

Minutes of the meeting of Fairfield Parish Council held in Fairfield Community Hall on Thursday 9th June 2016 at 7:30 pm

Councillors present: P Mitchinson (Chairman), B E Dack, P Daffarn, S L Jones and T Milliken.

Officer present: Katrina Henshaw (Parish Clerk)

Also present for all or part of the meeting: Ward Member Councillor B Saunders and one member of the public.

41 Apologies for Absence

41.1 Apologies were received from Councillor C Bidwell (holiday), Councillor N P Hanks (work commitments) and Ward Member Councillor S Dixon.

42 Disclosures of Interest and Dispensation requests

42.1 No disclosures of interest and no requests for dispensation were received.

43 Council Minutes

43.1 Minutes of the annual meeting held on Thursday 12th May 2016 had been circulated to all Councillors and it was

RESOLVED

That these minutes be agreed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and be duly signed by the Chairman.

44 Public Participation

44.1 No members of the Public requested to speak.

45 Central Bedfordshire Council Ward Members Report

45.1 Councillor Saunders advised that CBC do not put any council's comments to planning applications on the website. He also advised that the two new applications on the former Pig Testing Unit were expected to be discussed at the Committee Meeting on 29th June.

45.2 CBC Local Plan 'Call for Sites' Publication has been issued and Councillor Saunders showed copies of the maps showing submissions from CBC's Local Plan 'Call for Sites' Process. FPC has also received a copy of these maps. Each site submitted will be assessed by CBC Officers using the approved site assessment criteria. These criteria will be consulted on at the end of June 2016 and CBC will notify FPC when this consultation starts.

45.3 The change to the postal address is still in process and Councillor Dixon will chase this up. A recent assault to a seventeen year old has illustrated why this change is important as the Police appeal only mentioned Arlesey and Stofold which could prevent possible witnesses realising the area the incident took place. It was agreed that the clerk would write to the Police to advise them of the inaccurate information they used on their appeal. **Action: KH**

45.4 The smell around Fairfield is still a problem and Councillor Dixon is liaising with Anglian Water to resolve this issue.

46 Report from Paul Redwood, Teasel

- 46.1 Paul gave a brief history of the creation of Teasel which started in 1993 as a P3 Group and is still part of P3. It has its own constitution and own equipment. It has received funding from P3, BRCC (S106 money) and Stotfold Town Council. Paul gave FPC copies of the constitution and useful contacts.
- 46.2 Following a discussion, it was agreed that 'Friends of the Orchard' needs to be formalised and a constitution needs to be drafted. The plan is that the orchards will be owned and funded by FPC. **Action: BD**

47 Speed Limit in Fairfield

- 47.1 The expected programme is:-
1. Notices published - Friday 27 May 2016.
 2. Objection period ends - Friday 24 June.
 3. If objections are received they will be considered at Delegated Decisions Meeting on 26 July.
 4. If there are no objections design will be undertaken in July/August with implementation in September.
 5. If objections are received and resolved implementation will be October 2016.

Approximate costs:-

- TRO processing, includes press adverts - £600
- Terminal signs and markings (Eliot Way and Dickens Boulevard) - £1,000
- Repeater signs and/or markings (All roads) - £2,500
- Design and construction supervision fees - £2,500
- **TOTAL - £6,600**

It was noted that these were approximate costs only and the cost could be less. Following a discussion it was agreed that FPC would pay the costs.

48 Christmas Lights

- 48.1 All councillors had been supplied a brochure and quotes from
1. Gala received in 2014 that is higher than the ones Sparkx and Blanchere have sent for this year. So FPC agreed to discount them.
 2. Dean Hankins Blanchere Illumination
 3. Sparkx

Following a discussion it was

RESOLVED

That FPC would place the contract with Sparkx for one year hire to install and remove motifs on the eight lampposts around Urban Park. They will be size C and will all be the same.

REASON

Sparkx installed the fitting last year and offered a competitive price this year.

The clerk to place the contract. **Action: KH**

Quotes were also received to decorate the tree from

1. MBS
2. Sparkx

Following a discussion it was agreed to defer this decision until it is known how power will get to the tree. Solar lights and/or battery lights to be investigated. **Action: PD/KH**

Councillor Dack to obtain a quote to install a power point in Urban Park. **Action: BD**

49 Fairfield Alive

49.1 FPC to have presence at this event. Councillor Daffarn to take the lead on this. **Action: PD**

50 Western bridleway

50.1 CBC have marked out the line of the bridle path and are now to establish their proposals. FPC will be involved in initial discussions prior to some consultation with residents. Residents have been informed of this.

51 Dog Fouling around Fairfield

51.1 FHMC has given permission for CBC enforcement officers to operate and act on the land that is under the freehold ownership of Hotbed. FPC to confirm FHMC has permission from the land owner. **Action: KH**

Awaiting FPRA to supply FPC confirmation that the respective landowners agree to CBC taking appropriate action of any offences committed on their land.

Progress to be reviewed at 30 June joint meeting.

52 Leisure Strategy Document

52.1 Revised 'Fairfield Parish Open Spaces' documents awaited from CBC.

53 Allotments, Recreation Space and Cemetery

53.1 Further to the meeting of 19 May CBC is to provide suggested areas for this provision. CBC to identify all surrounding land owners.

54 Section S106 outstanding matters and allied areas

54.1 No change since FPC May meeting. FPC has written to Hotbed urging them to include the two sports grounds into the land transfer. FPC letter has been supported with letter from the two clubs.

54.2 Advantage has asked if it would be possible to put on something over the summer court, especially over the Wimbledon period or does this need to wait until the land transfer is settled. It is not FPC's permission to give at this stage. The clerk to advise Advantage. **Action: KH**

55 Orchard

55.1 No change since FPC May meeting. P J Livesey still awaiting receipt of the official documents from CBC.

56 Additional Parking at Kipling Crescent

56.1 Nothing new to report.

57 Inconsiderate parking and driving around the school

57.1 FPC is awaiting a meeting date with the school.

58 The Neighbourhood Plan

58.1 Pre-submission stage consultation is running from 30 May until 11 July 2016. All documentation available on the website.

59 Annual Report

59.1 This will be on the website from 10th June 2016.

60 Lights on footpath alongside Cricket Pitch

60.1 Lighting should be provided in line with the requirements of the Design Statement so if solar lights are not used then the bollards as used around Fairfield will need to be used. These cost £643 each and at least eight will be required. It was agreed that FPC's preferred option would be the solar lights as there would be more environmentally friendly and more economical to purchase and run. This will be noted at the joint meeting on 30 June 2016.

A resident with the support of Fairfield Hall Hub initiated a petition in support of the request that lighting be installed on the path across the cricket pitch and this was delivered to all residents to the north of Kingsley Avenue, along with a few to Salisbury Close and Russell Walk. 121 residents indicated their support. Not all of those responding had received a petition but wished to show their support anyway. 20 of these responses were from residents living in Salisbury Close, Russell Walk, Fleming Drive, Nightingale Way, Nickleby Way, Dickens Boulevard, Faraday Gardens, Franklin Place, Paxton Drive and Palmerston Way.

61 Flytipping

61.1 To be reviewed at the 30th June joint meeting.

62 Planning

62.1 Proposed new school, land East of Hitchin Road

All councillors had seen a letter received from Lochailort Fairfield Limited and the response sent from the chairman.

63 Planning Applications

63.1 **CB/16/01454/FULL Land East of Hitchin Road South of the Former Pig Testing Unit Erection of 2-form entry Lower School and nursery with access, parking, all-weather pitch with changing facility, landscaping and associated works.**

FPC has concerns with the appropriateness of the proposed school location and its scale, however support the provision of this new community facility.

The school is proposed to be on the east side of the Hitchin Road, with the majority of residential dwellings in Fairfield are located on the west side of the road. This therefore requires that many children cross the Hitchin Road to attend the school and there are associated risks.

The Parish Council has asked for clarification as to why a two form entry school is proposed, when only a single form entry school would appear to be necessary. No answer has been forthcoming and therefore this over provision appears un-justified and the associated additional funding to be utilised in constructing a larger than necessary facility, may be better allocated to additional secondary schooling facilities in the area. Should CBC be able to justify the proposed school size with forecast figures, then we would be supportive of the proposed scale.

With regard to the proposed vehicle and pedestrian access to the site, we have concerns with the design of the Eliot Way access / roundabout via which the proposals will be accessed. The eastern arm of the roundabout is currently only utilised by a small number of dwellings and those residents have voiced significant concerns over the difficulty of exiting onto the roundabout. While there is no adverse safety record at the junction, the proposed increase in traffic using the junction is significant. We ask that the applicant is required to submit an independent road safety audit for the new junction arrangements, prior to any planning decision being made. This should also account for the impact of the proposed new pelican crossing, just south of the Eliot Way junction. This crossing will be heavily utilised during peak hours, due primarily to the location of the new school and as such, queues will build across the roundabout, blocking vehicle traffic seeking to enter / exit the school site. According to the latest site plan, this crossing appears to be the only proposed safe crossing route from the existing dwellings in Fairfield to the new school.

There are conflicting plans within the submissions, particularly the revised site / master plan and the plans within the Transport Assessment. The conflicts relate in particular to the proposals to provide a new footway along the eastern side of Hitchin Road, from a point just south of the Eliot Way to the junction with Dickens Boulevard, plus a proposed pelican crossing to the north of the Dickens Boulevard junction. These items are relied upon and set out in the Transport Assessment, however appear to have been removed from the latest site plans.

Should this application be approved, we would ask that CBC ensure that all associated highway improvement works, pedestrian crossings, traffic orders and footway works are secured by planning condition as pre-commencement items. The Transport Assessment submitted in support of the school proposal appears to be the same document as that submitted with the outline application for adjacent residential development and it is not clear what highway infrastructure / improvements are to be provided in association with each application. We are therefore concerned that the school could be approved, with no requirement for highway improvement or pedestrian safety works.

63.2 **CB/16/1455/OUT Land East of Hitchin Road South of the Former Pig Testing Unit Outline Application: mixed-use development comprising flexible-use commercial unit (Use Class A1 (shop) A3 (Café) D1 (Surgery) B1 (Offices); 180 dwellings; landscaping; open spaces; access; parking and associated works (all matters reserves except access).**

FPC **objected** to the proposals on the following grounds:-

- The proposals represent inappropriate and un-sustainable greenbelt development, outside of the current settlement envelope.
- The application is premature with respect to the emerging Neighbourhood Plan
- Insufficient information has been provided to analyse the extent of highway impacts and any mitigation required.
- Impact upon highway safety, particularly at the Eliot Way roundabout
- Inconsistency between plans submitted by the applicant and those within the supporting reports.
- Waste / effluent management systems in the vicinity are inadequate and the proposals will intensify the issues
- Flood risk / development within.

Further detail on each of these items follows:

Inappropriate & Un-Sustainable Greenbelt Development

The proposals sit outside of the current development envelope and on greenbelt land. The NPPF includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, however this site cannot be considered as sustainable, certainly on the grounds of transport, not being within walking distance of a local train station or of employment opportunities and being served by very limited bus services, which CBC has been considering reducing further. The proposals would therefore inevitably require future residents to rely upon the private car for the majority of journeys, contrary to the aims of government guidance at a local and national level.

Paragraph 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework concerning the presumption in favour of sustainable development is being heavily relied upon to justify the proposed development but the presumption is only valid for sustainable development.

Policy TP1A of the CBC Core Spatial Strategy requires developers to show how developments will reduce the need to travel and reduce reliance on cars; the proposal fails on both counts and should be refused accordingly. Policy DPS19 requires developments to be “readily accessible by public transport, cycle and on foot...”, however the proposal site is served by limited public transport and is beyond a ‘reasonable’ walking distance from the local train stations as well as the major employment areas in Letchworth & Hitchin. Cycle routes to and from the nearest major urban areas are also sub-standard.

FPC believe this site is not sustainable on economic grounds. With no Community Infrastructure Levy in place there will be no contribution being paid directly to the parish to mitigate the effects of the development. Currently, for economic reasons, it is the policy of CBC to use the New Homes Bonus to support the provision of front line services across Central Bedfordshire, and not directly in support of areas affected by development. Provision has already been made towards a new school building following the granting of permission for the development of the former Pig Testing Unit site.

Prematurity With Respect to Emerging Neighbourhood Plan

Given that Fairfield Parish is a designated Neighbourhood Planning area and that the Neighbourhood Plan is in the process of being completed, it is considered that this application is premature and its approval would undermine and be prejudicial to the neighbourhood planning process. This is of particular importance given the significant the scale of development when considered in the context of the existing number of dwellings in the Parish. Precedent has been set for this in decisions by planning inspectors and the communities secretary in decisions such as that for a residential development in Rother District Council in March 2014 (appeal decision) and early 2015 (decision upheld by communities secretary).

Highway Impacts & Conflicting Information

The proposals provide junction capacity analysis based upon traffic surveys undertaken in 2013. At the time of these surveys only a relatively small proportion of the new homes at the 'south of Stotfold' (Greenacres and adjacent developments) were completed / occupied and in the meantime the majority of dwellings have been completed and occupied, therefore in order to provide a true and accurate analysis, updated survey data must be obtained. In addition to the junctions currently analysed by the applicant's consultant, the triple mini-roundabout junction to the south of the site between Stotfold Rd, Arleseey New Road, Wilbury Hills Road and Bedford Road should be analysed, as we are aware that significant peak hour queues (over 20 vehicles on the southbound approach) and delays occur at that junction and the application proposals would have an impact upon the junction.

With regard to highway safety, we have concerns with the design / alignment and use of the Eliot Way roundabout, via which the proposals will be accessed. The eastern arm of the roundabout is currently only utilised by a small number of dwellings and those residents have voiced significant concerns over the difficulty of exiting onto the roundabout. While there is no adverse safety record at the junction, the proposed increase in traffic using the junction is significant. We ask that the applicant is required to submit an independent road safety audit for the new junction arrangements, prior to any planning decision being made. This should also account for the impact of the proposed new pelican crossing, just south of the Eliot Way junction. This crossing will be heavily utilised during peak hours, due primarily to the location of the new school and as such, queues will build across the roundabout, potentially blocking vehicle traffic seeking to enter / exit the school and the new dwellings / shop etc.

There are conflicting plans within the submissions, particularly the revised site / master plan and the plans within the Transport Assessment. The conflicts relate in particular to the proposals to provide a new footway along the eastern side of Hitchin Road, from a point just south of the Eliot Way to the junction with Dickens Boulevard, plus a proposed pelican crossing to the north of the Dickens Boulevard junction. These items are relied upon and set out in the Transport Assessment, however appear to have been removed from the latest site plans.

Vehicle trip rates for the school and the dwellings are based upon generic Bedfordshire and national rates, which can only provide very rough approximations, which we believe to be under estimating the volume of new traffic. With the development replicating the existing split of land uses within the 'main' Fairfield development, it would appear far more sensible and accurate to utilise trip rates derived from surveys of traffic generated by the existing housing / convenience store at Fairfield and traffic / modal splits based upon the existing Fairfield Lower School.

Waste / Effluent Management & Associated Health Issues

The proposals are within approximately 150m of a sewage treatment works plant and the additional dwellings, as well as those recently permitted at the 'Pig Farm' scheme (a total of 310 dwellings), will all rely upon the use of that plant. There is a history of issues with the plant and associated odour issues impacting residential amenity, including very recent and in fact current intensification, ensuing complaints to CBC and NHDC. The proposals have the potential to make this situation significantly worse and with the new dwellings in such proximity to the plant, new residents would be effected as well as existing residents.

Flood Risk

Residents of nearby Stotfold have experienced flooding from the Pix Brook twice in the last 2 years. The site is bordered by the Pix Brook on the Eastern side. The site itself slopes towards the Brook, which is recognised as being in Flood Zone 3 along this edge and run off from a further 180 houses is likely to cause increased risk of such flooding. Sewage overflow is also reported as having occurred on the proposed site. The proposals could therefore result in increased flooding risk for existing and new residents.

63.3 It was agreed that FPC will request to speak at the committee meeting on 29th June when the above two applications will be discussed. **Action: PM**

63.4 **CB/16/02299/FULL 38 Heathcliff Avenue**
Single storey rear extension

FPC has no objections to the basic principle of the application other than conditions are that all materials are to match existing bricks and windows.

64 Planning Decisions

64.1 CB/16/01257/FULL 167 Hitchin Road
Erection of a new 2 storey house adjacent to 167 Hitchin Road.
CBC refused planning permission 26th May 2016.

64.2 CB/16/01433/FULL 61 Heathcliff Avenue
Single storey rear extension
CBC granted planning permission 26th May 2016.

65 Finance

65.1 Receipts and Payments

Councillors were provided with payments totally £20,313.84, receipts totally £2,210.24 and a transfer of £250 to alto. It was

RESOLVED

That all monies on the payments list be paid and the receipts and transfer to Alto be noted.

65.2 The internal audit has been carried out and no issues were raised. The report had been circulated to all councillors.

65.3 The accounting statement 2015/16 had been circulated to all and it was agreed. The Chairman and RFO signed the Annual Return. The Notice of the Period for the Exercise of Public Rights is currently being displayed. The accounts to be sent to the external auditor by 27th June 2016.
Action: KH

65.4 Under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, it was agreed that the public and press should be excluded from item 25.5 of this agenda (item 65.5 of these minutes) in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

65.5 Councillors had all been supplied the 2016-2018 National Salary Award guidelines from NALC
In a closed session it was

RESOLVED

The clerk will be paid SCP26 from 1st April 2016 as recommended by NALC E02-16.

66 **Date of next meeting**

66.1 A joint meeting will take place on 30th June 2016 at 7.00 pm.

66.2 The next Parish Council meeting will be held on 14th July 2016 at 7.30 pm

Meeting closed at 8.55 pm