

ASHBY HERRINGFLEET AND SOMERLEYTON PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 18th November at 7.30pm in Somerleyton Village Hall

The Sole Business of the Meeting was to agree the Parish Council's Response to Planning Application Ref No: DC/21/4745/FUL Development of the existing agricultural field site known as Mill Farm Field to provide thirty-five homes, with associated access roads, parking and landscaping including the creation of two new public green open spaces. Mill Farm Field Land is bounded by The Street and Station Road Somerleyton NR32 5QL.

The Meeting commenced at 7.30pm.

In Attendance were: Councillors D. Ainslie, C. Diggins, J. Foster, G. Gibbs, L. Housman, P. Johnson, N. Livingstone (In Chair), S. Phillips, C. Reynolds and R. Wild. Also in attendance was J. Wild, local correspondent for the Lowestoft Journal.

There were 31 members of the public in attendance. Also present were: Christopher Ash, Director and Architect from Project Orange, and David Barker, Planning Consultant.

The Chair said the order of the Agenda had been changed, bringing the introduction and public forum forward and moving the business items of the Agenda to the end.

1. Brief Introduction to the Planning Application.

S. Phillips gave a presentation with slides of the proposed layout and sections showing the visual impact of the development behind its hedgerow boundary. He then moved to a slide detailing points raised by villagers who were unable to attend the Meeting. These included:

Concerns were raised about the disruption during the development of two sites, particularly if they are developed concurrently. This particular development will be particularly noticeable and disruptive.

The junction of Station Road and The Street is a particularly difficult one to negotiate, particularly when overgrown with weeds. It is not wide enough for two cars to pass let alone large construction vehicles heading for the access points on Station Road during the construction period. There is an urgent need to improve the junction in readiness for the expected large increase in traffic.

There was concern about the provision of electric charging points to vehicles on the development which will not have dedicated off street parking.

The affordable homes provision is welcome and should not be traded away through Local Plan 8:2, which permits this in exceptional circumstances. There are currently only three publicly available affordable homes in the whole of the Parish Council's three constituent villages so these 11 are vital.

It was suggested that a footpath could be created from the southern access point of the development and along Station Road to the Playing Field, with a safe crossing point.

The current layout has housing very close to a working farm. The local farmer has raised concerns about this in a letter to East Suffolk Planning Department.

Concern was expressed about the laying of underground cable, replacing the overhead line, along the verge of Station Road close to the roots of the hedgerow might endanger this special habitat.

PUBLIC FORUM

J. Livingstone from the Neighbourhood Planning Group told the Meeting that the Group is comfortable with the mix of a majority of 1, 2 and 3 bedroomed housing.

Reassurance was sought that the Hedgerows around the site, a vital local habitat should be preserved.

Concern was raised that there had been insufficient consultation on this site being chosen for development. This was disputed; the first Consultation took place in June 2016, and there have other consultations in the interim.

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There was concern about the number of houses on the site; the response was that the Parish Council had, in its response to the Draft Local Plan, made it clear that any new housing density should match that of the existing settlement. This development matches that density with 35 units rather than the 45 houses originally proposed in the Draft Plan.

Some points were raised about the Affordable Housing provision. There was support for this allocation being protected and providing a long term affordable entry to our community. There should also be a strict allocation process. The usual arrangement is that affordable homes will be managed by a Housing Association.

The proximity of the site to the working Mill Farm was raised. The Meeting was supportive of the case made by the Farmer that residents occupying the row of houses abutting The Street would be affected by the noise/dust and odour arising from activities on the farm, and he feared complaints about this might affect his livelihood.

In answer to a query about street lighting on the new development, the Architect said that there would be low level bollard lights and porch lights but no high level lighting.

The Public Forum ended at 8.00 pm At this point most members of the public left the Meeting.

The Business Meeting commenced at 8.07pm

2. Apologies for Absence. Apologies were accepted from R. Lindsay. Proposer: S. Phillips; Seconder: C. Diggins. All in favour.

3. Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda. The Clerk had received Declarations of Interest regarding item 5 on the Agenda, from J. Foster and P. Johnson. Both had left the Meeting at the end of the Public Forum. G. Gibbs informed the Meeting that she had sought advice from the Democratic Services Manager at East Suffolk Council as to whether she should declare an interest; but had been advised that this was not necessary as her home did not directly overlook the proposed development.

4. Requests for Dispensation. The Clerk had received Requests for Dispensation from J. Foster and P. Johnson. Both had left the Meeting at the end of the Public Forum.

5. Parish Council Response to East Suffolk Council. Parish Councillors discussed the proposals contained within the Planning Application and mindful of the views expressed in the Public Forum agreed their response. This response is posted on the Parish Council Noticeboard and attached to these Minutes.

There being no further business the Meeting closed at 9.12pm

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