



MERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: M Parker

Clerk/RFO: R Martin



MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING IN ST PETER'S CHURCH CALLED IN RESPONSE TO PARISHIONERS' CONCERNS REGARDING PLANNING APPLICATION 3/PL/2015/0455

Present: Councillors: Parker (Chairman), Dunn, Macro and Riley, and Rosemary Martin (Clerk); 19 parishioners in attendance.

624. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllr de Grey.

625. To receive declarations of interest

None received

626. To receive overview of contents of and background to Planning Application 3PL/2015/0455

Cllr Parker opened the meeting.

In theory, this application should be refused, since there is currently no out settlement boundary for Merton, and BDC planning policy therefore dictates that any planning application for residential development be refused.

One of the options that the Parish Council had been considering to facilitate a new village hall was to submit a planning application for a small hall and a small house on the existing village hall site. Proceeds from the sale of the small house could then be used to fund the cost of building the new hall. BDC planning officers had recently indicated that, if the village supported this, permission for such an application might be granted. Villagers are now concerned that such an application might set a precedent for applications similar to the one under consideration. The Parish Council will therefore remove that from the list of options for the village hall site.

627. To adjourn the meeting for Parishioners' Questions

The meeting was adjourned
The meeting was reconvened.

628. To discuss, and agree Parish Council response to Planning Application 3/PL/2015/0455

During Parishioners' Questions, the following objections to the proposed planning application were raised:

- It might set a precedent for further applications to be granted
- This is a green field site, and there are undeveloped brownfield sites which could preferably be developed in the parish
- There is no longer an out settlement boundary in Merton, therefore no residential development is permissible under BDC planning policy
- There are tree sparrows, RSPB protected species, nesting on the site on an ash tree
- The ash tree is of such a size that it should be protected
- There are great crested newts in the immediate vicinity, and therefore probably on the site itself
- This site is within 1500 metres of an SPA protection zone where stone curlews are nesting and therefore no new building is allowed
- The road onto which the exits from the houses will debouch is in fact a narrow single track road



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- The development would mean that there would then be three exits onto this road in a distance of 100 yards
- Due to the narrowness of the road there would be very poor visibility to exit from the site without removing the existing hedgerows
- The road is currently used primarily by farm traffic, walkers, bicyclists and horse riders, plus those living in 5 houses along the Peddars Way, this would significantly increase the amount of traffic
- Driving from the proposed development to Watton involves negotiating a dangerous blind bend onto the Watton Road, where it is impossible to pass a car coming in the opposite direction, and the Watton Road itself is a single track road
- There are no amenities in the village, and the site is 1.5 miles from the centre of Watton, so trips to schools, supermarkets, doctors, etc would involve car journeys
- The proposed development of relatively large detached houses in relatively small plots would be at odds with the character of the rest of the village
- Some parishioners complained that their water pressure is already poor and additional developments might exacerbate this.

After the discussion, the Chairman took a vote on who supported the application and who opposed it. All present opposed.

On the basis of the above, the Parish Council will oppose the application, but will also attempt to ascertain the views of other parishioners.