

**Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of Whaddon Parish Council held on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2010 at 7.30p.m. in the Village Hall, Church Street, Whaddon, nr Royston, Hertfordshire.**

Present:	Chairman	Dr N Strudwick
	Councillors	Mr W Burchett, Mr L Ginger, Mr P Neale (from 7.37pm), Mrs M Peyton, Mr C Rose
	Parish Clerk	Mrs G van Poortvliet
	Parishioners	6 present

- 1.0 Apologies for Absence** – received from Cllr J Lewis and County Cllr L Oliver.
- 2.0 Declarations of Interest** – Cllr Ginger declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 as his son may, in the future, be interested in being housed in the proposed Affordable Homes development. Cllr Ginger would not participate in any vote relating to this item.
- 3.0 Approval and Signing of minutes from last Parish Council (PC) Meeting (12<sup>th</sup> July 2010) - Resolved:** that this item be postponed until the September meeting of the PC.
- 4.0 Affordable Homes – discussion and decision on approach to be taken at District Council Planning Committee:** the Chairman provided a verbal update on recent developments regarding the planning application for a development of 8 Affordable Homes at Church Corner, Whaddon.
- The PC had sent a letter to SCDC Planners recommending approval of the scheme but stating that their support was conditional upon advance sight and agreement of the wording of the s106 agreement.
  - The PC will not be a party to the s106 agreement which will be between Bedford Pilgrims Housing Association (BPHA) and SCDC. (At this point Cllr Neale joined the meeting).
  - SCDC Planners had recommended refusal of the planning application. The application would go before the Planning Committee on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> August. So far, the Chairman and District Cllr Cathcart had been unsuccessful in obtaining a postponement of the Planning Committee (due to SCDC's 8 week determination period) but would continue trying to do so. It would be possible to ask for a postponement at the Planning Committee.
  - The Planning Committee would be preceded by an Affordable Housing Panel on 3rd August. Attendees to be the Chairman and Vice-Chair, representatives from SCDC Planning and Housing departments, District Cllr Cathcart and District Cllr McCraith.
  - A copy of the report from SCDC Planners to the Planning Committee, detailing the reasons for the recommendation of refusal of planning permission, had been received.
  - BPHA's architects refuted some of the comments in the aforementioned Planner's report and had also sent a letter to the Planning Committee.
  - The Chairman had seen a model s106 agreement but this had not been suitable for Whaddon. Verbal assurances had been received from the SCDC Housing Officer that it would be possible to amend the s106 agreement. However, the Chairman was doubtful that the wording could be drafted and agreed before the Planning Committee meeting.
  - The SCDC Housing Department had not been informed that the Planning Application had been submitted for the Whaddon Affordable Homes scheme.
  - The Chairman and Vice-Chair had documented all the alternative sites considered in Whaddon for affordable housing and the reasons why these were unsuitable. The Chairman stated that the proposed site was the only site available for Affordable Housing.
- Comments from the Public – the following comments were received:
- A member of the public commented that it seemed deliberate that the SCDC Planners had not informed the Housing Officer that a Planning Application had been submitted for Whaddon. It was requested that the Chairman bring this up at the Panel meeting. Also, the Village Plan demonstrated that the vast majority of the Village were in favour of the provision of affordable housing in Whaddon.

- A member of the public commented that the absence of affordable housing meant he had been unable to afford to live in Whaddon. He had been housed far away, by SCDC, necessitating significant travel.
- A member of the public, whilst supporting the provision of affordable housing in principle, objected to the location (next to a listed building) and the volume (eight) of the proposed dwellings.
- A member of the public stated that the location may not be ideal but that, considering it could go nowhere else, it was the only choice available.
- A member of the public queried why the development was for eight houses when the identified need was for eleven dwellings. The PC stated that the number of dwellings was dictated by the size of the plot and that they could not support an application for more than eight houses on the Church Corner site.
- A member of the public suggested that not having sight of the s106 agreement in advance of the Planning Committee would increase the degree of trust required that the wishes of the PC would be honoured.
- A member of the public commented that the house-designs were nice and represented a significant improvement over previous versions.
- A member of the public stated that it was a shame that a more balanced solution could not have been found between meeting the needs for affordable homes in the Village and preserving the setting of a listed building. The PC responded that, in their view, this was the most balanced solution available. Many of the alternative sites considered were also adjacent to a listed building.
- A member of the public asked what stance the PC would take if the planning application was refused at the planning committee. Would they appeal? The PC explained that, in the first instance, it would be up to BPHA to decide whether to appeal. A lot would depend on the reasons for refusal and it would not be possible to answer that question at this time.

A discussion was held.

Resolved: that the following course of action be taken. 1) the Chairman to attend the SCDC Planning Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2010 and request a postponement to allow further clarification to be sought regarding the wording of the s106 agreement. 2) Regardless of the outcome of 1), the PC to fully support the proposed Affordable Housing scheme and to push strongly for the s106 agreement to strongly favour local people with a strong connection to Whaddon. The scheme should also be for rental units only.

It was also suggested that, should the scheme get approval, the PC should urge Whaddon residents to apply for the homes.

**5.0 Barrington Cement Works Planning Application S/01080/10/CW – discussion and submission of comments (if any):** the proposed infill scheme for the old cement quarry in Barrington was discussed. The PC is not a statutory consultee but the site is less than five miles from Whaddon.

Resolved: the PC to comment on the application as follows – ‘Whaddon Parish Council have no objections to the proposed development at Barrington Quarry so long as the infill materials are brought in by rail.’ Action: the Clerk to respond to the consultation.

**6.0 Items for next meeting:**

- Items noted in minutes of PC meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> July 2010.
- Damaged bollard on entrance to recreation ground.
- A1198 speed limit review.

**7.0 Date of next meeting (13<sup>th</sup> September 2010)**

**There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.00 pm**