

BETLEY, BALTERLEY & WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 13th January 2010

PRESENT

Cllrs Robert Bettley-Smith, Steven Ball, Mandy Berisford, Jo Cameron, Seb Daly, Richard Head and Chris Watkin.

IN ATTENDANCE

Borough Cllr Becket
Nine members of the public
Gwyn Griffiths (Clerk)

1/10 Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Hales and Price. Apologies for absence were also received from Borough Cllr Wemyss and County Cllr Chapman.

2/10 The Chairman welcomed members and members of the public to the meeting, and indicated that it was intended to allocate up to an hour to allow public comment on the planning applications to hand, and specifically application 00674 & 00675 relating to Betley Model Farm. As Chairman he had, with Borough Cllr Becket, met earlier in the day with Elaine Moulton of the Borough's planning department to discuss the Model Farm application.

This meeting had considered the Parish Council's previous submission, relating to a previous application, and further issues which had been raised, including the following:

An ecological report was now in place, but this related only to the building itself. As far as impact on the SSSI was concerned Natural England had raised no objection, but was being reconsulted on the potential impact on the site itself as the protected species report was considered to be inadequate.

The removal of the earth bank alongside the building had been raised as an issue by the Parish Council at the Conservation Advisory Working Party (CAWP) meeting and subsequently. The purpose of the bank appeared to be structural, and the Borough Council had agreed to consult further, including taking advice from a structural engineer.

The 'hierarchy' of alternative uses had been discussed with English Heritage (EH). Contrary to the impression previously given this did not form EH policy, but was an interpretation of their view. Nonetheless the Borough Council was now considering potential agricultural re-use in light of fresh information provided. Any proposal to restore agricultural use would have to be assessed for potential harm, and viability would be a material consideration.

There were still outstanding issues regarding the provision of services to the site; and the closure of the facility room at the Hand and Trumpet, and total closure of the Blue Bell had been drawn to the Borough's attention as evidence of the state of the market for such facilities.

The schedule for dealing with the application was to aim for decision at the Planning Committee on 16th February, but this would depend on responses to further consultation and could not be guaranteed.

3/10 At this point members were invited to consider any declarations of interest in agenda items.

Cllr Ball declared a personal interest in (County) application N.09/13 (Betley School) as the parent of a child who attended the school.

4/10 The meeting was then adjourned to allow public participation [a summary of this part of the meeting is given; members of the public are referred to as M.1, M.2 etc, councillors as C.1 etc, and responses by the Chairman/ Clerk as Ch/Ck].

M.1 Sought clarification. Did the road access form part of the application? This could impact on existing drainage issues, with run-off from the proposed hard standing.

Ch. Yes. The point re drainage would be noted.

M.2 What was the date of the Ecology Report? **Ch.** August 2008. There clearly may have been a change of circumstances, and an update may be necessary.

Ch. The CAWP had recommended refusal, as the application was against policy and there were concerns about effects on the structure. **Cllr Becket.** No doubt it was against policy; but further work was needed to establish how much it was against policy. Even if an application was contrary to policy it could be approved if there were *very special circumstances* which outweighed the policy objections. The debate would hinge on whether the only way to bring the building back into use and secure its preservation was by such a development. He would argue differently!

M.2 When would the Parish Council take a view on the application. **Ch.** At tonight's meeting.

M.3 At the CAWP Cllr Naylor had commented that the plans gave a misleading impression, and made the existing buildings look larger than they really were. She (M.3) felt that the application required substantial groundworks which could undermine and/or destabilise not only the Model Farm buildings but possibly also the neighbouring Old Hall.

M.4 Restoration to agricultural use would be much cheaper than the proposed works for a hotel, which meant that viability could be achieved more easily. He had evidence re the instability of the buildings – should he pass this to the Parish Council? **Ch.** Please forward to the Borough Council.

M.2 He very much wanted to see the buildings saved. They were not under immediate threat but needed some works. He was concerned that the scheme proposed would destroy the whole purpose of protection by changing the building irreperably and destroying its character, damaging the character of the Conservation Area and the special interest of the site. There were a number of potential agricultural uses which would require only minor changes to the building and would thus protect its special interest.

M.3 Concerned that the applicants were speculators rather than developers. **Cllr Becket** Understood the concerns, but a company linked to the applicant was currently developing a hotel elsewhere.

M.3 Concerned that a 200m stretch of hedge had been removed on site. **Ch.** This was a matter for the Borough Council to assess whether there had been a breach of any relevant legislation.

M.2 Were the land ownership issues clear; had notices been served on relevant owners? There were inconsistencies between different documents. **Ch.** Details may be dependent on the agreement between developer and landowner. **Cllr Becket** would check the relevant details.

C.1 Could we hear an outline of the proposed alternative agricultural use? **M.4** Original intention had been a simple restoration, but had been told it was necessary to establish viability. They had prepared an independently-reviewed business plan which included egg production, the rearing of dairy heifers and agricultural storage.

M.5 How many objections had been submitted to this application. **Cllr Becket** Sixty were listed on the website, but others had yet to be added.

5/10 The Chairman indicated that the meeting of the Parish Council would now resume in order to consider its view on the application.

6/10 Members considered the following planning application.

09/00674/FUL Conversion and extension of farm complex to form hotel and function room, restaurant, spa etc, new vehicular access, car parking etc, Betley Model Farm, Betley

RESOLVED a) that the Parish Council formally expresses its opposition to the application on the grounds that it is contrary to a number of planning policies;
b) that the Council fully endorses the report previously (June 2008) submitted to the Planning Authority insofar as it relates to the current application;
c) that the Council will consider further observations at its meeting on 28th January 2010.

7/10 Members considered the following planning application.

09/00680/FUL Change of use of school rooms to form additional residential accommodation, extensions etc The School Room and The Croft, Main Road, Betley

RESOLVED that the Parish Council supports the application as it facilitates the preservation and restoration of the building, but would wish the new steps at the front of the property to match those at the neighbouring properties (i.e. by rising at right angles to the front wall) in order to maintain consistency in visual appearance.

8/10 Members considered the following planning application.

09/00696 700 702 703/FUL Agricultural building, feed silo and new vehicular access, Elms Farm, Newcastle Road, Balterley

RESOLVED that the Parish Council supports the application in principle, but would ask the Planning Authority to ensure:

- a) that there is no adverse impact on nearby residential properties;**
- b) that the concrete apron fronting the beef rearing building is of sufficient size to allow larger vehicles servicing the site to enter and leave in a safe manner.**

9/10 Members considered the following planning application.

N.09/13 Demolition of entrance building and toilet block, replacement extended building comprising entrance, reception, offices and toilet facilities at Betley School, Church Lane, Betley

RESOLVED that the Parish Council considers the proposed works meet an essential need for the enhancement of facilities at the school, and has no objection to the specific design.

10/10 Members considered the following planning application.

09/00731/FUL Detached garage, Marsden, Den Lane, Wrinehill

RESOLVED that the Parish Council supports the application

11/10 The Clerk submitted to members invoices to hand. He noted that only two councillors who were signatories to the account were present.

RESOLVED a) that on this occasion the Clerk be authorised to act as a signatory;
b) that the Council authorises payment of the following:

T Dunlop	audit fee	£ 30.00	863
Betley Village Hall	hall hire	£ 24.00	864
Lampholder 2000 Ltd	Christmas lighting bulbs	£ 69.57	865