

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FOWLMERE PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE PAVILION ROOM, VILLAGE HALL, FOWLMERE
on THURSDAY 19TH MARCH at 7:00pm

PRESENT: Cllr D Roberts (Chairman), Cllr L Wragg, Cllr M Vinton and Cllr R Lennon (arrived at 19.13)
IN ATTENDANCE Ms K Byrne (Clerk), Mr P Biggs and Mr J Young

1. Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence from Cllr P Burge, Cllr S Mulholland, Cllr P Collinson and Cllr C Howe

2. Declarations of interest (if any)

Cllr Roberts declared an interest in historic applications relating to items 4, 5 & 6 but she will look at each of the new applications afresh.

Cllr Roberts declared that if an application is later 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.

(When she arrived) Cllr Lennon declared an interest in item 5, as she lives very close to the proposed site.

3. Minutes from Previous Meeting 18th February 2020 – Matters Arising

The minutes were agreed as a true record, and were signed by Cllr Roberts. There were no matters arising.

Cllr Wragg suggested that the numbering of pages for the Planning Minutes should be sequential throughout the year, as per the PC Minutes.

ACTION – The Clerk will check whether this is good practice and if it is adopt this numbering system in the next Financial Year.

The PC agreed to consider items 4 and item 6 before item 5 in case any members of the public (thinking that the meeting was starting at 7.30pm) wanted to attend the discussion on item 5.

4. 20/01512/PRI06A – Springfields, Fowlmere Road, Fowlmere

**Prior notification of agricultural or forestry development – Erection of agricultural barn
For Information Only**

A previous similar application on this site was turned down last year as the site is immediately adjacent a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – the Fowlmere Watercress Beds.

In reviewing this new application, the PC expressed similar concerns about the location of the site being near the SSSI. However, as the Councillors are not experts in this area, Cllr Roberts proposed that the decision should be left to the Planning officers; all concurred.

Fowlmere PC has no objections to a barn being erected on the site, but expressed concern regarding the sensitivities of the site being so close to the Site of Special Scientific Interest.

5. 20/01209/FUL – Land At Chrishall Road, Fowlmere

Development of 16 No. dwellings, associated works, provision of vehicular access and open space.

Cllr Lennon declared an interest and for discussion of this item, she removed herself to the public area.

Cllr Roberts said that this is a development of 16 dwellings, and is outside the village envelope. The application is being submitted under the entry level exception site policy, as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework. If the PC was to object to the application it would need to provide material considerations (which Cllr Roberts listed); other considerations (non-material, also listed) could also be considered.

A previous application on this site was submitted in 2017 as a rural exception site, and was refused because it was outside the village envelope and against policy.

Cllr Roberts invited the applicant's agent (Mr P Biggs) to speak. Mr Biggs gave some background and explained how this new application differs from the previous rejected application. There will be 16 two-bedroom houses, (6 affordable houses to rent and 10 for shared ownership), each property will have a good sized garden and 2

car parking spaces, and the distance from the neighbouring properties will be greater than 24m back to back and 14m to the north, all of which is compliant with the policy.

Cllr Roberts invited the members of the public to speak. The concerns expressed included: the height of the proposed 2-storey houses and closeness to neighbouring homes on Appleacre park, which some residents felt would overlook their gardens; the survey the applicant claimed to have carried out (in 2017) did not include speaking to any Appleacre residents; noise from the families who potentially might live in the new homes; street lighting on the new development might be intrusive to Appleacre residents; the Appleacre fence being used as the boundary. The applicant's agent was given permission to respond.

After a comprehensive discussion, the PC concluded that there were no material reasons for recommending refusal. Cllr Roberts proposed that the PC recommend support, all concurred (3 votes for support, 0 against). However, the PC insisted on the following caveats:

- A Housing Needs Survey is carried out;
- SCDC strictly implements all aspects of the policy and if anything fails then the application will be refused;
- Play equipment is provided in the open space to the north of the proposed site;
- Section 106 money is provided for indoor and outdoor facilities;
- Section 106 money is provided for education, which must be exclusively for Fowlmere Primary school;
- Any streetlighting on the site must be low-level and directional, and must not cause any spill-out to neighbouring properties;
- No lights on the back of the proposed houses are to shine towards Appleacre;
- Proper high-quality landscaping to be carried out on all boundaries, and only native species to be used in the hedges (no Leylandii);
- The footpath to extend to the end of the site and beyond to the bus shelter on Chrishall Road.
- A development of this size anywhere within the village envelope or outside must not be allowed to create a precedent.

6. 20/01634/PRI06A – Deans Farm, Long Lane, Fowlmere

Erection of an agricultural building to be used for the storage of hay, straw and grain

A previous similar application for prior approval for an agricultural building on this site was considered last month. On 19 February 2020 Cllr Burge and the Clerk submitted a letter to SCDC expressing the PC's concerns and the lack of information supporting the application. The PC continues to have reservations and concerns about the attempts to intensify the use of the land all of which lies outside the village framework and should therefore be strictly controlled within polices

Cllr Roberts said that SCDC have still not given much detail to support the application. It is still not clear why the farm needs another agricultural building, and if it does why it does not use the barn that received planning permission for change of use in 2016. The applicant needs to show that the barn is required to hold produce from that farm. Cllr Vinton said that it appears that the applicant may want to use it for storage of items other than Deans Farm produce. If this is so then it needs to be transparent in the application.

Cllr Roberts said that SCDC should seek independent expert advice.

ACTION – Clerk to resubmit the letter from 19-February, and add the following text:

Fowlmere PC recommends refusal. Fowlmere PC urges SCDC planning officers to establish beyond doubt that the proposed agricultural building is required to store produce produced only on Deans Farm and not elsewhere. The building must NOT be connected to mains sewage. The applicant's case must be critically challenged as to whether or not it complies to the stringent tests required when asking for further buildings to be erected in the open countryside outside village envelopes, when there are already large and underused buildings on the same site.

7. Other Matters and Updates (for information only)

There was none.

The meeting closed at 21.00