

Minutes of Ufford Parish Council Meeting

Held on 10th August 2021 ~ 7.00pm

St Mary's Parish Hall, Church Lane, Ufford

Present

Cllr. Kathryn Jones (Chair)
Cllr. Jane Hawthorne
Cllr. John Skinner

Cllr. Keith Bennett
Cllr. Steve Mayhew
Cllr. Nigel Smith

Cllr. Pat Edworthy
Cllr. David Pearce

Judi Hallett (Clerk)

Cnty. Cllr. Alexander Nicoll

2 Members of the Public

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. To receive Apologies for absence:

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr. Ashley O'Malley (Family Commitments), Cllr. Nick Crocker (Away) and Cllr. David Findley (Away). These were accepted. Apologies had also been received from Dist. Cllr. Carol Poulter.

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest on Agenda Items and any applications for dispensation:

There were no declarations of interest and therefore, no applications for dispensation.

3. Public Session:

a) Reports or comment from any member of the public (notes only):

- None

b) Reports or comment from ESC and SCC Councillors:

- **Cnty. Cllr. Alexander Nicoll** – Cllr. Nicoll indicated that he was present to hear the debate regarding land at the former Crown Nursery and to offer support and guidance where he could, especially with Highways and Transport matters.
- **Dist. Cllr. Carol Poulter** – Cllr. Poulter had sent her apologies but had asked to be kept informed of any Planning matters that may require her attention in the future.

4. To sign Minutes of meeting dated 27th July 2021:

The minutes of the Full Council meeting dated 27th July 2021 had been circulated. The minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr. Mayhew, seconded by Cllr. Hawthorne and all Councillors were in agreement that they be signed.

The Clerk agreed to publish the minutes on the website.

Action: Clerk

Chair's initials.....

5. To discuss and agree responses to the following Planning Applications:

- a) DC/21/3237/FUL - Demolition and clearance of former nursery buildings and structures, erection of a Class E (A) convenience food store, Class E (B) cafe and 11 No. business units (9) (i) (offices); access, car parking spaces and landscaping at Part Of Former Crown Nursery, High Street, Ufford - Councillors made the following comments:
- [The Clerk read the title of the application and indicated where she felt there had been a typing error. The Chair asked for confirmation that all Councillors had received the plans and had time to review them.]
 - An interesting application; I find it strange that the applicant claims they will increase the 'biodiversity' of the site by planting a few trees, when in reality they will have removed many trees and bushes and tarmacked over a large proportion of the land
 - I am very surprised ESC did not feel a full Environmental Impact Assessment was needed, much of this site has remained the same for over 200 years and therefore would be home to a considerable amount of wildlife
 - I am very concerned about the appearance of the development; we are a rural village not an urban setting; this development will ruin the street scene in that part of the village; the design may match that of the Goldsmiths development but that doesn't fit in either!
 - There are a huge number of car parking spaces which means a huge number of additional cars driving in to and out of the village
 - There would not be enough interest from residents for the 'offices' so this would mean many people driving to the site, and there are lots of 'offices' already available in neighbouring towns and large villages
 - The buses are very limited, only during the day and not on Sundays or Bank Holidays, a very few people cycle but most will drive; it's a long walk from the train station (where Taxis are not based)
 - Small shops in the village have not worked in the past and shopping habits have now changed, people shop for a week at a time not every day and a small shop will not be able to compete against the large stores; shopping on-line with a delivery is a much greener way to shop
 - The site is outside the Physical Limits Boundary – this is very important. When Goldsmiths was built that was also originally outside the PLB but in the latest Local Plan (LP) the PLB was redrawn around the new houses; we cannot just keep building next to the limit and re-drawing the boundary.
 - This is yet another example of 'Salami Slicing' aka 'Mission Creep'
 - During the 2017 Application (which was refused) Mr Philip Ridley confirmed that the site was "Outside the PLB and therefore in the 'Countryside'"; when a proposed development is in the 'Countryside' many other Policies from the LP need to be considered

- The Applicant has only concentrated on Policies 4.3, 4.5 and 4.6 but 4.2 and 4.8 also need to be considered; you can't just ignore some policies that don't fit with your proposal
- [Policy 4.2 was detailed by the Chair and the change of classification for business use was also explained]
- There is currently vacant 'Office' space at Riduna Park, Deben Meadows, Deben Mill and in Wickham Market; the applicant has not demonstrated a need for further
- Since the Pandemic many more people are working from home and there is evidence that large office spaces are no longer needed
- Why was there no EIA [there is an Ecology Report]? The trees and grassland are perfect for carbon capture and all this car parking will remove this
- We need to look closely at Policy 4.2 and quote this, and all its subsections, in our letter
- There is nothing in the application that shows the 'public benefit' of this development (as required by Policy 4.5)
- Policy 4.8 also needs to be taken in to account, the site is not well connected to a Town Centre
- Why would people want to come to Ufford for a business unit
- Both ESC and SCC have declared a Climate Emergency and virtually all users (staff and customers) of these units will drive
- It is not our problem to work out if the units are viable or not, however, we do not want a 'White Elephant' on our hands because the next step will be for a 'Change of Use' to be submitted and for it to be changed to housing
- If the offices are built and not taken up there is a chance it will be designated as a 'Brownfield' site; it is definitely a 'Greenfield' site at present
- Policy 4.6 talks about the conversion of rural buildings but the proposed use is not comparable to the original use and size
- We also need to look at the whole site; within the Flood Risk Assessment for the development there is comment that the proposed drainage would be suitable for 'further development'; what is that 'further development'?
- I am surprised ESC has not classified this site, we need to know what classification we are starting with
- Traffic – The assessment on the B1438 was carried out in April 2021, just as we were in the first step out of lock-down, the figures would have been much reduced; it is no surprise to see much of the traffic was speeding (an average of 37.5mph) and that there is double the volume on the south bound carriageway than on the northbound; the assessment makes no mention of the 136 additional dwellings about to be built in Pettistree/Wickham Market, this will greatly increase the traffic numbers; their figures show vehicle movement on the B1438 would be at 8 per minute by 2026 and this is an underestimate
- Q [*asked to the two members of the public*] What about HGV's using the shop/café, will they be banned and how will you achieve this?

- A. Yes, there is no space for HGV's on the site. Access to the site can be controlled by various means such as height barriers
- What about delivery lorries and lorries picking up from and delivering to the offices? How will they be controlled? If no HGVs are permitted on the site they will probably park on Yarmouth Road and block the traffic whilst they access the shop and café
- If/when Sizewell C is granted permission, we could see many more lorries and vans, what is to stop them parking overnight?
- [The requested opening hours for each type of unit were read from the application] These are very long opening hours and will require lighting most months; this will result in a great deal of light pollution to that area; there is no mention of the type of lighting that will be used
- Light pollution will have a massive impact on the wildlife on the site, especially the bats in the neighbouring Parklands Wood (where our Bat Survey showed we had a great number and different species).
- The amount of glass in the design is good but that will result in even more light pollution
- Bats – In 2014 the applicant's Ecology Report mentioned bats; the 2017 application relied initially on the 2014 report but SCDC requested an update; the update showed bats roosting in the old buildings; the Bat Conservation Society recommends a Full Survey is carried out, this has not been done. The current Ecology Report suggests additional bat boxes will be put up away from the site but established bats will probably not use them and are likely to perish
- UPC had a Full Bat Survey in 2020 on Parklands Wood which is only 200m from the site; we have to ensure ESC's Ecology Officer is aware of this application
- Orchard – It is a great shame to lose this small orchard. It was planted for the Millennium by the then owners of Crown Nursery, using different native but unusual species. It is only 20 years old and has at least another 30 years of use
- Houses 2, 4 and 6 Nursery Lane will become a traffic island; this development will be dreadful for them.
- Is anyone in favour? [silence]
- **Conclusion: Strong Objection on the reasons above** (Prop: Cllr. Hawthorne Sec: Cllr. Skinner, all in agreement) The Clerk agreed to draft a letter for review

The two members of the public left the meeting but discussion continued...

- We could ask for an independent traffic survey to be carried out
- The Public meeting last week saw 10 residents speak with 3 Councillors (notes have been distributed); many residents were concerned about a possible change of use if the offices failed
- Any shop in the location would be seen as a positive for further development as it would make the location more sustainable

- It is very important that this matter goes to the Full Planning Committee; we need to ask Cllr. Carol Poulter if she can request this now if the Officer is minded to recommend approval. There seems to be no fixed criteria for when an application goes to Full Committee or not
 - Many of the reasons for the refusal of the 2017 application (including Care Home, Business Units and Dwellings) are very valid for this application
 - [The history of the appeal after the 2017 application was detailed by the Chair]
 - Is it possible to request a site visit? These are unusual
 - It is fair to say that there has been some interest in a Café and Shop but are these people thinking the whole thing through?
 - The deadline for comments has been moved to 26th August and there is no sign of the notice yet – Clerk asked to speak to Planning Officer about the location of the notice and the date it was put up.
 - Ideally UPC should publish its letter so that others can view it
 - The NPPF originally classified Nurseries as Greenfield sites but this has been revised recently
 - A copy of the UPC Bat Survey on Parklands Wood has been sent to Mr James Meyer at ESC
 - Policy 4.3 really needs careful attention when it comes to drafting the letter
- b) DC/21/3431/LBC – Conversion of a Grade II listed barn into a dwelling and recreating the setting by the provisions of a single-storey extension and cartlodge | Upper Barn, Lower Ufford Road, Ufford - Councillors made the following comments:
- Very similar permission granted in 2010 but for a 'Holiday Cottage' with just 58 days use restriction placed on the permission; this is now looking like a permanent home
 - This looks fine to me, all the questions raised in the 'Pre-App' discussions seem to have been addressed
 - It is better to preserve this historic building than see it decay
 - **Conclusion: No Objection** (Prop: Cllr. Bennett, Sec: Cllr. Hawthorne, all in agreement)
- c) DC/21/3436/VOC - Variation of Condition of C/10/1818 - Conversion of a Grade II listed brick barn into dwelling and recreating the setting by the provisions of single-storey extension and cartlodge. - The owners want to make amendments to the approved scheme Approved Plan references to be changed to PW1043_PL01, PL02revA and PL03revA | Upper Barn, Lower Ufford Road, Ufford – Councillors made the following comments:
- *Same comments as above*
 - **Conclusion: No Objection** (Prop: Cllr. Mayhew, Sec: Cllr. Edworthy, all in agreement)

d) *Additional Item* - DC/21/3723/FUL - Front ground floor extension and First floor extension/alterations and general alterations to existing bungalow at Oakdene, School Lane, Ufford – Councillors made the following comments:

- This is almost a total rebuild and it is going to be a very large house
- The suggested black exterior is not in keeping with the surrounding houses or the rest of Ufford
- This will have a huge impact on the street scene and is over development of the plot; it will go from a 3 bed bungalow to a 5 bed house (with a calculated 82% increase in floor space)
- The footprint is similar but the height will dwarf the bungalow next door
- Conclusion: **Objection on the grounds of over development of the site, impact on the character of the area and inappropriate design** (Prop: Cllr. Jones, Sec: Cllr. Bennett, 7 Cllrs. Agreement with 1 abstention)

Action Clerk

6. Finance - To discuss purchase of a Notice Board for Community Hall Car Park:

The Chair advised that the notice board at the Community Hall was in a very bad state of repair with only one lock working and a very hard pin board. The broken lock meant that unauthorised posters could and were being displayed.

The Clerk suggested a new board could potentially be wall mounted (easier to fit and would leave the grass area clear for grass cutting) but that permission would need to be obtained from the Hall Committee.

After discussion about various suppliers, Cllr. Mayhew proposed an 8 x A4 wall mounted board was purchased from Notice Boards UK Ltd, at an approximate price of £485.00; as long as permission had been granted from the Hall Committee to host it. This was seconded by Cllr. Edworthy and all were in agreement.

Action: Clerk

7. To receive agenda items for next meeting and agree date of Next Meeting (21st September 2021):

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| • Emergency Planning | • Neighbourhood Plan |
| • Broadband Project | • Ufford Almshouses |

Action: Clerk

The meeting was closed at 8.30pm

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair: Dr. Kathryn M Jones

Judi Hallett
Clerk to Ufford Parish Council

Chair's initials.....