

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FOWLMERE PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE

which was held on-line via Zoom

on **THURSDAY 29th April 2021 at 7:30pm**

PRESENT: Cllr P Burge (Chairman), Cllr D Roberts, Cllr R Lennon and Cllr P Collinson
IN ATTENDANCE Ms K Byrne (Clerk) and Mr J Fulton (who joined at 19:40 and left at 20.00)

Before the meeting began Cllr Burge advised the attendees that the Zoom session was going to be recorded but would not be widely distributed. There were no objections.

1. Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence from Cllr C Howe (who had a work commitment), Cllr S Mulholland (who had a work commitment), and Cllr L Wragg, (who had a personal commitment); Cllr J Hobro was absent.

2. Declarations of interest (if any)

Cllr Roberts declared that if an application is placed before South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) she will approach any new information afresh. Also, because Cllr Roberts is a District Cllr at SCDC, the same applies and she will look at any application, which goes to SCDC, afresh.

3. Minutes from Previous Meeting 23rd March 2021 – Matters Arising

The minutes were agreed to be a true record, and were signed by Cllr Burge; he will deliver the signed copy to the Clerk. There were no matters arising.

4. Update on Mill Farm, Fowlmere Road – 20/03105/FUL

Cllr Burge said this application had gone to the SCDC Planning Committee meeting on 13 April, where Cllr Wragg represented the PC. It was disappointing that the SCDC Planning Committee paid little attention to the points raised by Fowlmere PC. The Planning Committee found in favour of the application (6 to 4). Afterwards Cllr Roberts had expressed her concerns to Stephen Reid the SCDC planning solicitor, who invited the PC to provide further input. Cllrs Wragg and Burge responded with a letter, at short notice, restating the PC's concerns about the application and how the SCDC Planning Committee had dealt with them. A planning decision notice has not yet been published; Cllr Burge thought it unlikely that SCDC would change the decision but hoped that in future planning officers might review how they handle comments from PCs, and ensure that their reports are unbiased.

Cllr Roberts said that the Planning Committee chairman (Cllr Burge) had written an excellent letter, raising some pertinent policy points; it was disappointing that the PC had to pick the district council up on planning matters.

5. S/4252/19/FL – Cherry Tree Field, Shepreth Road

Conversion of cowsheds to 3 bedroom house with internal annex and stable building

[The screen was shared on Zoom to show the relevant documents for this and the following 2 items.]

Cllr Burge said this application had been seen several times by the PC, and SCDC Planning Committee who had approved it. However, the basis for that decision had been challenged by the PC, as the previous prior approval which SCDC had relied on, had been flawed. The subsequent re-application for prior approval was granted. However, the PC had just been notified that Few's Lane Consortium has challenged the decision, and named Fowlmere PC as an interested party (as such it will be kept informed of any developments). Nonetheless, this application should be considered on its merits.

Cllr Burge summarised the application and the additional information provided. The PC had previously stated why the application is not compliant with Policy H/17 'Reuse of Buildings in the Countryside for Residential Use' of SCDC's Local Plan. The PC had also provided a statement to SCDC regarding the Planning Officer's report. Cllr Burge suggested that the PC might consider combining the 2 previous submitted documents into 1 consistent document restating the material grounds for objection, and re-submitting this to SCDC.

Cllr Burge invited Mr Fulton (the applicant) to speak. Mr Fulton said that they (the applicants) had been going through the (planning) process for some time, and they thought they had mitigated the concerns of the PC. He had also just become aware of the Few's Lane Consortium challenge. He understood the PC's concerns about the building, and wanted to work with the PC to allay any further issues. Mr Fulton wanted to clarify to the PC

that if they (the applicants) do not get permission to build the one house (proposed in this application) they would go ahead and build 2 houses, as permitted in the already approved Class Q (fall-back position). He thanked Cllr Roberts for inviting him to speak and hoped the PC would take his comments positively.

Cllr Roberts said that the PC can only judge the application on the information in front of it. She said that the Fewes Lane Consortium is a campaigning group who want to ensure that SCDC Planning Committee follow prescribed policies, and are unconnected to Fowlmere PC.

Following further discussion, Cllr Roberts proposed that the PC recommended rejection because of the material reasons previously stated, Cllr Lennon seconded, all concurred.

ACTION – Cllr Burge to combine and re-state the PC’s previous comments; Clerk to submit on behalf of the PC

6. 21/00784/HFUL – Lower Farm, Lower Thatch Barn, Long Lane, Fowlmere

Replace 1 No. front door and 2 No. sliding windows to front elevation and 4 No. bottom hinged windows to side elevation

Cllr Roberts declared a pecuniary interest in this item, as a near neighbour, and left the meeting at 20.01.

Cllr Burge summarised the application, which proposes to replace doors and windows with aluminium items, and change some from sliding to opening. The conservation officer had stated there was no material conservation issues. Cllr Collinson said if the conservation officer had no issues then he doesn’t either. Cllr Collinson proposed that the PC takes a neutral stance as it had no objections; all concurred.

Cllr Roberts returned to the meeting at 20.04.

7. 21/00941/FUL & 21/00942/FUL – Land to the North of A505, Thriplow, Royston

Erection of agricultural building and grain store, and creation of a concrete apron

Cllr Burge summarised the application, which proposes to build 2 separate barns, in 2 separate phases, to create 1 large grain store. Cllr Burge questioned the need for so much more storage for grain when the applicant had recently received approval for a new grain store on Fowlmere Road, Foxton with 9,000 tonnes capacity (S/3566/17/FL). He also questioned the building of the 2 barns in 2 phases, when effectively it is an application for one larger grain storage facility. Would it not be better to resubmit as a single application?

The PC asked the Clerk to request clarification from the Planning Officer on these matters, before submitting its comments.

ACTION – Clerk to ask the Planning Officer for clarification on the PC’s questions on the grain store

8. Arrangement for returning to face-to face meetings

Management of sharing planning documents once meetings are no longer held online

Cllr Burge said that as SCDC no longer sends out paper copies of plans, when the PC returns to face-to-face meetings (from 7 May 2021) it needs to consider how to review and share planning documents. If the Village Hall does not have facilities for projection then the Primary School, who does have a projector and screen, may be able to host future planning meetings. However, the head teacher would first need to consult the governing body about whether they could hire out the school hall in the evenings. A third option, if neither of these possibilities work, might be that the PC considers purchasing projection equipment itself.

ACTION – Cllr Burge and Clerk to find out whether the Village Hall have projection equipment, and if not whether the school could host Planning meetings

The meeting closed at 20.22