

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 7 MAY 2014, 7:30pm, IN THE MEETING ROOM PUCKLECHURCH COMMUNITY CENTRE, ABSON ROAD.

PRESENT. R. Symons Chairman, Mrs G. Boyle Vice Chairwoman, Mrs L. English, Mrs J. Hawkins, M Humphrey, M.C. Smith, Mrs T Symons, M.S. Watson.

Steve Reade, South Gloucestershire Councillor for Boyd Valley

Debra Duke (Clerk)

NO 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

None

NO 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

NO.3. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 APRIL 2014

It was noted that the PVSSC had confirmed that it was a not-for profit organisation.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

NO.4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

NO.6. FINANCE

No.6a. To Receive the Annual Finance Report, Financial Audit, End of Year Reconciliation, Budget Report April.

The accounts to the 31st March 2013 were agreed and Sections 1 & 2 of the Annual Return completed and signed. The clerk confirmed that the meeting with the internal auditor would take place on 23 May. A report from this would be presented to the meeting held on 4 June. The Clerk confirmed the Notice of Appointment of Date for the Exercise of Electors' Rights is on display to inform the electorate they can inspect the accounts.

RESOLVED:

Agreed the Annual Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2014

- Accounting Statements
- Annual governance statement

No.6b. To INSTRUCT cheques to be signed

Invoices would be approved at the meeting on 21 May 2014.

NO.7. CORRESPONDENCE

No.7a. Pony Party on the Rec

A request had been received from a resident about having ponies on the recreation field for a birthday party. Councillors said that pony rides had been given permission previously for Revel and that the organisers had to comply with certain conditions to ensure that no lasting damage was caused and the area left clean and tidy.

It was therefore requested that further information was provided before a decision could be made.

RESOLVED:

To ask for the following information in time for the meeting on 21 May to make a final decision:

- Which area of the recreation was intended to be used?
- Risk assessment and insurance provision for the event
- Number and size of the ponies
- Wet weather contingency plan.

No.7b. Bus Services complaint

Since the commencement of the First Bus service X49 some complaints had been received by the parish council. There had been complaints about the prices and the scheduling of the buses as they were often late.

It was noted that a General Manager had been on one of the morning bus services on 7 May 2014. Councillors were pleased that this step had been taken and hoped that passengers would continue to report issues to First and that they would then take the relevant actions.

A representative from First Bus would be attending the Annual Parish meeting on 14 May. Attendance would be double checked.

NO.7. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

No.7a. PK14/1477/F Change of use of agricultural land to Gypsy and Traveller Site (1 pitch), erection of access gates and installation of cess pit (Retrospective) Resubmission of PK13/2621/F. 85A Parkfield Road Pucklechurch BS16 9PS

A draft objection had been circulated. It contained the same reasons as the objection to PK13/2621/F. Further objections referenced the recent ministerial statements about protecting the green belt from development. The design and access statement submitted with the application raised no material differences except for health. The health information was being kept confidential by SGC therefore the parish council was not in a position to be able to comment on this. The parish council were disappointed that they could not see this evidence and the argument why this site was more appropriate than others. Government guidance said that health reasons were usually insufficient to outweigh general planning guidance. Objections had also been raised by highways and drainage.

RESOLVED: To submit the following objection

Pucklechurch Parish Council objects to this planning application for all the same reasons it offered when it was previously refused by SGC as PK13/2621/F. The Council requests that SGC make all correspondents who made comments on both PK11/3976/F and PK13/2621/F aware of this application and that the comments the Council makes below be provided in full to the appropriate committee.

Pucklechurch Parish Council's objections are encapsulated by SGC 's refusal notice as follows:

*"The site is located within the Bristol/Bath Green Belt and the proposal does not fall within the limited categories of development normally considered appropriate within the Green Belt. In addition, the applicant has not demonstrated that very special circumstances apply, such that the normal presumption against development in the Green Belt should be overridden. The proposal is therefore contrary to guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); and policies CS5 and CS34 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan Core Strategy (Adopted) December 2013; and the South Gloucestershire Development in the Green Belt SPD (Adopted) and having regard to the Ministerial Statement "Planning and Travellers" 2nd July 2013."*¹

On 17 January 2014 a written Ministerial statement to Parliament repeated the Secretary of State's position *"that unmet need, whether for traveller sites or for conventional housing, is unlikely to outweigh harm to the green belt and other harm to constitute the "very special circumstances" justifying inappropriate development in the green belt. The Secretary of State wishes to re-emphasise this policy point to both local planning authorities and planning inspectors as a material consideration in their planning decisions."*

Furthermore online Planning Practice Guidance relating to the Green Belt was published on behalf of the Government in March 2014 that reiterated the Ministerial Statement on Planning & Travellers - see House of Commons Library Standard Note SN/SC/934 last updated on 26/3/14. The same document reports that the Government has also said that it would consider improvements to planning policy and practice guidance to strengthen green belt protection including a review of the term 'travellers' with reference to planning law. The Government's planning policy is therefore very clear that both temporary and permanent traveller sites are inappropriate development in the green belt and that planning decisions should protect green-belt land from such inappropriate development.

Pucklechurch Parish Council has been consistent in its objection to proposals for all types of development that it considers inappropriate within the Green Belt and has expressed these views with reference to appropriate adopted and emerging national and local policy documents. *A Community Plan for Pucklechurch, Shortwood, Parkfield & Lyde Green* was adopted by Pucklechurch Parish Council in July 2010.

The plan is important for the area because it represents the wishes and aspirations of the community and is based on solid data provided by over 1200 residents. Almost 90% of those who responded said that the Green Belt should be preserved at all costs. The cumulative impact of the Gypsy & Traveller sites round Pucklechurch should be seen in the context of the local landscape and its overall settlement pattern – these sites are contributing towards ribbon development outside the village boundary and consequently impacting on the openness of the Green Belt surrounding it.

¹ South Gloucestershire Council TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 REFUSAL OF PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT notice, PK13/2621/F, issued 19th March 2014

The Design & Access statement provided with this re-submission offers nothing materially different in planning terms to what was offered in support of the previously refused application, except a reference to publically undisclosed health issues being offered as a special circumstance. It is impossible for us to comment on undisclosed information other than to say that there were ample opportunities for health issues to have been offered as a special circumstance. The agent who acted on behalf of the applicant's aunt, Mrs Wendy Ayres (PK11/3976/F finally disposed of 15/7/13) was certainly aware that health problems might be offered as a special circumstance, as evidenced by the correspondence between the agent and Roger Hemming, Senior Planning Officer at South Gloucestershire Council. Indeed Jo McKean, Welfare Liaison Officer, Ethnic Minority & Traveller Achievement Service, who wrote to report on the family circumstances, asserted there were no health issues.

The Parish Council believes the pertinent question which must be addressed is whether or not there are sufficiently compelling health reasons for the occupation of this particular site and no other.

In the recent appeal process relating to the refusal of permission to build a bungalow at 74 Parkfield Rd., SGC's own officers commented that the Local Planning Authority was not qualified to assess or comment on any medical assessment made in relation to the applicants and that government guidance (*The Planning System: General Principles*) has traditionally emphasised that personal circumstances can seldom outweigh more general planning considerations. In addition, the Inspector stated in the previous appeal decision that the health issues of the applicant were not very special circumstances and did not outweigh the resultant harm of the proposal.

Visual harm to the openness of the countryside is a material consideration and constitutes a breach of NPPF core principle 9. The harm to openness requires very special circumstances of more than substantial weight to justify any grant of planning permission. Clearly we are not aware of the nature of the condition offered as a special circumstance but we must also ask the question as to whether or not this condition can be ameliorated with treatment and if this is the case suggest that any reason that could be offered for the occupation of this particular site and no other would only therefore be temporary whilst the resultant harm of granting full permission would be permanent. SGC's own website states:

"When attempting to prove very special circumstances the onus is on the applicant to prove that the exceptional nature of the proposal outweighs the harm that it would cause to the Green Belt.

Circumstances that have been accepted as being 'very special' are very rare, but will often involve a specific judgement being made that no other option is available in light of the unique circumstances and individual case."

It is Pucklechurch Parish Council's view that whatever the medical information is that has been supplied it will therefore be unlikely to represent very special circumstances which outweigh the harm to the Green Belt through inappropriate development.

We would address specific points made within the Design & Access Statement as follows:

1. The site is unauthorised and has been since August 2011 when the temporary planning permission contingent on its occupation by Mrs Wendy Ayres expired - it is therefore not safeguarded. Reference: *Policy CS21* , which states that *In the case of sites with temporary planning permission, the site will be retained, or 'safeguarded' until such time as the existing permission expires and safeguarding status will no longer apply.*

2. The temporary permission and the appeal decision associated with it have no bearing on this application since it was relevant to Mrs Wendy Ayres and her immediate dependents alone.

3. The Ministerial statement makes it clear that unmet need alone is insufficient to outweigh Green Belt considerations.

4. The applicant did not apply for temporary permission but the efficacy of this was considered by Roger Hemming (Senior Planning Officer) within his circulated report and found wanting. In any case the granting of a temporary permission would not mitigate the harm done to the Green Belt.

5. It makes no difference whether or not the site once used to be the garden of 85 Parkfield Rd (there is actually no documentary evidence for this), what matters is its impact on the Green Belt. The house next door to this site is one of only a few traditional scattered dwellings that fronts on to Parkfield Rd. The new mobile home causes harm by virtue of its contribution to ribbon development and the harm it does to both the visual amenity and openness of the landscape by way of encroachment.

Finally Pucklechurch Parish Council would like it to be made clear that contrary to comments made by Officers during the discussion of the previously refused application, several complaints have been made to SGC enforcement with regard to the unauthorised occupation of this site.

NO.8. REPORTS

No.8a. Parish Councillors written reports

No.8b. Councillors report from Parish Council Saturday Open Morning

Councillors Smith and Humphrey had attended. Two residents had attended. One about a gravestone in the cemetery. It was suggested that families were notified when gravestones had been approved. However, the clerk dealt with the stone masons at this point and for plots prior to the issue of Exclusive Right of Burial Certificates may not have contact details for the applicant.

A concern had been raised about the water running down the hill near the sharp bend of Shortwood Road, B4465, as you leave the village (known locally as Policeman's Hill, sometimes Bend).

RESOLVED:

- To report the concerns about the water on the B4465 to SGC Highways **DD**
- To check applications for gravestones and reply to the family concerned **DD**

No.8c. Report from Boyd Valley Councillors.

Councillor Reade reported that the land at Oaktree Avenue was on the market for tender.

No.8d. Verbal report from the Clerk

- Internal audit would be carried out on 23 May
- One application for the casual vacancy had been received.
- Western Power Distribution would start work on the base for the new substation tomorrow. They had a fault with the current one at the weekend so they had moved this work to a higher priority.
- Weed killing on the recreation ground would be carried out week commencing 12 May

NO.9. AGENDA ITEMS

No.9a. To discuss and resolve the distribution of the Pucklechurch limited edition print

Ten requests had been made. The availability would be re-advertised within Pucklechurch News. It was also noted that groups could purchase the right to use the design.

No.9b. Proposed that the Parish Council purchase bus tickets in bulk to the sum of £1000 from First Bus for the X49 service and pass on the discount to residents. Resident will be able to purchase the tickets in advance from the Post Office or local shop.

First Bus had informed the parish council that they could purchase discounted bus tickets. This would be at nil cost to the council. There was a discussion about whether every business premises in the parish should be asked if they would like to sell the discounted tickets, rather than just the shop and post office. As a starting point it was suggested that the shop and post office be approached first whilst the legality of the parish council undertaking this was confirmed.

It was noted that there was a system to purchase bus tickets through a Pay Point. If a business wished to provide that service the council purchasing discounted tickets could be classed as competition to another service, which it is unable to do.

RESOLVED:

1. To investigate the opportunity further to ensure that the council is enabled to do this and to check if other businesses could offer the same **DD**
2. To check with vendors in the parish if they wished to stock bus tickets **MW**
3. To contact Avon Local Councils Association for legal guidance **DD**
4. To contact First Bus for full details of the scheme **MS**
5. To add an article to Pucklechurch News that the Parish Council is exploring ticket schemes **MH**

No.9c. Proposed that in addition to the discount from First Bus the Parish Council also subsidise the tickets at the same rate as the First Bus discount. Note: According to First this is often done

This would be considered once agenda item 9b had been agreed in detail. It was noted that to provide an additional subsidy would not cost the council money.

No.9d. To AGREE style for memorial benches for the recreation ground

Two requests for benches had been received and at the meeting held on 16 April options were presented to councillors. Following that meeting photographs of the existing benches had been taken and it was now agreed which options to offer. It was agreed that soft ground fixings would be suitable and that the applicant for the bench was responsible for ensuring fixing materials and installation were ordered

RESOLVED

To offer two options:

Peak Commemorative Bench from TDP

Phoenix bench from Glasdon

No.9e. PPC160 - to discuss possible options for marking the 160th anniversary of PPC in December

It was noted that the first meeting of the parish council took place in December 1854. It was suggested that the council commemorated this fact. One suggestion was to progress one of the projects from the Community Plan to fund way markers for local walks and brand one of the walks as the PPC160 walk, or similar. Other ideas for marking the occasion were invited.

No.9f. To agree roles in the Annual Parish Meeting

The school were providing teas and coffees for the meeting.

RESOLVED: For the agenda items to be presented by:

Welcome by the Chairman of the Parish Council- **RS**

Introduction of Parish Councillors- **ALL**

Notes of Annual Parish Meeting 2013- **RS**

First Bus service- X49- **First representative**

Pucklechurch Parish Emergency Plan- **MS**

Cycle path to Shortwood- **MS**

Parish Council annual report- **Clerk**

No.9g. Website update

It was suggested that the website be published as it was and comments and feedback requested before purchasing a specific domain name.

RESOLVED:

To publish the website and advertise it within the next Pucklechurch News.

NO.10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council meeting would be held on Wednesday 21 May 2014, at 7:30pm.

CHAIRMAN