

Barford, Sherbourne & Wasperton Joint Parish Council

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Council held on Monday 25th October 2004 in Barford Memorial Hall

Present: Cllr. J. V. Murphy (Chairman)
Cllrs. M. P. Byerley, R. Clay, Mrs. S. Dean, G. P. Grima,
Mrs. A. Gordon, Mrs. M. A. Hayward, K. S. Hope,
R. G. Mulgrue, S. G. Starkey, W. Worrall and J. T. Wright.

In attendance: Cllr. R. G. Butler (Warwick District Council)

By Invitation: Mr. M. D. Hawkesford, Mr. J. M. Hawkesford,
Mr C. Coleman (Malcolm Hawkesford Estate Agents),
Mrs L. Oscroft (Headteacher, Barford St. Peter's School)

Members of the public in attendance: 43 residents

Apologies for absence: Cllr. Dr. M. J. Metcalfe

182 Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Cllr. Starkey declared a personal interest as one of the architects who might have worked on the scheme was a relative.

183 Land around Barford House

The Chairman explained that the special meeting had been called to be informed of proposals for the use of the land around Barford House and to gauge public reaction to them. He pointed out that the Parish Councillors could not at this stage, in advance of a formal Planning Application, discuss the details of the proposed housing as this could compromise their position when formally consulted in the planning process.

Mr. Malcolm Hawkesford, who acted for P. A. Hopkins Ltd., the owners, presented an indicative scheme for the use of the land, which was presently used for grazing and lay outside the village boundary. The commercial aspect of the development would be market housing, the number of which had not yet been defined and would depend on the type but was likely to be relatively small. Access would be from Wellesbourne Road and this would also enable access to the rear of some of the existing houses in Church Street. In return for permission for the market houses the landowner would donate to the village an area near Wasperton Lane for affordable housing and the remainder of the land for use as public open space and sport & recreation facilities together with a building for a new village hall/sports pavilion and attendant car parking. The proposed sport & recreation facilities, which could also be available for the use of the school, would include a cricket pitch and land for other activities, such as tennis, a bowling green and a children's playground. A rough estimate of the value

of the donation was about £1 million. He assured the meeting that the development would be carried out in a sympathetic way, preserving trees.

He emphasised that the scheme was outside current planning policy and the policies of the emerging District Local Plan, which only allowed affordable housing in villages, and therefore to make it worthwhile to submit a formal Planning Application it would need the strong support of the village. He handed out an illustrative plan but stated that the details of the scheme were very flexible and could be amended to reflect the wishes of the village.

Residents and Parish Councillors then asked questions about the scheme. Amongst the points raised were the following:

Financial:

- (a) the size and conditions of the donation – prior to the Planning Application more details of the plans would be given and of the conditions to be attached. These would then be incorporated in a legal agreement;
- (b) the source of the donation – it would be from the land owner, not the developer;
- (c) running costs of a new village hall – if hire charges were considered likely to be insufficient, these could be covered by using part of the donated capital sum for a sinking fund;
- (d) further funds could be levered into the village by using the donation as match funding for grants to enhance the new hall and recreation facilities;

Housing:

- (e) the number of houses – the JPC would be consulted on the Planning Application and it would have legal agreements attached to it to prevent any increase in the agreed number;
- (f) in view of supposed difficulties of accessing the bypass from the village, it would be better if the market homes were low-density – there would be consultation with the village prior to the Planning Application on the type and number of market homes ;
- (g) the extent of the affordable housing – the whole of the Wasperton Lane site could be used if required;
- (h) the allocation of the affordable housing – there was an existing agreement with the Warwickshire Rural Housing Association and Warwick District Council that new affordable housing would be allocated firstly to those with Barford connections and would remain the property of a Housing Association, so could not be sold. Furthermore, any existing social housing released by people relocating to new affordable homes in the village would be similarly prioritised. It was hoped that this agreement would be extended to this proposed new provision;

Village Hall and Sports Facilities:

- (i) need for a new village hall – if the village considered it did not need a new hall, then the building could be just a sports pavilion;
- (j) more car parking spaces might be required than those shown on the plan;
- (k) if necessary, the existing village hall could be disposed of and any future development of its site would be the subject of consultations and Planning Permission. It was not clear for what purpose the proceeds of any sale could be used;

(l) need for a new cricket pitch – it was explained that the rent for the existing pitch was going to be increased significantly, perhaps beyond the means of the club to meet, and the existing ground had poor facilities. However, if negotiations with the current land owner were not successful (and so far they did not appear promising), the club would have to search for an alternative ground;

(m) floodlighting for the sports area should be avoided;

Planning Process and Timescale:

(n) the questionnaire forming part of the Parish Plan process would be used to consult residents on the facilities they considered were needed;

(o) a “Planning for Real” exercise could be used to shape the proposals prior to a formal Planning Application;

(p) the timescale – if the village supported the proposals in principle, then it was likely to be at least two years before Planning Permission was granted;

Public Open Space:

(q) a green belt or wilderness area and circular walks should be included;

(r) concern at the safety of the open space in view of the new road cutting through it;

(s) the cost of the up-keep of the open space – a contribution might be required from the owners of the new market homes;

Other Issues:

(t) the safety of the junction of the new access road with the Wellesbourne Road – the development would not be completed until after the bypass was opened. This would lead to a substantial reduction of traffic on the Wellesbourne Road, which would be declassified. The new access road might also be used to give an improved and safer vehicle route to the school;

(u) the use of the new car park by the village school – this would be a matter for the JPC or the body set up to have responsibility for the new facility;

(v) the security of the school from the sports/recreation area and new car park would have to be borne in mind.

On being put to the members of the public present, it was clear that only a small minority were not in favour of continuing discussions on the proposals.

In conclusion, the Chairman thanked Malcolm Hawkesford for his presentation and reminded residents that they should complete the Parish Plan questionnaire, which would be issued shortly, as this contained questions on the facilities and developments they would like to see in the Parish.