

# Wootton Rivers Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 5<sup>th</sup> December 2016

<b>Present:</b>	David Wardlaw	Parish Council Chairman
	Clare Bamforth	Parish Council Vice-Chair
	David Butler	Councillor
	Michael Farr	Councillor
	Glenn Leech	Councillor
	Steve Rawlings	Councillor
	Neil Worthington	Clerk

**Apologies:**  
Paul Neale Councillor

## **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. None were declared and no dispensations were requested or granted.

## **2. Planning Application No 16/11051/FUL – Church Farm**

David Wardlaw briefed the meeting about this application. The Councillors had been shown around the site by the Architect in August and the plans had since been revised to reflect various of the initial comments.

The application comprised the conversion of the 2 existing barns into 3 bed houses with the remaining barns to be demolished and replaced by 2no 2 bed, 1no 4 bed and 1no 6 bed houses, the largest being occupied by one of the beneficiaries of the Antrobus Trust.

The issues which had been identified for further examination were :

- Does the site come under the classification of infill as defined in the Wiltshire Core Strategy or are there particular circumstances which could override this?
- As the site is partly outside the Conservation Area and the natural build line of the village, would this set a precedent for other applications in the future?
- Does the application detract from the character or appearance of the village or landscape and is the scale and type of the proposed buildings detrimental to the village appearance?
- Does the application address the requirement for schemes of 5 or more dwellings to include affordable housing?

- Is the access to the site which had been modified since the proposals presented in August acceptable?
- Does the application comply with the draft NDP especially with reference to the requirement in it to maintain views to the countryside?.
- Is there a danger, if this development is opposed, that the site could become derelict or used for industrial or commercial purposes?

Parish Council members expressed their views

- The mix of house sizes was considered to be more in keeping with the requirements of the NDP.
- The reuse of the existing historic barns was welcomed.
- Insufficient information regarding the materials and design was included in the application and were inadequate for a scheme of this importance. In particular, there was concern about Plot 4 which was shown as being rendered and therefore may be more prominent than a brick building.
- There was concern that the houses at the rear of the site fell outside the natural build line of the village and that this would create a second line of houses affecting the linear nature of the village.
- Although the conversion of the existing buildings into dwellings was acceptable there was concern that replacing the more modern agricultural buildings at the rear of the site with houses would create a precedent.
- It was noted that the access proposal now required the width of the road to be reduced, although this meant that the existing boundary wall to the street now required less alteration to provide adequate visibility splays.
- Concern was expressed about creating a gated community – the architects confirmed that gates into the properties would be traditional 5 bar field type gates.
- There would be a financial benefit to the village through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Fowler Architects responded on various of the issues raised:-

- The background to the scheme was explained emphasising that unless a suitable design could be devised the site had the potential to become derelict or be used for light industrial use, until a future time when permission for housing would again be sought. During this time there was also potential for the existing barns to deteriorate to an extent that they could no longer be viable for conversion.

- Also, this scheme had the advantage that one of the beneficiaries of the trust intended to become the occupier of the largest house. If the site was sold on the open market a developer's scheme would no doubt seek to maximise the profit from the site.
- The Government's presumption is that existing buildings should be reused for employment purposes. The architect's view is that the existing farm is classified as 'previously developed land'.
- The architects advised that it was now Government policy that in the countryside only schemes of 11 houses or more were required to incorporate affordable housing.
- The viability of the site required the inclusion of the larger houses to plots 3 and 4 to pay for the high cost of the removal of the old barns and concrete hard standings and to pay for the expense of decontaminating the site and removal of the asbestos.
- The removal of the large barn would open up the views of the countryside from the road.
- The design of Plot 4 was being led by the Trust beneficiary who may be amenable to changes in the proposed materials etc
- The materials and design had not been fully detailed as they were subject to agreement by the Conservation Officer. This would include all the properties not just those which were inside the Conservation Area.

Comments from the floor were invited, including from members of the Steering Group of the Neighbourhood Development Plan team.

- The plan did not respect the historic aspect of the site as the larger houses at the rear of the site would dominate the converted historic buildings at the front of the site.
- The larger houses would dominate the views of the village from the canal, the 3 gates at the top of Primrose Hill and from Martinsell.
- The existing modern agricultural buildings were probably built under Permitted Development Rights and there should be no presumption of a right to replace them with housing.
- The historic courtyard formed by the old barns and Church Farmhouse would be adversely affected by being overshadowed by a new modern replacement farmhouse.

- All the existing buildings in this area line the existing street – this proposal would create an additional row of dwellings – where this has happened in the past elsewhere in the village it has generally been detrimental to the appearance of the village.
- The design of the Plot 4 house did not comply with the NDP or VDS as it was not in keeping with the design of the surrounding houses.
- Due to the importance of this site any development of it should be of such high quality that it enhances the appearance and character of the village and makes a positive impact.

### **Summary**

**It was agreed that no conclusion could be reached at this meeting and that a further meeting will have to be held following further consideration of the scheme and clarification of various matters including:-**

- **the planner's opinion as to whether allowing replacement dwellings outside the build line or Conservation Area would create a precedence in the future**
- **advise on whether the development can be classed as infill**
- **do the economics of the site need plots 3 and 4 to make the scheme viable**
- **reassess the impact of the development on the village including the views from outside the village.**

### **3. Other urgent issues**

#### **Work to trees 16/11067/TCA – Village Hall**

There were no objections to this proposal.

#### **Work to trees 16/11830/TCA – Manor Farm House**

There were no objections to this proposal.

#### **Work to trees 16/11534/TCA – 22 Wootton Rivers**

There were no objections to this proposal.

**Date of the next meeting – to be arranged.**

Parish Council Documents are available on the Parish Council Website  
- [woottonriverspc.co.uk](http://woottonriverspc.co.uk)