

Little Chesterford Parish Council

Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 13th May, 2021 at 7.30pm

Present Cllr Paul Osborne, Cllr Annie Roberts and Cllr Fiona Wilkinson.

In Attendance County Cllr Paul Gadd, District Councillor Neil Gregory, 2 members of the public and Amanda Lindsell - Clerk to the Council.

21/027 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and noted from Chair Robert Pumfrey and Cllr Lez Davison. In the absence of Chair Pumfrey, it was agreed that Cllr Wilkinson would Chair the meeting.

21/028 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

21/029 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

21/030 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the March Parish Council Meeting were approved by Councillors as an accurate representation and acting Chair Wilkinson signed the minutes.

21/031 DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

Newly elected County Cllr Paul Gadd was welcomed to the meeting and noted his intention to attend meetings where helpful and work with the Parish Council as required.

District Councillor Neil Gregory reported;

- i. The call for sites closed 21/04/2021 and should become public mid-June. It is already known that Stumps Cross and Grosvenor are included, and there are unverified rumours that a notable landowner is no longer opposed to development on their land. The area is going to be up against significant development, but it is worth remembering that many more sites get put forward, than are required.
- ii. UDC's Chief Executive Dawn French has announced her retirement at the end of August. District Cllr Gregory commended Dawn for getting the District Council through Covid and transforming the Council's finances from extremely shaky to strong, and noted that a large degree of reform is still required in the planning department.
- iii. The Stansted Airport appeal may have another round following the Government's recent statement relating to climate change. The District Council have asked the Planning Inspectorate to re-open the appeal.
- iv. The District Council hopes that the Local Plan will go to Regulation 18 by December 2021.

County Cllr Paul Gadd left the meeting.

21/032 FINANCE.

- i. The Council agreed to continue affiliation with EALC and NALC for 2021/22.
- ii. The clerk presented a statement of accounts and reconciliation to cash books which were approved.
Cheque - 100383 - Beaver Sheds Ltd - bus shelter - reimburse Ian Couchman - £2245.00
100384 - Clerk's salary March 2021 (& holiday entitlement) - £283.31
100385 - EALC/NALC affiliation 2021/22 - £71.54
100386- Clerk's salary April 2021 - £143.57

were agreed for payment.

- iii. The council resolved that as a smaller authority whose gross annual income or gross annual expenditure does not exceed £25,000 the council are exempt from sending the Annual Governance and Accountability

Little Chesterford Parish Council

Return to the external auditor for a limited assurance review. The Annual Internal Audit Report, Annual Governance Statement, Accounting Statements, an analysis of variances and the bank reconciliation plus the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 including the period for the exercise of public rights still need to be fully completed and, along with a copy of this certificate, published on a public website before 1 July 2021. The Clerk and Chair of the meeting signed the Certificate of Exemption.

iv. The Council resolved to appoint Yvonne Morton to carry out the internal audit of the Council accounts.

v. The clerk read through and the Council approved the Section 1 Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21. The Clerk and Chair of the meeting then signed the statement.

vi. The Council approved the annual accounts, and the Clerk and Chair of the meeting signed the Section 2 Accounting Statements 2020/21.

vii. The Council noted the completion of the Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Annual Governance and Accountability Return (Exempt Authority) to be displayed from 9th June 2021, and making available the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and associated documents on application to the clerk, between 14/06/21 and 23/07/21.

21/033 PLANNING

The following responses were agreed to return to Uttlesford District Council relating to planning;

i. UTT/21/1485/SCO- Chesterford Park, Little Chesterford

Request for a Screening Opinion for a proposed development of Green Energy Hub - The Parish Council agreed that they are supportive of Chesterford Research Park's efforts to provide sustainable energy for park occupants but are concerned that the site selected will have a high visual and environmental impact and therefore request that a full independent screening environmental impact assessment is carried out. The Parish Council concur with the report by Place Services that states that further historic and archaeological investigations should be carried out and in particular would like to draw attention to the following concerns which are not contained in the submitted environmental report:

a. The site lies in an area of chalk upland which has been defined as having a Low Landscape Capacity, a high sensitivity to change bottoms [See Landscape Capacity Assessment by Hankinson Duckett Associates 2016, prepared for the Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan], and is highly visible from the valley sides and PROWs in the valley. This emerging Neighbourhood Plan, which has currently completed Regulation 14 Consultation, seeks to protect and preserve those chalk uplands which lie outside of the development limits in Policy GLCNP/1- Overall Spatial Strategy.

b. The site is adjacent to, and visible from, a public footpath (designated by Essex Highways as PROW 34-11) which does not appear on the maps included in the submitted report, but is clearly shown on the Essex Highways Definitive map. This footpath is well known, used and appreciated locally, and the visual impact of the proposed development on this important amenity must be properly assessed in all seasons.

c. The adjacent Bassingbourne Wood is highlighted as an area of biodiversity in the Park's own site literature, and in the spring is full of bluebells, a native species widely acknowledged as an indicator ancient woodland, rather than being predominately non-native species as stated in the submitted report.

District Councillor Neil Gregory left the meeting.

ii. UTT/21/1310/FUL - Kings Farm, High Street, Little Chesterford

Proposed new four bedroom house with a detached double garage - The Parish Council agreed to object to this proposal, as it does not follow the established layout of the village, which consists of almost entirely of dwellings which front onto the highway. The emerging Neighbourhood Plan, which has just completed the Regulation 14 consultation process, recognises this linear layout as an important characteristic to be preserved and enhanced - Policy GLCNP/2 - Settlement Pattern and separation states that "backland development in Little Chesterford will not be supported as it would change the character of the village."

Policy GEN2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan 2005 also states that "development will not be permitted unless it is compatible with the scale, form, layout, appearance and materials of surrounding buildings". This proposal is therefore contrary to policy GEN2.

Furthermore the access to the site does not appear from the plans to meet the requirement for access for emergency fire vehicles of 3.7m road width and 3.1 gate width and the proposed access to the property east of the current field gate is not owned by or under the control of the developer, being rather an access track to the garaging at the rear of the properties fronting the Walden Road, under the ownership of the local

Little Chesterford Parish Council

authority. Use of this single width track for construction traffic would have a substantive disruptive impact on these properties.

iii. UTT/21/0859/HHF - The Manager's House, Walden Road, Little Chesterford

Erection of stable block - The Parish Council agreed to object to this proposal as the proposed stable block is of almost the same footprint as the dwelling with which it is associated. If the front porch is omitted, the square footage appears identical. As an ancillary building it's scale is disproportionately large and contrary to Policy GEN2. The Council notes that development of the Manager's House was only permitted under exceptional circumstances in the rural setting as per the decision notice for UTT/17/1793/FUL, which notes the need "To protect the rural amenities of the area and in view of the exceptional circumstances that justify the development," so the same consideration must be extended to this stable block.

The access to the stable block for vehicles is not clearly defined on the plan, and no existing access appears possible within the block plan edged red. A possible indicated access to the south of the block would require removal of a portion of hedgerow, which the application states would not be required. Vehicles accessing the stable block via this presumed access would need to pass down the unmade, overgrown track to the west, which is a public footpath not mentioned in the application, and is unsuitable for the increased traffic that the proposed development would generate. The development would additionally be visible from this well used public footpath.

Should the council be minded to approve any proposal for stabling on this site, we would request that the following conditions be included to prevent overdevelopment of this site and preserve its rural nature.

1. The stable building should remain as an adjunct to the manager's house, preserving exceptional development on this rural site for workers associated with the nursery business.
2. The stable building not be considered part of the Springwell Nursery horticultural/agricultural site, and therefore ineligible for a future Class Q application.
3. The stable building to remain for equestrian use only, without the potential for conversion to residential.

The following planning decisions were noted;

iv. UTT/19/1786/FUL - Joseph Farm, Walden Road, Little Chesterford

Conversion of former barn to 1 no. dwelling off existing access Refused.

v. UTT/21/0728/NMA - Briar Cottage, High Street, Little Chesterford

Non material amendment to UTT/19/2763/HHF including- Change rear extension elevations from brick to render finish - Approved.

vi. UTT/21/0828/HHF - Springwell Stables, Walden Road, Little Chesterford

Extension to form a new entrance hall, increase the existing dining room and to accommodate a new bedroom and walk-in wardrobe on the ground floor and a studio on the first floor - Approved with conditions.

21/034 LOCAL PLAN

Update provided previously by District Councillor Neil Gregory.

21/035 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Councillor Wilkinson reported that the Neighbourhood Plan has completed the Regulation 14 consultation stage and comments received in response will now be considered.

21/036 MATTERS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

- ii. Gigaclear have reseeded some areas but require chasing to complete the reseeded on the top road.
- ii. A small group of residents are working with Great Chesterford History Society to write a book, which includes three Little Chesterford houses - Maltings, Manor Farm and Riders Croft. Residents with memories of these properties are invited to get in touch.

21/037 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held at 7.30pm on Thursday 8th July, 2021.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

**Approved as accurate;
01/07/2021**