

MINUTES OF COTTERED AND THROCKING PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN COTTERED VILLAGE HALL ON TUESDAY 7th MARCH 2017 AT 7.30 PM

Present: Bryan Pitman (Chair) Terry McGrath
Colin Bayles John Bull
David Charles Barry Dean

Officer attending: Denise Anderson (Clerk) 22 members of the public

The Chairman reminded the public that the meeting was being recorded for the accuracy of minute taking.

APOLOGIES

17.25 County Councillor Rose Cheswright and District Councillor Paul Kenealy

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

17.26 None

MINUTES OF MEETING

17.27 The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 31st January 2017 were before the meeting and signed as a correct record.

PLANNING

17.28 **3/17/0387/OUT** Land Adjacent to the Old Rectory Baldock Road Cottered Buntingford Hertfordshire SG9 9QP for Proposed residential development comprising 15 dwellings (including 6 Starter Homes) with associated access.

Clr Pitman provided an overview of Planning Application 3/17/0387/OUT stating it was one of the largest in the Parish for some considerable time.

Councillors voted unanimously to suspend Standing Orders in order to allow the assembled public to contribute to the discussion on this planning application.

A number of points were raised relating to the application:

- Parking for residents of The Crescent who currently use the existing field entrance and the grass verge adjacent to the proposed site to park their vehicles.
- The access into and out of the proposed site on to the A507 Baldock Road was considered to be extremely difficult especially during morning and evening rush hour due to the weight of traffic through the village.
- The crossing of the main A507 Baldock Road to reach village facilities such as the Village Hall and Recreation Ground, especially by young families who are assumed to be the inhabitants of these new properties, was also a concern.
- Parking for Village Day (as this site currently provides parking for the event).
- It was considered such a development would change the shape of the village.
- Could there be negotiation for parking within the development?
- The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) had written a letter in relation to this development.

Many of the public stated that they supported this proposed development and there was a general consensus of opinion that in these times of great housing need it was appropriate that Cottered should contribute to that need. I was also felt that the 15 dwellings proposed would make little impact on the current high levels of traffic that currently pass through the village.

Mr and Mrs Taussig of the Old Rectory, the applicants, were in attendance at the meeting and explained their son, Tom Routh, one of the architects who had produced the plans for the proposed development, was present and would 'talk through' the application and answer any questions that arose.

Mr Routh stated that it was hoped that the proposed development was seen as a positive contribution and opportunity for the village and that they wished to take on board the views of the village as the village was at the heart of their proposal.

He responded to the concerns about the access to the site saying a transport report had been commissioned that had proven minimal contribution to traffic and that they were liaising with HCC regarding the visible splay on the entrance road.

It was hoped that good quality, affordable homes would be seen as 'proper and positive' and that they could be offered to people in the village.

To provide allotments, a community garden and parking for residents and Village Day visitors had all been considerations.

A member of the public stated that this proposal offered a higher ratio of starter homes than required by planning regulations, provided generous parking and landscaping and was well thought out. It was considered that schemes with greater density could be imposed and this current proposal would be preferable.

The applicants stated that they had been bombarded with requests to use the land in question for development but they had chosen what they felt was a responsible route.

Standing Orders were resumed

Councillors raised a number of points:

Councillor Dean had concerns that there was not a continuous footpath from the proposed site entrance, around the blind bend of the A507 Baldock Road, to allow pedestrians to cross opposite the Village Hall.

Councillor Pitman asked if a s106 Agreement could be considered to improve the footpath.

Questions were raised about the affordable homes for local people and how assured that would be. Mr Routh was invited to explain and he outlined the Government led scheme which allows housing to be offered at 80% of market value. The affordable houses are expected to be price capped at £250,00 and it is hoped that the buyers will be limited to local people.

Councillor Pitman stated he felt the development conflicted with the Neighbourhood Plan and the District Plan and a letter from the CPRE objects to the development.

Mr Routh was allowed to respond and stated that he felt some points in the letter from CPRE were incorrect and that they were engaging with the District Plan, believed this to be an infill site and that they were working within the system.

Councillor Bayles stated that he felt the letter from the CPRE was worth reading and that he agreed with much of the content. He also felt there were conflicts with the application and the Neighbourhood Plan and the District Plan. Cllr Bayles considered he required further clarification of the issues raised prior to making a recommendation about whether permission should be granted.

Mr Routh was invited to respond and stated that he was happy to address the various issues raised and asked for clarification on the points the Parish Council would like more explicit detail on.

The specific issues were identified as:

- Transport
- Access
- How affordable housing works
- Parking
- Pedestrian access/connection especially in relation to safety.

It was resolved to defer the decision on this Planning Application to the Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 14th March 2017 to allow the applicants the opportunity to provide responses to the specific issues raised.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

All meetings to start at 7.30 pm in Cottered Village Hall
Tuesday 14th March 2017

The meeting closed at 8.40pm

Signed _____

Date _____

PUBLIC SESSION

There was no public session as public participation had been allowed as part of the meeting.