

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE OF URCHFONTS PARISH COUNCIL held on Wednesday 08 March 2017 at 7:00pm in the Conference Room of Urchfont Village Hall.

Present: UPC Chair Dave Mottram (DM) Lead of Planning Trevor Hill (TH) Cllrs: John Chapman (JC) Graham Day (GD) Nicky Mitchell (NM) Royston Thomas (RT) Andy Stephens (AS) & Planning Administrator Sandra Johnston (SJ)

Also present: Parish Clerk Bob Lunn (BL), Wiltshire Cllr Philip Whitehead (PW).

Members of the public: J Crowe, C Crowe, D Harris, R Naylor, I Johnston, R Hawkins, P Cotell, M Cox, D Stevens, J Holt, S Holt, M Kemp & R Kemp.

****Cllr Mottram welcomed all present and opened the Planning Meeting:-**

1. Apologies for absence: Vice-Chair Bill Donald. It was also noted that Councillor Helen Gibb had that day resigned as a member of the Parish Council, due to personal commitments.

2. Declarations of Interest: 5c) Cllr Stephens: Interest as applicant.

3. Minutes of a meeting held on 08 February 2017 were signed as a true record: proposed by Cllr Thomas, seconded by Cllr Chapman; agreed unanimously.

4. Matters arising from those Minutes: Cllr Hill had not yet managed to contact planning officer Karen Guest to confirm 'Conditions of Variations' on application 15/11764/VAR, for the Pond Wall.

****Cllr Mottram invited Cllr Hill, Lead Cllr for Planning, to continue the business of the Planning Meeting.**

Plans for discussion

Council Members were reminded by **TH** that when considering planning applications they must follow the guidance outlined in the UPC Planning Policy and Procedure document (UPC/18) and its incorporated Statutory Authorities/Governing Documents, all of which can be found on the Wiltshire Council or Urchfont Parish Council websites. Also that they should have regard to the visual impact upon the surrounding area and its relationship to adjoining properties.

****Urchfont Parish Council's role, as a Consultee, is to provide Wiltshire Council with UPC's views, which will be based on a balanced view across the Urchfont Parish community.**

NB: The meeting will be adjourned at the beginning of each Planning Application to enable members of the Public to express their views on that particular application.

5. Plans for discussion

5a) 17/00438/FUL - Full Planning Application for Retrospective permission for the erection of a 1.8 mtr high, close-board Wooden Fence to the side elevation of 10 Manor Close, Urchfont, Devizes, Wilts., SN10 4RE, for Mr Colin & Mrs Janet Crowe.

***To date, 6 letters of representation had been received by WC Planning Office and/or UPC.**

No site meeting required, as all Cllrs had viewed independently.

SJ read out those that had been sent to UPC and also a statement from Mrs Crowe, Applicant:-

- Due to Mr Crowe's illness a low maintenance home and garden was needed and thought the easiest way of achieving that was to erect a fence so that Mrs Crowe could focus on her husband and not worry about the garden becoming overgrown and unsightly. While low maintenance was the main concern, privacy in their back garden and a sense of security were also considerations.
- The fence does not interfere with a driver's line of sight as it is set well back from the road, especially near the corner.
- Mrs Crowe did contact someone in the village who she'd been told would know about planning and he could see no problem with a fence. She is uncertain as to whether the height was discussed. It never occurred to Mr & Mrs Crowe that height would be an issue, as they could see similar height fences and walls along the road. Had also read that the Parish Council were concerned about shrubs overhanging pavements, so thought the best way to avoid that would be a fence.

They wish to apologise for not applying for planning permission first but were totally unaware it would be needed.

Below – Paragraph read from a statement concerning the Parish Draft Neighbourhood Plan:-
“One of the characteristics of Urchfont ‘Villagescape’ is open plan frontages, where boundaries are either open or consist of low walls and hedges especially in the areas of more modern development such as Manor Close, Bowdens, The Orchard and Walnut Close. In acknowledgement of this, Policy D1 in the Parish’s Draft UWL Neighbourhood Plan states that development will be supported if it is of an appropriate scale, layout and form which respects the existing rural locality and reflects local distinctiveness (para 2A) and respects “the character and appearance of the street” (para 2C).”

TH read out the following extract from the Wiltshire Council Planning Portal;

The Planning Portal states;

You will need to apply for planning permission if you wish to erect or add to a fence, wall or gate and:

- it would be over 1 metre high and next to a highway used by vehicles (or the footpath of such a highway); or over 2 metres high elsewhere;*
- or, your right to put up or alter fences, walls and gates is removed by an article 4 direction or a planning condition;*
- or, your house is a listed building or in the curtilage of a listed building.*
- The fence, wall or gate, or any other boundary involved, forms a boundary with a neighbouring listed building or its curtilage.*

*You will **not** need to apply for planning permission to take down a fence, wall, or gate, or to alter, maintain or improve an existing fence, wall or gate (no matter how high) if you don't increase its height. **In a conservation area**, however, you might need planning permission for relevant demolition in a conservation area to take down a fence, wall or gate.*

***You do not need planning permission for hedges** as such, though if a planning condition or a covenant restricts planting (for example, on "open plan" estates, or where a driver's sight line could be blocked) you may need planning permission and/or other consent.*

DM The applicant’s property is a bungalow on a corner plot and the owners wish for some privacy. The fence they have erected extends from the neighbouring Electricity Sub-station, towards the bend of the road, then cuts across the garden to the corner of the bungalow. It does not carry on along the front boundary of the property.

NM In sympathy with the owners with regard to their privacy requirements but feels the fence is incredibly dominant and adversely affects the streetscape. If such high fencing enclosed a number of the surrounding houses, the open and rural aspect of the properties in that area would be lost. Yes, the fence surrounding the Manor grounds is high but it blends into the woodland and is not particularly close to housing.

GD In his opinion the fence, as it stands, looks incongruous in the local setting.

DM Would agree that the wall and fencing further along the road, by the Beeches, is higher than a metre.

TH The taller fences and walls in the surrounding area are, for the most part, historical and were probably in place when the adjacent land was developed. In his opinion this fence is much too high, infringes the highway regulations, and should be reduced to 1 metre.

AS The fence as it stands looks harsh and dominant because it is new. A lot of hedging in the surrounding area appears to be very high. He has sympathy for the applicant’s desire for privacy.

TH Hedging of 1.8m would be permissible because permission is not normally needed to plant a hedge in your garden and there are no laws that say how high you can grow your hedge.

The Planning Committee found as follows:

17/00438/FUL - Cllr: Hill proposed that UPC Planning Committee **Object** to this retrospective application: Seconded by Cllr Mitchell; motion passed with 5 votes in favour and 1 against.

5b) 17/00916/FUL - Full Planning Application for Retrospective permission to Restore and Re-roof single storey existing Garden Shed/Store at ‘The Old School’, High Street, Urchfont, Wilts., SN10 4QH for Mr & Mrs Leigh.

*To date, 1 letter of representation had been received by WC Planning Office and/or UPC.

Site meeting held on Saturday 04/03/17 - 4 Parish Cllrs – (DM/JC/NM/GD), S Johnston & Mrs Leigh present.

**The Planning meeting was adjourned for public participation:-

Statement by Emma Leigh – Applicant

Dear Parish Council - Please accept my apologies for not being able to attend the Parish Council meeting on March 8th. I was very pleased to meet the Planning Group on Saturday morning and thank you so much for coming and visiting The Old School.

My husband and I do wish to apologise that this planning application has been in retrospect. When the work started I genuinely thought we were within the "permitted development" rules. All work stopped immediately it was pointed out to us that we were in contravention of Conservation Area policy.

Our aim is to restore the brick building, which we think used to be the school lavatories, and is outlined on the site plan, to put a pitched roof on the building to keep it in character with the main property and local conservation area. We would like to use it for garden storage and tools and to maintain The Old School to a high standard in keeping with the village. Of course, we now know this should be done through the correct channels and procedures of which we are recently aware. Yours sincerely, Emma Leigh.

Statement by Di Harris – The Grain Store (Next door neighbour)

I am reassured that the new drawings show the roof following the outline of the existing building, though I'm not sure I've grasped how the roof will be constructed. I am also worried about the height and the fact that it is visible behind my house from the drive. The comparison with the commercial Urchfont Motors garage is interesting, but I feel it has been chosen carefully to imply that the elevation has no impact on neighbouring properties. The outbuilding does of course have an impact on my property as the roof ridge is higher than my roof and can be seen above the roofline when viewed from the drive. This is of course due to the difference in level between Old School House garden and my drive. Although the drawings show the height of the roof to be 3.9 metres (and I challenge that), from my side of the boundary the proposed roof will be an additional 1.2 metres higher due to the different ground levels making the apex of the roof at least 5.1 metres above the path around the Grain Store - in fact it will be greater than that because I believe the measurements on the submitted drawings to be incorrect as, in my opinion, the height of the wall plate to the ridge is actually 1.8 metres, so the figure shown of 3.9 metres should be 4.2 metres (so not under 4 metres). I calculate the actual height of the proposed apex to be almost 5.7 metres above the path around my house.

Concerning the Roof pitch - I have lived in the Grain Store since 1984. For all that time the building in question had a flat tin roof. The builder carrying out the renovations at the Old School informed me that flat roofs did not exist when the building was first constructed but it was used as an outside toilet for the school and many outside primary school toilets had no roof at all, so it is inappropriate to 'assume' in a planning application that the building originally had a pitched roof. I have spoken with someone who lived opposite the school and attended between 1931 and 1936. He remembers the toilets having a corrugated tin roof with a shallow incline, just enough to allow water to run off. Certainly in living history (going back to 1931) the roof was not pitched or tiled.

****Public participation was closed and the planning meeting re-opened:**

JC The outbuilding in question may have had a flat roof at some time in the past but the proposed pitch appears appropriate and the roofing materials sourced are in keeping with the area. JH agrees that the Plans do not make it clear how the builder will deal with the angled corner of the building when fitting the roof: perplexed as to how he will 'slice' off the corner that extends across the neighbouring property.

DM UPC has to assume that, if approved, the planning application will be fully complied with.

GD Even after viewing, he found the plans confusing and could not understand why the corner roof joists had been constructed to extend over Ms Harris' property as they presently did. He would not object to a small pitch, as suggested, but would wish to see no roof obtrusion, only guttering.

NM This is a difficult rebuild as the back wall of the outbuilding is built on top of the boundary wall between the Grain Store and the Old School. The building is not completely rectangular as shown in the first set of drawings, therefore a traditionally shaped rectangular roof would extend past the back wall of the building. Not certain if guttering could extend across the boundary. Does not have a problem with the pitch and likes the Victorian roofing materials.

TH Could not attend the site meeting and not seen the roof from scaffold height. Was the height an issue?

GD The amount of scaffolding around it detracted from how it might eventually look.

JC Urchfont Garage is more obtrusive which in turn makes the pitch of this roof appear less obtrusive.

RT It was concerning that the first set of drawings presented with the application were quite inaccurate.

DM The updated drawings show the correct dimensions of the building and a roof plan which fits this shape. The proposed pitch has been kept to a minimum for the size of the building. It is probably conventional residential and any datum line would be hard to discern in that area of the village.

TH Latest hard drawn plans show the height as 3.9 mtrs, therefore UPC must accept the plans as submitted and leave it to WC to ensure they are complied with.

TH Should we support or object to this application?

The Planning Committee found as follows:

17/00916/FUL - Cllr: Day proposed that UPC Planning Committee **Support** this retrospective application **subject to** the proposed roof not protruding NE of the boundary wall and being constructed with materials sympathetic to the local environment: seconded by Cllr Mitchell; motion passed:- 5 votes in favour & 1 against.

5c) 17/01030/TPO – Works to TPO trees to consist of; Silver Birch (T1) - crown clean, and crown raise to give 1m clearance from top of hedge. Red Oak (T3) - crown clean, reduce crown and crown raise to 4m over neighbouring property to balance. Wild Cherry (T4) - crown clean, thin crown and remove stubs from previous work. Red Oak (T11) - crown clean and crown raise to 4m to give clearance over lawn and hedge. Common Oak (T10) - lift and reduce limbs on neighbours side to balance. Beech 'Asplenifolia' (T8) - crown clean. Crown raise to 4m to give clearance over lawn. Smooth Japanese Maple (T7) - minor crown lifting and balancing to give 4m clearance over lawn. Turkey Oak (T6) - crown raise to 6m (as per notification of Full Planning Permission E/2013/0246/FUL). Reduce crown by 25%: All at Jubilee House, Townsend, Urchfont, Devizes, Wilts., SN10 4RR, for Mr A Stephens.

*To date, no letters of representation had been received by WC Planning Office and/or UPC.

Site meeting held on Saturday 04/03/17 - 4 Parish Cllrs (DM/JC/NM/GD), S Johnston & Mr Stephens present. The Planning Committee found as follows:

- No objections have been made by neighbours.
- As the trees in question are under a tree preservation order, WC Arboricultural & Landscape Officer David Wyatt had visited the site and given advice on each individual tree.
- Mr Stephens' land contains one of the largest amounts of TPO's in the area.

DM A sensible approach to prevent overcrowding and consequent shadowing of smaller shrubs and plants.

TH This planning application is pleasing as it is not to fell trees but to care for them by reducing, balancing, crown cleaning and crown raising and, in TH's opinion, an excellent example of estate management.

17/01030/TPO - Cllr: Thomas proposed that UPC Planning Committee **Support** this application: Seconded by Cllr Day; motion passed unanimously.

5d) 17/01150/TPO – Works to TPO trees to consist of; 1 x Grey Poplar tree (T1)- Fell; at 'Moonacre', High Street (B3098), Urchfont, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 4RP, for Mr R Kemp.

*To date, no letters of representation had been received by WC Planning Office and/or UPC.

Site meeting held on Saturday 04/03/17 - 4 UPC Cllrs (DM/JC/NM/GD), S Johnston, Mr & Mrs Kemp present. The Planning Committee found as follows:

DM This magnificent Grey Poplar is the subject of a tree preservation order but its roots are blocking the drains of Moonacre quite badly and are also rising through and damaging the surrounding lawn. They have also become a trip hazard. It is a mature tree which was unlucky enough to have a house built far too close to it. It is a sad dilemma as to its fate.

JC Very sympathetic towards the householders but has more sympathy for the tree, as it stands approx 80ft high, is possibly 100 years old and is a complete eco-system in itself. The Neighbourhood Plan states that mature trees will be protected where possible so does that apply to this tree? It is also part of the 'scenescape' in that area of the village and could have another 100 years of life left in it. JC cannot support an application to destroy such a marvelous natural structure.

NM Agrees the tree is wonderful but it is having a serious effect on the property. Has much sympathy for the householders who, because of the root invasion, are having a great deal of problems with their drains.

GD In his opinion the house should never have been erected where it was and, although a very sad decision to have to make, he would reluctantly agree to support its felling.

17/01150/TPO - Cllr: Day proposed that UPC Planning Committee **Support** this application: Seconded by Cllr Thomas; motion passed by 4 in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention (Cllr had not viewed the tree).

5e) 17/01292/TCA – Works to tree in a Conservation Area to consist of; 1 x Cherry tree (T2) – Fell; at 'Moonacre', High Street (B3098), Urchfont, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 4RP, for Mr R Kemp. Site meeting held on Saturday 04/03/17 – 4 Parish Cllrs (DM/JC/NM/GD), S Johnston, Mr & Mrs Kemp present.

The Planning Committee found as follows:

- No objections have been made by neighbours.
- A sad looking tree in a poor state, suffering from past mismanagement.

17/01292/TCA - Cllr: Day proposed that UPC Planning Committee **Support** this application: Seconded by Cllr Thomas; motion passed unanimously.

5f) 17/01259/FUL Full Planning Application for Extension to existing hay Storage Barn at Marsh Lane Barns, Marsh Lane, Urchfont, Devizes SN10 3PR, for J M Bodman Ltd (c/o Martin Bodman, Knights Leaze Farm, Urchfont, Wilts., SN10 4RA.

*To date, no letters of representation had been received by WC Planning Office and/or UPC.

Site meeting held on Saturday 04/03/17 at which 4 Parish Cllrs (DM/JC/NM/GD) & S Johnston were present.

The Planning Committee found as follows:

DM Every time that UPC visits this site there seems to be another cleared corner of land that needs filling in. Found upon visiting that hedging and trees had been uprooted but is aware that the farmer is entitled to do so on agricultural land. The issue for DM is how the farmer intends to proceed with this development in the future and he would wish for some dialogue between UPC and Mr Bodman.

JC Although this area is outside the ANOB (Area of Natural Beauty), it is only just so. It is still in the Pewsey Vale and that land is characterized by small hedges and woodland. He is concerned by the tearing out of a significant amount of hedging and the large, unsightly, half rubble bund bounding one side of the site. The storage barns being constructed at Marsh Barns look more suited to an industrial site and are very obtrusive. He is also unhappy with the 'bite by bite' approach being applied with every successive planning application. The draft UWLNP CN1 refers to protecting the landscape. JC would wish for these issues to be addressed by UPC with the farmer.

TH stated that the NP also recognizes that farming is an important local economy and should be supported; therefore one probably negates the other.

RT Being a rural farming area, we must support the farmers. These storage barns could have been sited at Knights Leaze Farm, therefore being where they are lessens the necessary agricultural traffic through the village. Could UPC request that replanting works be carried out?

17/01259/FUL - Cllr: Thomas proposed that UPC Planning Committee **Support** this application **subject to** new hedging being replanted and additional landscaping works carried out: Seconded by Cllr Mitchell; motion passed with 5 votes for and 1 against.

6. Decisions received from Wiltshire Council since 02 February 2017

6a) 15/11764/VAR - Variation of Condition 6 of Planning Permission E/2012/0147/FUL to enable agreement of alternative pond wall repair scheme and timetable for works: all at Manor Farmyard, Urchfont, Devizes, Wilts., SN10 4QP for Redcliffe Homes Ltd. **Approve with Conditions**

6b) 16/12296/FUL - Full Planning Application for a proposed Conservatory to the rear of 'Pillings', Cuckoo Corner, Urchfont. Devizes, Wilts., SN10 4RA, for Mr Mark Hulse. **Approve with Conditions**

6c) 17/00465/TCA – Works to Trees in a Conservation Area to consist of: Walnut – Fell. Holly - Fell 2 x Sycamore - Fell. Birch – Fell; all at Green Farm, The Green, Urchfont, Wilts., SN10 4RB for Mr Will Corke **No Objection**

7. Matters for Report

As a courtesy gesture, Mr Steve Harbour (QDOS Homes Ltd) had delivered, to Councillor Trevor Hill, a preview of his proposed plans for the Beeches site in Blackboard Lane. Mr Harbour has been in contact with all the people he felt may be affected by the development and held consultations with them, in the hope of reducing any past objections. He was also meeting with the planning officer for pre submission consultation. These plans, as presented, are now with the Planning Administrator for all Parish Councilors to view if they so wish.

There being no other business, the Planning Meeting closed at 8:00 pm.

The proposed date of the next Planning Meeting is **Wednesday 12 April 2017** at **7:00 pm** in Urchfont Village Hall: preceding the Full Council meeting.

Planning Administrator Sandra Johnston – 01380 848774 – 07808 124721 – sandra-j@virgin.net

NB Hard copies of all Planning Applications & Plans are with the Planning Administrator and may be inspected by arrangement at any time. Planning Applications and their documents should also be visible on www.urchfont-pc.gov.uk or go to www.wiltshire.gov.uk and click on 'Planning Applications' – 'Planning applications online' - 'Search by planning application number'.

Signed Date