

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE OF URCHFONTS PARISH COUNCIL held on Wednesday 11 January 2017 at 7:00pm in the Conference Room of Urchfont Village Hall.**

**Present:** UPC Chair Dave Mottram (DM) Vice Chair Bill Donald (BD) Lead of Planning Trevor Hill (TH) Cllrs: John Chapman (JC) Graham Day (GD) Andy Stephens (AS) Royston Thomas (RT) & Planning Administrator Sandra Johnston.

**Also present:** Parish Clerk Bob Lunn (BL), Mr S Harbour - Qdos, Mr R Smith - Ashley Designs and 8 members of the public.

Cllr Mottram opened the meeting by welcoming all present. The meeting was then handed over to Cllr Hill, Lead Councillor for Planning, to continue the business of the meeting.

**A Presentation by QDOS Homes on proposed further planning options for 'The Beeches' site:**

Given by Mr Steve Harbour, Managing Director of Qdos, and Mr Roger Smith of Ashley Design Associates.

Statement by Councillor Hill:

"This presentation will form part of the 'public presentation time' during the planning meeting but the time allocation for such presentations may be extended at the discretion of the Chair.

Nothing that a member of Urchfont Parish Council says during the presentation, including the content of their questions, shall represent any form of commitment on the part of UPC.

Planning Applicants should note that any information gleaned from Urchfont Parish Council at a pre-planning application presentation should be considered as being received without prejudice to any decision the Parish Council may make as consultees on any subsequent formal planning application. Formal planning meetings will be the subject of publicity and public consultation in accordance with the UPC Policy and Procedure Document. During such meetings other matters may come to light, in relation to the application, that may result in additional information and issues being raised that are pertinent to the determination of the application and Urchfont Parish Council's final decision".

Councillor Hill then invited Qdos to give their presentation;

Statement by Mr Steve Harbour - MD of Qdos.

Mr Harbour had bought the property known as 'The Beeches', in Blackboard Lane, Urchfont, approximately 15 months ago. In the intervening period his company, Qdos, had drawn up several schemes for developing the site upon which the property stands and submitted two planning applications to Wiltshire Council. After consideration of these applications [and in their role as a consultee of WC] UPC had submitted an objection to each and both applications had eventually been refused by WC. Qdos had lodged an Appeal with the Inspectorate on the last application, which had subsequently been overturned. Mr Harbour believed the main causes of the refusals to be overlooking and the close proximity of houses to each other. Mr Harbour now wished to discuss more development options with UPC in the hope that he might gain an insight into what might be acceptable to both the Parish Council and the community.

Statement by Mr Roger Smith – Architect.

\*\* Mr Smith provided 3 alternative rudimentary block plans for perusal by UPC and the public.

- 1) The Beeches site has several constraints due to the existing trees (TPO's & root zones) and surrounding houses, added to which the Wiltshire Council guidelines (i.e. proximity & overlooking) add further requirements. The latter require rear private gardens to be a minimum of 10.5 metres deep (34'6") – 22 metres (72') is recommended between facing elevations and 11 metres (36') between principle and gable elevations. The actual development area is quite tight.
- 2) In development each additional dwelling increases the number of car spaces or garages required. This in turn reduces the square area of floor space that can be provided for each dwelling.
- 3) An arbitrary wish to produce 'X' number of dwellings on a particular site is dependent on the existing constraints of the site.
- 4) In the case of this site four dwellings have proved to be a problem, even when a mixture including some smaller units is proposed. However, most of the criteria can be met.
- 5) The optimum square area total for the site is 5,000 square feet (465 sq.m) therefore...
  - a) A 2 house option is the easiest form to achieve the optimum. (Alternative 1)
  - b) However, 3 houses provide a more satisfactory form related to the grain of the surrounding

development. It has good spacing between each dwelling and also the adjoining properties. It also meets all the authorities' criteria and takes account of the planning inspector's comments. (Alt. 2)

c) Mixing house types to provide some modest three bedroom dwellings and 1 bungalow can produce the optimum floor area for the site. This option does, however, result in a more cramped layout but is the most that can be achieved within the constraints of the site. (Alternative 3)

6) Architectural styles are not an issue as these can reflect the local vernacular, it being eclectic.

**TH** Pointed out that following the Examiners Report some recommended amendments to the Neighbourhood Plan could allow more latitude on site dwelling numbers. In his report the Planning Case Officer identified that this site was not suitable for 5 large dwellings. The Planning Officer also stated that in respect of the previous planning application for The Beeches:- *"Having regard to the type and size of houses expected to be delivered throughout the area covered by the UWLNP and as specified within policy H2, the proposed development does not provide an overall predominance of 2 & 3 bedroom houses, or small scale housing units for older people"*

**S Harbour** replied that the area and site virtually precluded the building of modest bungalows and semi-detached houses. Low cost housing is usually built on low cost land. Urchfont is an area in which the most modest property has a high price tag in relation to cheaper areas. A newly built modest semi-detached in Urchfont would not be marketed at 150K as it might be elsewhere.

**DM** opined that the Neighbourhood Plan Examiner (Ann Skippers) has indicated that whilst indicative figures for each development site have been included in NP's, these figures should remain just that; indicative to allow for any site specific considerations to be taken account of.

**BD, JC & RT** agreed that plan 3 addressed problems of proximity and the proposed properties might cost less but it was difficult to put the block plans into perspective, there being no elevations. Plan 2 has no bungalows but habitable rooms in the two storey dwellings appear to have no overlooking windows. Constraints on the site, as previously mentioned, preclude another semi-detached property.

**TH** Urchfont Parish Council would support an appropriate development on this site; one which met the requirements of the UWLNP policies.

**GD** [sic] 'For myself, and I hope the rest of UPC, comments about the deficiencies of previous applications [for this site] and our guidance for future plans are all contained in the letter we recently submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. I also think that the comment about the price of land in Urchfont precluding the development of affordable houses is something of a red herring. The transfer price for The Beeches was set in direct negotiation between the seller of the plot and the buyer of the plot. A developer minded to develop affordable housing would surely ensure that the price paid to purchase the land was commensurate with this objective'.

**Linda Clow, resident of Manor Close** – Having viewed the 3 rudimentary planning options presented to UPC that evening, Mrs Clow expressed the view that, although certain aspects of the proposals were encouraging, she and her fellow neighbours were disappointed not to have been contacted by Mr Harbour or his architect regarding the drawing up of these new options. Until sight of the agenda for the UPC Planning meeting, residents had no knowledge that this presentation was to take place. She spoke for all when she appealed directly to Mr Harbour to work with those neighbouring residents who would be most affected by the development of the Beeches site. These residents were not against development of the site and wished to work with, not against, the developer towards a satisfactory conclusion for all parties.

\*Cllr Mottram thanked Mr Harbour & Mr Smith for their post-planning presentation.

\*\*Cllr Hill opened the Planning Meeting:-

**1. Apologies for absence:** Cllrs Baker, Gibb & Mitchell. Wiltshire Cllr Philip Whitehead.

**2. Declarations of Interest:** 5a) UPC: non-pecuniary Interest. 5a) Cllr Stephens: pecuniary Interest.

5b) Cllr Thomas: non-pecuniary Interest.

**3. Minutes of a meeting** held on 14 December 2016: were signed as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Day, Seconded by Cllr Chapman; agreed unanimously.

**GD** pointed out that a correction was needed to the wording of the Minutes at item 6: Decisions from Wiltshire Council. At 6b), to avoid public confusion, the words *'and insertion of a second dormer to west elevation'* should be omitted, \* A rider has subsequently been added to the December 2016 Planning Minutes at item 6b).

**4. Matters arising from those Minutes:**

7i) **T.H.** Non-compliant Planning issue concerning the erection of a 6ft roadside fence in Manor Close: As

actioned in the Planning Minutes of 09 Nov 2016.

Following the report by UPC to WC regarding a possible breach of planning in Manor Close, a letter was sent by WC to the house in question, requesting they either reduce the fence to one metre or present a *retrospective planning application to WC Planning Department. No answer as yet.*

## **5. Plans for discussion**

Council Members were reminded 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.**

**5a) 16/12122/TCA** – Works to Trees in a Conservation Area to consist of; Sycamore tree – Remove 1 limb and crown raise to 5m. Eucalyptus tree - Reduce height to 3m/4m. 2 x Birch trees – Crown raise by 2m. Cherry tree – Remove lower limbs. All at Cuckoo Farmhouse, Cuckoo Corner, Urchfont, Devizes, Wilts., for Mr Alistair Everett.

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

A site meeting was held on 07/01/17 at which 6 Parish Cllrs, S Johnston & Mr Everett were present.

**\*\*TH** – Urchfont Parish Council declares a Non-pecuniary Interest in respect of this application, as it accepts and acknowledges that the applicant has, and is, currently acting on behalf of UPC on legal matters relating to other Parish Council business. Urchfont Parish Council does not, however, feel that this Interest adversely affects its ability to make a balanced judgment on this planning application.

The Planning Committee found as follows:

- Mr Everett informed UPC that his back garden was in need of management. Works suggested by Will Corke would allow more light whilst preserving existing trees and shrubs.

**GD** A most beneficial tidy-up / **TH** A sensible approach to the problem .

**16/12122/TCA** - Cllr: Hill proposed that UPC Planning Committee **Support** this application: Seconded by Cllr Day; motion passed with 5 votes in favour - **AS** abstaining.

**5b) 16/12301/TCA** - Works to Trees in a Conservation Area to consist of; 1 x Sumac – Fell. 1 x Hazel - Coppice. 1 x Cherry – Crown raise/reduce to give 3m clearance. Ash x 2 – Fell. 1 x Hazel – Coppice. 1 x Eucalyptus - Fell. 1 x Ash - Fell. 1 x Pine - Crown raise to 4m. 1 x Hawthorn - Reduce by 40%. 1 x Hazel – Coppice. 1 x Pine - Crown raise to 5m. 1 x Cherry - Fell. 2 x Fruit trees – Fell. 1 x Conifer – Fell. 1 x Hazel – Coppice. 1 x Ash – Coppice. 1 x Hazel – Coppice. Lonicera hedge - Reduce to 3m. Mixed hedge - Reduce to 3m. All at 'Larchcombe' Peppercombe Lane, Urchfont, Devizes, Wilts., SN10 4QR, for Mr Sean Ebsworth Barnes.

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

A site meeting was held on 07/01/17 at which 6 Parish Cllrs, S Johnston & Will Corke (agent) were present.

- Will Corke (Green Farm Tree Care) helpfully identified individual trees & shrubs for all present at the site meeting. He explained the purpose of the proposed works, which is to remove self-seeded areas and shrubs which harm the overall balance of the garden and restore neglected areas to their former glory. In due course, some replacement fruit trees will be planted.
- Cllrs wished to thank Will Corke for attending the site meeting and for his information and advice. His help in identifying all relevant trees and shrubs was invaluable.
- **DM** This application would appear to be a mass de-forestation but the trees to be felled represent less than 10% of those on site. The proposed application is for almost the minimum of work that needs carrying out to let light and air in to existing plants and shrubs.
- **TH** Agreed and added that those trees to be felled were relatively small trees.
- **JC & GD** endorsed the previous statements; **JC** adding he'd had reservations that the amount of work proposed could cause possible detriment to songbirds but was reassured this would not be a problem.

**16/12301/TCA** - Cllr: Day proposed that UPC Planning Committee **Support** this application: Seconded by

Cllr Stephens; motion passed unanimously.

## **6. Decisions received from Wiltshire Council since 08 December 2016**

6a) **16/10415/FUL** - Full Planning Application for a proposed single storey rear extension at Paddock View, Bowdens, Urchfont, Wilts., for Mr & Mrs N Fowler. **Approve with Conditions**

6b) **16/10617/FUL** - Full Planning Application for the Erection of a two storey extension to the West end of Townsend House, The Bottom, Urchfont, Devizes, Wilts., SN10 4SF for Mr D Summers. **Approve with Conditions**

6c) **16/10921/TCA** - Works to Trees in a Conservation Area to consist of; 1 no. Copper Beech - Reduce by 20% and crown raise by 3-4m. 3 no. Pine Trees – to Fell. All at The Old Bakehouse, High Street, Urchfont, Devizes, SN10 4QL for Mrs C Charlesworth. **No Objection**

6d) **16/10981/TCA** - Works to Trees in a Conservation Area to consist of: 1 no. Sycamore tree - Pollard to remove overhanging branches and increase light levels, at Breach House, Cuckoo Corner, Urchfont, Devizes, Wilts., SN10 4RA, for Mr Philip Milanes. **No Objection**

## **7. Matters for Report**

**TH - Meeting between Karen Guest** (WC Senior Planning Officer) and **UPC Cllrs Mottram & Hill**

Re: POND WALL Planning Variation Application 15/11764/VAR - at 2pm on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

- **TH** received email from KG requesting discussion on Pond Wall, which resulted in the above meeting.
- **KG** outlined the sequence of events and WC criteria which lead to current position;
  - Important point of note - Pond wall would not normally fall within the planning office remit, as repairs to a wall of this type would not require planning permission.
  - It was included with the Manor Farm development on this occasion by the Conservation Officer, Helen Garside, due to its important position to safeguard the character of the conservation area.
  - The WC Planning Office position is that it is less concerned with the long-term engineering structure of the wall but more to ensure that it meets the standards of the conservation officer, i.e. it is reasonably structurally sound and 'looks' acceptable.
  - Original schedule of work to repair the wall was rejected by the Conservation Officer as it was considered by her that the over engineering works proposed would not be sympathetic with the walls original construction. These elements included the introduction of large section of concrete to support the rear of the wall.
  - The second planning variation application i.e. the Craddy's report, suggesting an on-going monitoring programme of the wall, was also not acceptable as it did not provide any schedule of actual work or any time scale for that work to be undertaken.
  - KG had asked Redcliffe Homes to submit a detailed schedule of work with the latest planning variation application but Redcliffe Homes conceded they were unable to submit such a schedule until such work started, as they would not be sure, until then, of the extent of the work required.
  - To that end KG is proposing to accept the latest variation application and to place conditions upon it with stipulation that once work has started and a better understanding of the work needed is identified, a more detailed schedule of work is submitted and reviewed to ensure that it meets the planning objective within an acceptable time scale.

**GD** Asked for a précis of what was discussed in the meeting.

**DM** Explained why original schedule of work by Eastwood and Partners was rejected by the Conservation Officer: it being over engineered. The Craddy's report did not provide sufficient information and was rejected by the Planning Officer. These rejections were instigated by the Conservation & Planning Officers and not by Redcliffe Homes. UPC objections to the latest variation of application 15/11764/VAR had concerned Karen Guest enough to call a meeting. In total agreement with UPC objections but will approve the application, subject to the condition that a new and detailed schedule of works be first shown to the Conservation & Planning Officers. The Planning Officers priority is visual impact and to conserve the original look of the wall.

**DM** UPC has been going down a more structural route than that being followed by WC Planning Dept.

**BD** If there is no onus on Wiltshire Council to ensure that Pond Wall is completely, and structurally, safe, might not the residents of Manor Farmyard be landed with a big repair bill at some time in the future?

**DM** Structural options are being left open until the wall is opened up during works.

**GD** What is the time scale for Conservation works? **TH** The exact time scale would depend on how much work was needed, certainly within months rather than years.

**GD** Opined that it would seem as if the original conditions established by the Planning arm of WC were actually prompted by the Conservation arm of WC, and the latter seem to focus on 'conservation' in the here and now as against something which extends over time. As a result, they appeared to be struggling to decide exactly what should be done to ensure the original planning condition is satisfied or the timescale in which it should be achieved. He would suspect the planners regretted issuing the original condition. Once Wiltshire Council's planning conditions have been complied with, then the responsibility for any future developments will lie with Redcliffe Homes.

**JC** It would appear that WC's point of view is that they are less concerned about whether the pond wall is structurally sound and more concerned about whether it meets the Conservation Officer's requirements. Of course the condition of the wall in the future will be a matter that much concerns its owners, presently Redcliffe Homes Ltd., although they intend to transfer ownership to Manor Farmyard Management Co Ltd.

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

**Brenda Potter** – Resident: - The wall is the responsibility of the people that bought the Manor Farmyard land from John Snook. John Snook's Father built Pond Wall to be structurally sound and to last and it is important to the community that the wall is conserved as it stands and is maintained in the future.

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

**RT** Be assured that the Conservation Officer has an interest in how the wall looks.

**RT** Our thanks to Cllrs Mottram & Hill for meeting with the Planning Officer and reporting back in depth.

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

**Kevin Macevoy** – Manor Farmyard informed the meeting that he believed there was now a delay to the works schedule and scaffolders would not be arriving on site until 06/02/17, with the Contractor starting on 13/02/17 and finishing no later than 28/05/17.

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

**JC** Would it be possible for UPC to remind WC and Redcliffe Homes that the intended schedule of works and its timing could have an adverse affect on the Urchfont Scarecrow Festival (03 – 05 May) and on Urchfont Best Kept Village in June?

There being no other business, the Planning Meeting closed at 7:55 pm.

The proposed date of the next Planning Meeting is **Wednesday 08 February 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](mailto: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](http://www.urchfont-pc.gov.uk) or go to [www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk) and click on 'Planning Applications' – 'Planning applications online' - 'Search by planning application number'.

Signed .....

Date .....