

# Wootton Rivers Parish Council

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 29th April 2019

<b>Present:</b>	Cindy Creasy	Parish Council Chair
	Clare Bamforth	Councillor
	Dean Cowley	Councillor
	Nick Jones	Councillor
	Steve Rawlings	Councillor
	Anne Swift	Councillor
	Neil Worthington	Clerk
	Jerry Kunkler	Wiltshire Councillor

Apologies received from David Butler

### **1. Declarations of Interest and the granting of dispensations.**

Councillors were reminded of the Code for Conduct and the need to declare any interest relating to the items on the Agenda. No interests were declared.

### **2. Planning Applications**

Cindy Creasy opened the meeting, welcomed the many residents who were in attendance, and explained the background to the 2 applications being considered. Planning permission had been granted in 2017 for the redevelopment of the redundant Church Farm site comprising the conversion of the 2 retained barns into new 3 bed properties, the construction of a pair of new 2 bed properties and a new 5 bed property at the rear of the site.

The new applications being considered were for the alterations to the existing listed Church Farmhouse and for alterations to the existing planning consent to the 5 bed property. The Parish Council have also been advised that a further planning application has been submitted to Wiltshire Council for revisions to the central area of the site for a revised scheme for the conversion of the existing barns and the new pair of semi-detached dwellings. However, this application has not yet been verified by Wiltshire Council or formally submitted to the Parish Council for comment so cannot be included in the decisions tonight. However, it is understood that changes are proposed to increase the number of dwelling units from 4 to 6 by the utilisation of space previously allocated as garages and the insertion of additional rooms within the roof areas.

The Parish Council had asked the applicants to agree to extend the date for consideration of these 2 applications until the 3<sup>rd</sup> application had been received so that the proposed redevelopment could be considered as a whole. However, the applicants had been unable to agree to this request.

Discussion took place as to whether the applications could be properly dealt with knowing that further changes were in the pipeline, but due to the restricted deadlines available to make comments the Parish Council had no option but to consider the applications as submitted, otherwise the time periods would lapse. However, if an extension to the time period is subsequently agreed, it may be necessary to review what is decided tonight to incorporate any change necessary when considering the redevelopment in its entirety.

A view was expressed that the plans as passed last time were reached as a compromise - balancing the need for the site to be developed to prevent it falling into ruin but also to come up with a viable scheme which would be within planning guidelines and Neighbourhood Plan and which would enhance the village. It was a matter of concern that only 18 months after permission was granted that further applications to alter the approved scheme were being proposed. The applicants advised that the proposed changes were necessary to improve the viability of the scheme and to reflect their wishes regarding the design of the large house which the previous architect had ignored.

Concerns were raised by residents and councillors as to the status of the application for the new 5 bed home. It was queried whether the application was actually a new application, with a new access direct to the road (as shown in the submitted plan) or if it was an alteration only to the existing design. The applicants advised that they were told that they must show an access route to the property for this application but that they were not intending to change the access as currently approved for the whole site. However, Councillors and residents expressed strong concerns that the application did appear to be providing for this and that it clearly conflicts with the permission for the overall site development. Further, if permission were given, the 5-bed property could be built, with a different access, and the rest of the site never developed. It was reiterated that, on its own, a 5-bed house in that location would never have been granted. It was only granted as part of the whole site and for the purposes of making it viable.

There were concerns expressed by residents about this process and suggestions that the Parish Council should just refuse to consider these applications until the final application is submitted. The Parish Council were in agreement with the principle but had had discussions with the planning officer who, although sympathetic to this argument, was unable to extend the consultation period without the agreement of the Applicant which was not forthcoming. The Parish Council therefore proceeded to consider the applications as submitted and could not take into account the 3<sup>rd</sup> application as it has not been formally received and no residents had yet seen the proposals.

### **3. Planning Application Nos 19/02986/FUL and 19/03333/LBC - Alterations to listed farm house at Church Farm.**

The submitted application had been inspected and a recent site visit carried out. The proposals were essentially to convert existing outbuildings to provide further living accommodation.

Parish Councillors expressed their views of the proposals

- The proposed changes did not greatly affect the external appearance of the house
- The increased size of the accommodation meant that there were now 2 very large houses on the site contrary to the NDP
- The 2-bay garage forming part of this house on the previously granted planning permission had been removed and with the total conversion of the outbuildings there was now no ancillary space for vehicles, storage, bins etc which would lead to more clutter on the site

- The refurbishment of the outbuildings would restore the fabric which is in danger of deterioration
- The refurbishment of the existing house would be welcomed to prevent the deterioration of a listed historic building
- There may be issues with light pollution to the adjoining property
- There is a danger of planning creep as no conversion of the outbuildings were proposed in the previous application and the issue of storage space, garages etc are not addressed
- This building was historically associated with the farmyard and the rear outbuildings form part of the landscape of the former farmyard which cannot be properly considered without taking into account the proposed changes to the remainder of the site which are not yet in the public domain
- The permission currently granted allowed a rear extension to plot 4 because the 2 ends bays were allocated as garage space adjacent to Church Farm. These garages are no longer shown on this application which shows how the separate applications are interlinked and why it is impossible to properly consider this application in isolation.
- The impact of the revised parking arrangements is unclear in that they conflict with the currently approved layout of the existing farmyard

Comments were invited from the floor which supported these comments. In addition, the existence of a Covenant preventing conversion of the outbuildings into living accommodation, which was held by an adjoining owner was highlighted. However, the Parish Council were unaware of the exact details and considered that this was not a reason not to consider the planning application. The enforcement of any covenant is a legal matter between the interested parties.

The Chair therefore proposed the following motion for consideration.

The Parish Council Object to the proposals but would support the opportunity to renovate and reconfigure the existing building but, without being able to see this proposal within the rest of the site with regards to parking, storage etc and the effect on the farmyard as a whole it cannot be dealt with in isolation.

Anne Swift seconded the motion which was unanimously supported.

#### **4. Planning Application No 19/03278/FUL – Alterations to existing planning consent for a 5 bed farmhouse at Church Farm.**

The submitted application had been inspected and a recent site visit carried out. The proposals were for a complete redesign of the large house at the rear of the site.

Parish Councillors expressed their views of the proposals

- The design of the house was criticised – the previous barn like design had been the result of discussions following the rejection of the initial ‘manor house’ design by the Parish Council, Conservation Officer and AONB. This proposed house was more urban and executive in appearance and the use of flint as a walling material for housing was not seen elsewhere in the village.
- The height of the building was a concern as the ridge height had been increased by 1m with 2 substantial chimneys 1.8m above the ridge line. The

use of hipped roofs in this farmyard context was felt to be unsuitable as gabled roof were prevalent.

- The change in design and increase in height was a concern as it would make the building more visible from both the road and the surrounding countryside and footpaths. The current approved design was felt to be less intrusive and blended in and complemented the existing retained buildings better. This proposal would be much more obvious and on this prominent site would stand out from its surroundings. It was noted that the only reason that a new house was originally approved in this sensitive position was to make the retention and conversion of the existing buildings viable.
- The vehicle access is shown from the plot directly to the road – this is contrary to the planning application already granted (16/11051/FUL) which shows this access to the site blocked and all vehicles using the southerly access.
- There is no explanation of how, or why, this design has been changed from the current approval. There is no Access and Design Statement or Heritage Impact Statement to show how this design respects or complements the site, Conservation Area or the village.
- The approved plans show a detached garage. There is no garage shown on this proposal. This was queried with the applicant who advised that a garage was proposed but indicated that the preferred location would be outside the Conservation Area. This was considered to be unacceptable and it was strongly felt that a garage should be included in the proposal so that the whole scheme can be assessed.

The Chair therefore proposed the following motion for consideration.

The Parish Council Object to the proposal due to the design, materials, height and impact on the rest of the site and surrounding areas and neighbouring properties. Without being able to see how this proposal is affected by further proposed changes to the remainder of the site (which are not yet in the public domain) it appears that the proposed access cuts through previously approved properties. A garage has not been included as part of the design which is unacceptable as its position and design could have an impact on the rest of the site.

Steve Rawlings seconded the motion which was unanimously supported.

**5.** Jerry Kunkler addressed the meeting and outlined the various options which could be used to enable the proposals to progress. He would welcome the opportunity to work with the applicants and Parish Council to enable the proposals to be modified so that they addressed the concerns stated during the meeting.

The Chair confirmed that the Parish Council would also welcome the opportunity to work with the applicants, and residents, to achieve a revised and cohesive planning approach to the development given the scale and importance of the site to the village.

**6. Date of the next meeting – 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.**