

HAMPTON LOVETT AND WESTWOOD PARISH COUNCIL WORCESTERSHIRE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17th January 2024

PRESENT

Councillors:

Cllr G.D. Crow (Chairman)

Cllr F. Walker

Cllr J. Pointon

Cllr. C. Ellson-Evans

Cllr C. Day

Ms Jemma Towers (RFO & Clerk)

The Chairman plus more than 2 members being present, there was a quorum.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr Brookes gave her apologies.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There was no declaration of interest declared.

3. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

Whilst members of the public may not take part in the Parish Council meeting itself, they are invited to give their views and question the Parish Council on issues on this agenda, or raise issues for future consideration at the discretion of the Chairman during a half an hour period at the end all meetings. The participation of members of the public is valued by the Parish Council and the importance of their involvement is recognised by the Councillors.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from 27/09/2023 were confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were signed accordingly.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

No matters arising from previous minutes

Cllr Crow confirmed under Item 7. Other Items and d. Community Vision for the future, where reference was made to "any concerns/complaints regarding the road being used need to be directed to Wychavon District Council and not the Parish Council or Councillors directly."

Wychavon District Council was incorrectly identified and the correct organisation to direct any concerns or complaints to is Worcestershire County Council.

6. DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS UPDATE

Cllr Day was heavily involved in the discussion regarding the planning appeal application for APP/H180/W/22/3305934, which concerns the planning application for the erection of up to 102 dwellings, new vehicular access, pedestrian access and associated works for a site at Kidderminster Road, Hampton Lovett.

Cllr Day did confirm that there is a new Head of Planning, Ian Mccloud who has worked in Birmingham and has a lot of experience.

7. OTHER ITEMS

Cllr Crow raised concerns regarding the dog walking site which is now open. Cllr Crow explained that there is no clear way of identifying the entry to the site and that it is fundamentally dangerous. Cllr Day confirmed that Highways would have assessed this and that they have deemed it to be safe.

8. PLANNING

There was a significant turnout of residents from Doverdale Park at this evening's meeting. Cllr Crow welcomed all those who were present and thanked them for taking the time to attend the Parish Council meeting. Cllr Crow identified the unity and the desire of the residents of Doverdale Park and the wider Parish to submit their objections to the proposed planning application.

Cllr Crow explained that the impact of this appeal is significant, as is the Levelling Up Department's decision to give Beechcroft, the appellants £28,000. Cllr Crow explained that it is critical that all objections to the planning application are submitted and confirmed that such objections need to be submitted by 1 February 2024. The inquiry will be held mid-February.

Having provided a summary, Cllr Crow invited the Secretary of Doverdale Park Residents Association (DPRA) to share the Park's views. The Secretary explained that a letter had been drafted which was due to be sent to the Inspectorate in Bristol and read this to those present at the meeting. The letter highlighted that this is now the third application in relation to this proposal and it has left the residents feeling anxious and upset. The residents had considered it to be a closed matter, however its re-opening shows a flagrant disregard for the community; residents are frustrated and this situation is having a significant effect on the health and wellbeing of such residents. The Secretary explained that the impact has forced the Association to form a core committee of residents to ensure that all the voices of the residents are heard. The Secretary then shared the new information which they will be submitting to dissuade the Inspectorate from allowing the application, which included but is not limited to:

- Late notification of the appeal leading to a request for a time extension being granted until 1 February 2024. It is not clear why there was such late notification.
- The mental stress is overwhelming
- The detrimental impact on the community
- No consideration for the Grade 1 Church
- Flooding on the site since the previous appeal, which has been documented.
- Possible contamination of site due to the burning of animals years ago
- Wildlife monitoring and involvement of British Trust for Ornithology

The conversation then turned to why this appeal had been allowed. Cllr Day explained that it is his understanding that the last Inspector made an error of judgement. This error has been accepted by the Secretary of State and this is why it is being reheard. Cllr Day confirmed that this is entirely a problem within Planning Inspectorate in Bristol.

In terms of support, Cllr Day confirmed that Wychavon are opposed. Cllr Day confirmed that new arguments against the planning application are required; he confirmed that the previous arguments stand already. Cllr Day said that the enthusiasm and support is great, that all the

letters that have gone in already will show a real fight and that the submission of letters voicing arguments against the proposal should continue.

Discussion then focused on the new arguments to be submitted:

SWDP

- Cllr Day explained that Wychavon are now further forward with the SWDP than they were 6 months ago and the SWDP does not include the Park as an area of development. Cllr Day confirmed that the SWDP is with the Inspectorate in Bristol where it will be reviewed. Wychavon are committed to the SWDP that they have submitted, and in terms of the land involved in the current planning application, it is not a location which Wychavon have identified for building on.
- Cllr Price considered this issue in more detail and explained that in looking at the latest plan, the row of red squares which were part of the SWDP 2 months ago are now no longer in the plan and therefore not for development. Cllr Day alluded to Ombersley, in the sense that it is not in the plan but an application was submitted in any event. However, the fact that the land in relation to the application is now not included in the SWDP is a strong argument.
- Cllr Crow asked what the reasoning was for removing the land from the SWDP. No conclusive answer was provided for the marked difference

ACTION: Cllr Day to understand and share with the Parish Council the rationale for the land's removal.

ACTION: Cllr Day to provide the Parish Council with a copy of the SWDP which relates specifically to Hampton Lovett so it is clear what Wychavon have submitted.

Scale of Site

- A level 2 "Red" Constraint was raised (Appendix D) which states "Scale of site is inappropriate, for example by virtue of the settlements role in the settlement hierarchy, development would change the character of the settlement or would lead to an unnatural extension of the development boundary."
- Cllr Crow confirmed that the establishment of 102 houses would fundamentally change the character of Hampton Lovett. The development would bring at least an additional 214 people, and 214 people to a parish of 400-500 people is a huge amount. It will absolutely change the nature of the environment.
- Cllr Day recognised that the Boundary Commission had only very recently confirmed that Hampton Lovett is not part of Droitwich. Discussion was had regarding this demonstrating Hampton Lovett's individual character, that is it a rural area and 102 is a significant increase to the population of Hampton Lovett.

Significant Gap

- Cllr Crow explained that 20/30 years ago, there was an agreement with Wychavon District Council that the land which forms the land in the application would be retained as a "Significant Gap" to prevent Droitwich being joined to Cutnall Green and now this land is in dispute, the agreement needs to be reinforced.

- It has been recommend that this Significant Gap is retained previously, as surrendering this gap would threaten the openness and landscape character of the area.
- The Boundary Commission did not want to join Droitwich and Hampton Lovett and the Significant Gap is another clear example how the areas are distinguished.

It was held that the above three points will be submitted as the core objections for this third application.

Discussion was had regarding the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), however Cllr Day confirmed that he was unclear if there were any changes in the new NPPF from December, which would have an impact.

A discussion was then had regarding what if the application is accepted. Cllr Ellson-Evans highlighted the Design Code. Cllr Day confirmed that copies of the Design Code could be shared and that it is a really good document. Cllr Day explained that its purpose is to consider different designs for different categories; Wychavon is split into four areas. Cllr Day explained that there is some wrangling with the Code having legal force in the SWDP, and that there will be some frustration if it doesn't. The impact of the Code is that if a developer comes along, our expectations are demonstrated through the pictures and layouts included in the Code. It then makes it more challenging for a developer to dodge around those designs and encourages them to develop land in a way which is in keeping with the environment. Cllr Day explained that in reading the document, it really highlights how good the area around Droitwich is and that there is a real desire to make sure anything new fits in with the current environment if it comes to that.

Continuing this difficult discussion, Cllr Ellson-Evans stated that the residents of Doverdale Park wouldn't want people to be able to walk through the Park. Another resident confirmed that the new plan which has been submitted, if allowed, would result in a path directly at the back of her house, leaving no privacy as three sides of their garden are completely exposed and they are prohibited from erecting fences, which creates real security concerns. Cllr Day understood the significant concerns and advised that these are the type of situations which need to be submitted in objecting to the application.

Cllr Walker asked that if this third appeal is unsuccessful, could a further application be submitted. Cllr Day confirmed that developers have the right to try every two years.

Despite the conversation turning to "what if," Cllr Day praised those present at the meeting for being present and fighting hard. Cllr Ellson-Evans highlighted the strong representation from Doverdale Park and Cllr Day commented on how nice the community is.

Cllr Crow thanked Cllr Day for his attendance at the meeting and his participation. Cllr Crow then reminded all those at the meeting that any objections need to be submitted by 1 February 2024. The Secretary then explained that any resident who sends a submission, will be required to register online and that their submission will go directly to the Inspectorate; no one can see each other's submissions. The Secretary explained that all submissions will be reviewed, but only those which raise new points will be put before the Inspectorate. Further, the Secretary confirmed that those wanted to submit should not use the old reference to Wychavon: the reference is a much longer one and begin APP (as referenced in these minutes). A letter can also be sent but need there will need to be three copies.

9. FINANCE

To be discussed at the next meeting

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr Ellson-Evans confirmed that she will be standing down as Doverdale Park's representative on the Parish Council at the next AGM. Cllr Crow thanked Cllr Ellson-Evans for her time and commitment to the Parish Council and confirmed that advice would be sought from CALC regarding the advertisement of the post.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING