

**HIGH EASTER PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**  
**held via Zoom on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

Present: Cllrs Nigel Boreham, Andrea Davis, Robert Lodge (chair), Neil Reeve, Paul Sutton, Jo Windley and the Clerk Allison Ward

During the meeting there were 12 Zoom connections from members of the public

**20/139 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - None**

**20/140 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FOR THIS MEETING**

Cllr Boreham declared a personal interest as the landowner is a customer of his business, and he has known him personally for many years.

Cllr Lodge declared a personal interest as he has known the landowner personally for many years.

Cllr Windley declared a personal interest as a near neighbour to the application site.

**20/141 PUBLIC FORUM**

The Chairman reminded the meeting this is an outline application with all matters reserved except access and layout. Other matters of appearance, landscaping and scale are not relevant to this application and will form part of a second application if outline permission is given.

Cllr Lodge welcomed Iain Ford of Ford Homes Ltd, the applicant for the site and invited him to outline the application.

The company is focused on development of small-medium size sites, passionate about village life and sustainability. The site does not meet the criteria for farming and would suit a small, modest development. The proposal is for passive housing (energy efficient building designed to help reduce heating needs and energy demand, which reduces the impact on the environment) with air source heat pumps; the ground space required for these would protect the remaining paddock from any further development. In addition, the applicant is willing to gift this remaining paddock to the parish for community use.

The Parish Council had not received any written comments or requests to speak in advance of the meeting, however the chairman invited residents to make comments or ask questions and these are summarised below.

- A number of residents commented on highway safety given the application proposes four new access points onto a 60mph stretch of straight highway where speed is already a concern. The location has the additional hazard of a number of concealed access points. Residents noted there have been a number of accidents along this stretch particularly heading from Barnston to High Easter. During discussion Cllrs confirmed Essex Highways will not support a speed reduction for Bishops Green despite requests. Cllr Reeve confirmed it is not possible for planning conditions to include a request to reduce the speed limit.
- The area floods in heavy rainfall, where will additional water run-off from the development go? In discussions it was suggested this is primarily where ditches have not been cleared and it is noted this is resolvable, or if it was necessary a storm fill could be built.
- It was noted there is no 'on-street' parking. The proposed accesses are close to Garnetts Farm entrance and any on street parking along this stretch creates access problems for farm vehicles and machinery.
- Currently the site is a haven for wildlife.
- There is no public transport and cars are required to access all services. Mr Ford commented that electrical charging points would be a feature of the design.

Signed  
 Neil Reeve (Chairman of the meeting)

- What is the benefit of ‘tacking on’ 4 additional houses, why would residents support a proposal that added more vehicle movements on a stretch of dangerous road? There are plenty of better locations in Dunmow where services already exist.
- Spotted Dog is a restaurant not a public house.
- How will passive housing design fit in with the hamlet? Mr Ford confirmed this is not part of this outline application and the parish could be involved and contribute to the design.
- Concern that this sets a precedent and residents were not reassured that there will not be further development on the larger site. Mr Ford reiterated the comment made earlier that the remaining land could be gifted for community use. Cllr Reeve commented that the proposal to gift land to the parish is not stated in the application, the Parish Council can only comment on the application as presented.

*The chairman thanked Mr Ford for attending and responding to residents and asked that he remain to hear the Cllrs debate and respond to any further questions.*

## **20/142 PLANNING APPLICATION UTT/20/3417/OP**

During discussions Cllrs considered the points raised by residents and both the positive and negative aspects of the application. Positive comments are summarised as follows,

- Development proposed is a linear extension which is in keeping with the village design, as opposed to the back fill of fields. (Cllrs asked Mr Ford about the layout included within the ecological appraisal and noted it was a different layout proposal in a cul-de-sac style, Mr Ford confirmed this was an earlier plan discussed with Uttlesford and was not supported because it was considered back fill development).
- Some Cllrs are in support of small-scale developments spread across the district including in the villages, where access and location are suitable. Cllrs noted, as this is a hamlet location there is a total reliance on cars which reduces its suitability as a preferred location.
- Cllrs were supportive of the proposal for passive housing.

Comments of concern with the application raised in discussions included,

- The assumption that the District requires more housing is correct, although putting in units of 10 or less does not help in the equation and will only be given a small weight. Cllrs recognised Uttlesford’s Local Plan process is in the early stages and no decisions have been made on locations for new housing and whether the district supports new communities, a spread across the district, or a mix of both.
- The land was put forward in call for sites 2015 and not supported as it was not a sustainable location. The report concluded the site is highly sensitive to change in landscape and character. Nothing has changed to alter this conclusion.
- The highway access concerns raised by residents were shared by Cllrs. It was noted the current plan would require vehicles to reverse in/out and this could be resolved with turning and alterations to layout, however the application includes layout as presented.
- Concerns were raised with visitor parking as there is no provision in this location. Any parking on the highway would impact highway safety given this is a busy road and close to the farm and Public House access.
- The location is in a hamlet and isn’t sustainable with no public transport or services. Small sites still have to apply benefits, and this can be harder to achieve, affordable housing is not required on a site of this size, it is difficult to find benefits to outweigh the harm.

*Before taking a proposal, Cllr Lodge suspended the meeting to allow a resident to comment. They raised concerns with two large trees on the front boundary and the importance of retaining these. The meeting resumed.*

Cllr Sutton confirmed that whilst landscape is a reserved matter, layout is not. Cllr Lodge proposed that a tree preservation order is applied for as the two oak trees on the front boundary are under threat from the development, this was seconded by Cllr Sutton, with all in agreement and the clerk will progress. Mr Ford commented that it would not be the company’s policy to remove trees, they would intend to add further trees to the site.

Cllr Reeve proposed that the Parish Council objects to the application in line with the following policy,

- S7 – Development in open countryside where harm is not outweighed by social, economic or environmental benefits.
- GEN 1 - Access would compromise highway safety.
- GEN 8 – Parking standards, design inappropriate for location and no visitor parking.

This was seconded by Cllr Sutton; the vote was 5 in favour of objecting and 1 abstain.

#### **20/143 TO CONSIDER WHETHER TO CALL IN PLANNING APPLICATION UTT/20/3417/OP**

Cllr Windley proposed that the application be called in to be considered by the Planning Committee should officers recommend approval, this was seconded by Cllr Sutton with all in agreement, the reasons for this request being outside development limits (S7) and access (GEN1).

Before closing the meeting Cllr Lodge thanked Mr Ford for attending the meeting and for responding to the questions asked. He thanked Cllrs for giving up their time to attend an additional meeting and to the members of the public for engaging and attending.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.