agenda items:

Angus McPherson, Police and Crime Commissioner attending the March meeting

Suggestions of how to involve GWH more as it is within the Parish boundary

Two issues were identified regarding the number of vans being parked at the bottom of Purley Road and Leylandii trees growing out over the road. **Action - Clerk**

The meeting closed at 8.50pm

Signed.....

Date.....