

DRAFT MINUTES OF PLANNING MEETING OF FIVEHEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Held on Monday 15 February 2021 at 1930 - Virtual meeting online using Zoom

Present:

Mrs K Beacham - Chair (KB); Mrs L Howard (LH); Mrs P Brett (PB); Mrs N Cameron (NC); Dr B Ferguson (BF); Mr K Male; Mr R Wynn; Mrs J Parsons - Clerk/RFO (JP)

Attendees confirmed that they understood remote meeting procedures and etiquette. KB advised that the meeting was being recorded using the Zoom facility and the recording would be deleted after the Minutes were agreed.

4066 Public participation

Around 19 households were welcomed to the online meeting. A statement was read out by a member of the public, highlighting concerns regarding the reprofiling of the landscaping at the north end of the plot, where a raised plateau of 3-4m had been prepared for one of the houses to be sited on stilts. The property would now overlook neighbouring properties and gardens, infringing their privacy. There were currently 19 comments on the SSDC website expressing similar concerns. The main issue was the proposed levels of this house, which now appeared to be excessively high. There appeared no justification in the existing plans for the reconfiguring of the landscape in this way and other changes already made would appear to be unauthorised and in breach of planning control. Trust in the developer/owner to follow the approved designs had been misplaced and communication had been poor, despite efforts to collaborate in the interests of good will/neighbourliness. Others supported these views, with one person adding that it might be better for the properties to be moved approx 6 metres south, from an overall village perspective, but it was important that the Parish Council should have sight of detailed plans before a decision was made. Everyone was in agreement that the other major problem faced was putting right the work that had already been done to the site, aside from the S73 application, which was the wholesale destruction of the natural woodland and wildlife habitat, and that this was a matter for SSDC Planning Enforcement.

KB explained that the Parish Council had been notified late on Friday 12 Feb by the site agent (Clive Miller Planning) that they were in the process of producing more architect plans for the site, but without sight of these, the Council could only work on the information that it had at the current time and make its decision accordingly.

An initial vote was taken, which indicated 16 people against and none in favour; (this was mainly via the chat function, with some abstentions due to cameras being off/no comment in the chat).

PB clarified that there were four elements to the S73 application and it was not just the case of moving the houses south; this would be explained further in the main part of the Parish Council meeting. Two further households joined the meeting at this point.

A member of the public spoke about the application for the Land North of Ganges Close expressing concerns over whether the housing would actually benefit the immediate parish; the design/materials not being in keeping with the style of housing already in the village; the impact of the new road on the neighbouring properties; and the impact on the wildlife which flourishes within the meadowland, including wildlife that had migrated from Glendale. Even though the development sounded small, it was not really necessary for the village, as other developments in Fivehead and Swell were already underway; the 5-year plan was complete and being a rural village where building is not required, it was time to say no. Another person agreed that there were no lower cost properties available for young people.

KB reminded everyone of the importance of completing the Housing Needs Assessment that had been issued recently, so the Parish Council would have a good idea of what is required in the village.

The public session closed at 7.51pm.

4067 Apologies for absence

None

4068 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

- a) KB and NC had previously declared interests (Min 3050) relating to planning matters at Min 4069a; this was no longer necessary as planning had now been agreed for the top of Ganges Close, closing it off and making the strip of land now under discussion totally separate to Ganges Close.
- b) NC declared an interest relating to matters at Min 4069b; no dispensation was given so she would be asked to withdraw from decisions as necessary.

4069 Planning

- a) **20/03111/FUL** - North of Ganges Close, Fivehead Taunton Somerset TA3 6PD - Construction of seven dwellings with associated infrastructure including drainage, landscaping and access works

i) a briefing paper had been circulated and PB summarised points including traffic/access issues (proposed plans being too narrow) and the impact on traffic on Butcher's Hill and the A378; missing ecological surveys and phosphates report; omission of drainage issues and high risk of flooding; heritage/character not being appropriate at a point of joining two settlements; lack of clarity on boundaries, hedging and perimeter walls. Overall, there was no presumption to build as the local plan is current, with a 6-yr housing supply, and Fivehead is classed as a rural settlement in open countryside, therefore protected from development.

ii) The initial response from the Housing Needs Assessment showed that 78% did not want further housing in Fivehead. Of the 7 houses, 2 were proposed to be lower cost without garages, but if consent was granted, later alterations might be applied for, which might see alternative design specifications, an increase to the number of houses on site and the lower cost housing being changed to market housing. This site was not considered suitable for building low-cost housing only, as it would require higher density building to be financially viable, which would not be in line with SSDC policy for this rural settlement.

iii) There had previously been a public consultation where a poor response had been received and many objections had been listed. Already there had been 14 objections from the public on SSDC website. There had been 6 previous planning applications on the land, all refused, including one by a planning inspector, and the situation had not changed. Other applications in the village had been passed because SSDC had not had its local plan up-to-date, but this was no longer the case.

iv) Taking into account the views of the public in the earlier part of the meeting, and comments on the SSDC website, Members voted unanimously against the application. A sub-group would meet to plan the full response, using PB's briefing document as a basis, and circulate this for approval by the full Council. Care would be taken to summarise the strongest points to highlight to SSDC Planning, to ensure the submission is not clouded with too much detail which could weaken the case. Once this had been agreed, it would be submitted to SSDC and also published on the Parish website, as it contained useful reference points for the public.

- b) **20/03631/S73** – Glendale, Butchers Hill, Fivehead - Allow change to siting of the three dwellings, minor changes to internal layout and elevations and amended landscaping scheme.

NC left the meeting at this point.

i) a briefing paper had been circulated to the Parish Council. PB summarised the paper and clarified the four elements of the application: moving all 3 houses south by 6.35m; amendments to the landscaping plan to accommodate the move; minor amendments to the internal layout, elevations and landscaping; and a request to amend/approve planning conditions (which deal with landscaping, tree protection, access, hard landscaping including levels, drainage, maintenance, and construction management). The developer states that these conditions have been discharged as requested on the first application with no changes.

ii) Concern over the level of Plot 1 had been covered in the earlier part of the meeting. The Council had been advised by the Planning Officer that if there was to be a significant change to the design of the houses or the position, then an entirely new application would have to be submitted. The PC could only be expected to make a judgement on the plans presented at this stage. It was

noted that in the 3 applications for this development there had been no detail given on heights. The PC had also not had sight of the landscape management plan submitted post-determination.

iii) Visual evidence of the current position on site would indicate that the landscape management plan, tree plan, ecological plan and mitigations had not been complied with. The dormice licence was missing and would require amendment for the additional hedge removal at the entrance.

iv) Post determination plans (highways, hard landscaping and drainage) had never been published despite being raised as contentious issues.

v) The request for Conditions 8 and 10 to be removed, as there are no communal areas, was incorrect.

vi) The Council discussed its concerns over the departure from what had originally been approved. Conditions had not been compiled with, the woodland setting had been totally obliterated, along with the wildlife habitat, and it would no longer be possible to conceal the buildings within landscaping, which had been the intention. Members voted unanimously against the application to vary the conditions, as what had happened on the site was already substantially different to what had been approved. It was noted that the issue of the potential excessive height of Plot 1 would also be raised and a request for any further plans to be made available for the Council to comment on. It was agreed that the matter would be reported to Enforcement with urgency, for abandoning the plans and conditions of the first application; the outcome might have a bearing on future plans. A sub-group would look at the detail of the submission, based on PB's briefing document, and take into account everything that had been said during the meeting. This would be circulated for approval by the full Council.

- c) PB had made contact with CPRE and they would be looking at the applications for both sites; also, Natural England had been notified about the missing licences for Glendale. LH queried who would be responsible for the restoration of the damage caused. It was understood that Planning Enforcement would take up the matter, if they were in agreement with the alleged breach.
- d) It was agreed that a sub-group of KB, PB, LH and the Clerk would meet via Zoom as soon as possible and Members were invited to send any further comments to the Clerk.
- e) KB encouraged everyone present at the meeting to write to SSDC Planning and/or Planning Enforcement with their comments.

4070 Matters of Report, Questions and Items for the Next Meeting

KB proposed that any future plans for the Glendale site be considered at a separate meeting to the scheduled Parish Council meetings. Members were all in agreement with this.

4071 Date of Next Meeting - Monday 1 March 2021 at 1930 via Zoom

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

Chairman.....

Dated.....