

LUDDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 17th MARCH 2015 AT 7.30pm

Present: Councillors Gist, Hegarty, and Jones.

In Attendance: J. Madge (Clerk) County Councillor Horner, Ian Nixon of EMR and 19 members of the public

Apologies: District Councillor Vaudry and Cllr Heyworth

1. Public Participation: Chairman welcomed the members of the public who had come to express concerns over the proposals for the development of the former Veterinary Laboratory Facility at Luddington and introduced Ian Nixon of EMR and made it clear that he was attending in order to provide up to date information to the Council, and not to make a presentation to the general public. Ian Nixon confirmed that his company was in a joint venture and was providing finance to Ainscough Strategic Land. He confirmed that the joint venture companies had gone through a tender process, and did not have an option on the site, but were negotiating to purchase the site outright having made the highest offer and were hoping to exchange Contracts shortly and to complete the purchase of the site by 3rd April 2015.

He confirmed there had been pre-application planning discussions with Stratford District Council. As the site was currently classed as brown-field employment land, it was necessary to market the site in order to ascertain whether there was any commercially viable employment use available before a change of use could be considered. He confirmed that they were looking for residential development of about 50 to 60 houses. He indicated that as a brown-field site they considered that there was a presumption in favour of permission being granted. In response to questions about the size of the current buildings on the site he indicated that the existing building had a 20,000 square feet footprint.

It was pointed out that the village community was currently 73 houses with a population of about 150 (rather than 420 as he considered) and that it was not classed as a sustainable location for development. He confirmed that he was aware of the sustainability arguments but suggested that the community consider benefits that could be provided as a result of such development.

Strong views were expressed that the community valued the quiet nature of the village and that such a substantial change in the nature of the community that would be the consequence of doubling its size was not welcome, and would be fiercely contested, and pointed out that the community had had recent success in fighting unwelcome planning developments. Discussions concerning the possible level of additional housing that could be tolerated suggested that anything above 10 units would be unacceptable. Potential benefits that might be sought included an area of community woodland or open space, the provision of mains gas, improvements to broadband service speeds and a new Village Hall including some amenity land surrounding it. Cllr Barnes from Welford attending as a member of the public suggested that any proposed development would be detrimental to the river corridor and have an adverse effect on Weston, on the opposite bank of the river.

Mr Nixon agreed that before any planning application was made a public consultation meeting would be held, possibly in May.

2. Declarations of any Personal or Prejudicial Interests by Members including consideration and decisions upon written requests for dispensation for disclosable pecuniary interests (if any): None
3. Minutes of the Meeting held on the 17th February 2015 had been circulated and were approved and signed.
4. Matters Arising:
Village Green: Still no response from Ragley Estate. The Clerk is to make further attempts to elicit a response.
5. County Councillor's Report: CCllr Horner sent a written report as follows:
 - (a) The Jay Report into the child abuse in Rotherham has reported and the Prime Minister has called for Police and Social Workers to have a legal duty to report suspicions. I disagree because unless the culture changes changing the law will have no effect and I listened to an address by the Deputy Chair of the Local Government Association and he said it imperative that the report be read by all councillors as it had major implications for councillors themselves. I was encouraged that Mr. Porter had the same view as me that, whilst there were failures by the Police and Social Worker management, it was Councillors and MPs who are responsible to ensure that public sector staff do their jobs. Rotherham, Oxford, Manchester, Reading, Coventry and the murder of a disabled girl in Warwickshire all occurred because the local councillors had turned their back on the disadvantaged. The public should have the confidence to go to the local councillor when they have been ignored by the support services and expect something to be done. Unfortunately all too often councillors think of the council as a club and have no interest in investigating issues. Although it is only a minority some councillors also seek to use their office to further their own or friend's interests. At District Council level this tends to be manipulation of planning decisions and at County it is infrastructure, like roads, and in Parliament it is tax laws and other national policies. I do not see this situation changing because there is increasing tribalism in politics. Over the last 30 years the number of safe seats in Parliament has increased and there are now only about 40 seats that decide who governs and only a few people in these seats are prepared to change the way they vote. Unless the electorate vote on the merits of the candidate and policies and not on the tribe they represent we cannot expect any change.
 - (b) Also this month the County has had to give an opinion about forming a Combined Authority as part of the devolution debate. A combined authority is a group of councils merging activities to reduce costs and improve investment. It probably has more chance of success than voluntarily forming a unitary authority because there is no change to the boundaries of the councils or numbers of councillors. The possible options for Coventry and Warwickshire are to link with Birmingham or with Leicester and Leicestershire. The legislation does allow for Counties to join different groups and there is an argument for South Warwickshire to join an Oxfordshire/Buckinghamshire group. Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire have been able to achieved merger in two years to form D2N2 and so things can happen very fast when there is a consensus.

- (c) The County Council's Apprenticeship Hub is using the week to launch a major campaign to encourage small businesses to take on apprentices, as well as promoting the range, breadth and success of apprenticeships locally.
 - (d) Warwickshire is expected to have over 8,000 people suffering from dementia by 2021 and is looking to increase the number of dementia aware residents.
- 6. District Councillor's Report: There was no report from DCllr Vaudry
- 7. Finance:
 - (a) The Community Account stood at £5,979.34.
 - (b) The following bills were passed for payment:
 - i. £505.00 for Clerk's salary and tax deductions for January to March 2015;
 - ii. £132.00 for HCB Solicitors to reimburse paper, stationery and postage costs
- 8. Specific Agenda Items:
 - (a) Ainscough Strategic Land and proposals for development of Veterinary Laboratory Facility at Luddington: - Following the discussions during the Public Participations, it was agreed to produce and circulate a Survey Questionnaire to residents in the Parish to consult on the possible proposals and what potential planning gains would be desirable to the community. The questions for the survey were approved. Cllr Hegarty agreed to deliver in Luddington and Cllr Jones in Dodwell.
 - (b) Maintenance of access road adjacent to Village Green – Owners of Old Church House trying to improve the surface of the track adjoining the Village Green on a more permanent basis, and consulting with the Ragley Estate as owner and adjoining owners that use the track.
- 9. Correspondence:
 - (a) SDC – Notification of Quadrennial Election on 7th May 2015 and Nomination Paper Packs
 - (b) Local Government Boundary Commission – final recommendations for Warwickshire County Council
 - (c) WALC – Updated Legal Topic Note on Byelaws, and guidance on dog fouling and the law.
 - (d) WCC – Transport & Highways Update Spring 2015
 - (e) WALC – Minutes of Parish and Town Council Liaison Meeting
 - (f) P Rudge – Renewed Annual Insurance Certificates
 - (g) SDC – Information Sheets re Interim 5 Year Housing Land Supply Summary at 31st December 2014 and Annual Sports Awards Event.
 - (h) SDC – Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Review.
 - (i) National Plant Monitoring Scheme
 - (j) WALC – Briefing on Freedom of Information Datasets
 - (k) Roger Dopson Pro Warden of All Saints Church Luddington requesting assistance again regarding work in the churchyard. Clerk to respond that it had been budgeted for in Mr Rudge's costs for the year.
 - (l) SDC – Parish & Partners Briefing for March 2015.
 - (m) Clerk to circulate further relevant correspondence

10. Planning:

- (a) Hibbitt (15/00394/FUL) Dodwell Farm Evesham Road Dodwell – conversion of loft over garage to habitable use. No comment.
- (b) Bordon Hill Nurseries (15/00529/FUL) Bordon Hill Nurseries Bordon Hill Stratford on Avon – erection of a building to house biomass boiler and associated storage; installation of water storage tank; laying of associated hardstanding and associated work. (Notification as a neighbouring Parish Council). No Comment

11. Business for Future Consideration: None

Next Meeting scheduled for Tuesday 21st April 2015 at 7.00pm followed by the Annual Parish Meeting.

Meeting closed at 9.45pm