



West Monkton Parish Council

ADOPTED

Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee of West Monkton Parish Council held on Tuesday 19th April 2022 at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllrs Besley, Cavill, Ellis, Elliston and Haskins.

Cllr Tully attended the meeting as a member of the public but did not take part in any discussion of the planning application to avoid fettering his discretion as a member of the SWT Planning Committee.

Cllr Hall attended the meeting via zoom but due to his prejudicial interest did not take part in any discussion in relation to the planning application.

In attendance: Mrs A Shepherd, Clerk, Mrs T Cavill, Assistant Clerk, Cllr David Fothergill, County Councillor, Cllr Mike Batsch (Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council) and 9 members of the public (2 via zoom).

PC01/22 To receive any apologies (with reasons), introductions with responsibilities

Apologies were received from Cllrs Gage and Hope.

PC02/22 To note

- a) Declarations of Interest: No change.
- b) Dispensation Requests: None
- c) Amendments to the Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest: None had been notified to the Clerk.

PC03/22 To consider planning application and develop recommendations for consideration by the Parish Council at its next meeting:

08/22/0001/HYB - Application for a Hybrid Planning application for Outline Planning permission with some matters reserved (except access, scale and layout) for an extension to the country park and the development of facilities within Maidenbrook Country Park (Natural World Centre/Restaurant/Farm Shop/Observatory and Open Air Theatre), Outline Planning permission (including access) for a phased development of 70 No. dwellings (including 25% affordable homes) with associated highways improvements, orchard and the provision of additional public rights of way, landscaping and ecological enhancements and Full Planning permission for the erection of 16 No. dwellings (including 25% affordable homes) on land at Glebe Farm, Cheddon Fitzpaine.

Assistant Clerk presented some slides that provided an overview of the planning proposal. Assistant Clerk confirmed that following a review of the Design and Access Statement that accompanied the application, the proposal is compliant with all of the Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Cllr Haskins shared a response received from Rural Solutions to the questions raised during the Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council Public Meeting in relation to the application and a discussion followed on the responses provided to the questions and members of the public present at the meeting made comments. The key issues discussed included:

- Highways:

- The mitigation measures included in the proposal for example vehicle passing places and plans to add footpaths were considered insufficient by members of the public and the adequacy of the Highways Assessment was questioned.
- Cllr Haskins and Cavill confirmed that the observations from SCC Highways in relation to the planning proposal are awaited.
- Ecology:
 - The adequacy of the bat survey was questioned and the proposed mitigation measures were considered inadequate by the members of the public. Hestercombe House has responded to the application in relation to this issue.
 - It was noted that the County Ecologist's response to the application is also awaited.
- Number of houses
 - A discussion took place about the number of houses proposed, it was felt that the number of houses proposed was too many and that if the proposal was granted that further applications could follow increasing the number of houses proposed.
 - The lack of infrastructure in the village for the development was raised for example bus routes, shops etc.
 - It was also noted that if the application was granted it may encourage planning applications on other similar sites.
 - If the number of proposed homes could be reduced with a guarantee of an absolute maximum number secured by a mechanism, then the application may be more agreeable, particularly if it secures and protects the green wedge as that in perpetuity.
- Country Park
 - The size of the proposed building was felt too large.
 - Of the 115 comments received by SWT in relation to the planning application, 45 have commented to indicate that they don't like the proposals for the Country Park.

Following the discussion, the Planning Committee developed recommended comments in relation to the application, as follows:

Response to application recommended by the Planning Committee for consideration by the Parish Council:

08/22/0001/HYB - Application for a Hybrid Planning application for Outline Planning permission with some matters reserved (except access, scale and layout) for an extension to the country park and the development of facilities within Maidenbrook Country Park (Natural World Centre/Restaurant/Farm Shop/Observatory and Open Air Theatre), Outline Planning permission (including access) for a phased development of 70 No. dwellings (including 25% affordable homes) with associated highways improvements, orchard and the provision of additional public rights of way, landscaping and ecological enhancements and Full Planning permission for the erection of 16 No. dwellings (including 25% affordable homes) on land at Glebe Farm, Cheddon Fitzpaine.

Context / Introduction:

At the time of this comment, there is no lease, nor has there been in the past, of the Country Park land from Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT).

The plans for the installations at the Country Park (CP) were agreed in the early stages of the CP when the land was first offered for sale to the Parishes by the then Taunton Deane Borough Council. This offer was later withdrawn by SWT.

The two Parishes and the Local Planning Authority agreed that the way forward for the Country Park was to get it recognized as a National Country Park, by complying with the criteria laid down in Government guidelines. Hence the suggestion to introduce the café and toilets, facilities for running and walking, environmental educational facilities by the Forest School and environmental awareness and promotion by the wildlife pond and

observatory. It was agreed by all that recognition as a National Country Park would assist in securing grant funding for the ongoing maintenance of the Country Park which would be delivered by setting up a charitable trust.

Advice was given by the then Planning Strategy Officer at SWT (N Bryant) that the application for the Country Park café, toilets, observatory and amphitheatre could be included in the Glebe Farm application. Had the advice not been given, the Country Park application would have been made separately.

Comments in relation to the application:

West Monkton Parish Council does not support the application as it is currently submitted for the following reasons:

Although it is accepted that the application, as detailed in the Design and Access Statement submitted with the application, is compliant with the Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton Neighbourhood Plan policies including:

- H1 Housing for older people – 20 single storey dwellings are included across the four sites (10% would be 8.6)
- H2 and H3 External materials and Bin storage – local vernacular has been addressed, including stone type, render and grey slate roofs. Bin accessed by refuse carts from rear of buildings.
- T1 comprehensive and high-quality cycle and footpath network. New footpaths provided. Issues unresolved regarding vehicular movements.
- E policies n/a apart from E5 roll out of broad band
- R1 Dark skies lighting is downlit and LED
- R2 Green Space and Wildlife- plans for wildflower meadows, orchard tree planting
- R3 Flood attenuation- swales water butts and other rainwater capture e.g. ponds and wetland areas and tree planting
- R4 Recreation and community facilities – creation of new rights of way
- R5 Local Green Spaces – no green triangles in the application area

The application is in contrary to current SWT policies including Core Strategy policies SP1 – Sustainable Development, and SB1 – Settlement Limits as the development is proposed to be built in open countryside.

Issues including transport, highways and drainage also need to be resolved to local satisfaction.

The number of houses is considered to be overbearing for the small hamlet of Cheddon Fitzpaine, even though the parish of Cheddon Fitzpaine is much larger and includes a number of major housing estates e.g. Waterleaze, Nerrols, Northwalls.

The application could be reconsidered if there could be an absolute guarantee that the remaining land would be parkland forever, for example by the establishment of a charity to preserve it as such; with a reduction in the total number of houses proposed, and any further increase in the number of dwellings prevented, including future development of extra properties in the proposed existing gardens.

West Monkton Parish Council would be looking to support an imaginative and innovative application which demonstrated the benefits of the application to the Parish not only for the current generations but for future generations still to come.

PC04/22 Dates of forthcoming meetings:

Parish Council:

Second Tuesday in the month (Business focused meeting)

2022: 10th May, 14th Jun, 12th Jul, 9th Aug, 13th Sep, 11th Oct, 8th Nov, 13th Dec.

Fourth Tuesday in the month (Community / project focused meeting)
2022: 26th Apr, 24th May, 28th Jun, 26th Jul, 23rd Aug, 27th Sep, 25th Oct, 22nd Nov.
Audit Working Party: 22nd April 2022 at 9.00am (Virtual)
Annual Parish Meeting: TBC March 2023
BACH committee: 7th June 2022 at 7pm
Budget and Precept Working Party TBC November 2022 at 7pm

Meeting finished at 8.40pm



Signed Chairman:

Date: 26th April 2022

Adopted