

**MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF BARLEY PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT THE TOWN HOUSE ON MONDAY 9th JANUARY 2017**

1. Present

Cllr Jerry Carlisle (Chairman), Cllr I Turner, Cllr G Clark, Cllr Y Lee, Cllr P McPartland, Mrs Laura Childs (Clerk), Mr Tim Martin (RFO)

10 members of the public

2. Apologies

District Cllr G Morris, County Cllr Tony Hunter, Mr Nick Shaw (Town House Management Committee Chairman)

3. Councillor's Declaration of Interest

Cllr McPartland asked it to be noted that he lives opposite Kestrels, Church End, Barley which is to be discussed as a planning application on the Agenda.

No other declarations.

4. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 5th December '16 were read and approved.
Proposed by Cllr G Clark and seconded by Cllr I Turner.

5. Matters Arising

Despite advising BT that NHDC have no knowledge of a planning application to remove the red telephone box in Smiths End Lane, the Clerk has been told that they must wait for the planning application period to expire before they can give permission for the village to go ahead with any adoption process.

The interactive speed signs were discussed and it was agreed that they seemed to be having a positive effect. The possibility of purchasing a second sign was discussed but not formally approved at this stage.

6. Planning

Case ref: 16/03141/1 Kestrels, Church End, Barley – Three bedroom detached dwelling with basement garage/room following demolition of existing dwelling and garage.

This application was discussed at length and it was resolved to respond as follows:

Barley Parish Council unanimously objects to this application and in arriving at their decision wish the District Council to take the following comments into account:-

The site lies within the village envelope of the Barley Selected Village Policy Area as defined in both the 1996 Local Plan and the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan approved by NHDC in September 2016. It is also within the Barley Conservation Area.

Whilst we have no objection to the principle of redevelopment of this property we do not consider the submitted proposal to be acceptable for the following reasons:-

1. The height of the proposed new building is some 11.3m to the ridge. This is approximately 1.5m taller than the adjacent property, 2 Church End, and is 4.8m (74%) taller than the existing house proposed to be demolished. Furthermore, the footprint of the proposed new building, excluding the basement, is some 33% bigger than the existing house.

The proposed new property has been positioned both further forward on the site and closer to the adjacent property, being approx 1m from the boundary.

We consider the scale and bulk of the new property to be excessive and thus unacceptable in this location. We also note that the proposed development as shown on the submitted plans does not reflect the difference in levels between the site Kestrels, and the adjacent property 2 Church End.

2. As referred to above, the proposed development is approx. 1m from the boundary with 2 Church End. In our opinion this proximity will have a detrimental effect on both light and privacy at 2 Church End.

The repositioning of the proposed development will destroy the current open space enjoyed between the existing properties and block light into 2 Church End. There are also three windows shown on the eastern elevation which will directly overlook 2 Church End, these will clearly constitute an overlooking problem, particularly as the building is located so close to the boundary.

3. The proposed external materials are not in our view appropriate for this location; the proposed use of thatch on the vertical elevations to 3 sides of the property is out of keeping with the Conservation Area. Nowhere in the village is this treatment to be found.

In addition, we understand that under current building regulations, where a thatch roof is proposed for a new property, there must be a minimum distance of 12m from the boundary. Quite clearly that cannot be achieved here. While perhaps not a planning matter per se it is in our opinion a proper consideration; if approved, a planning application should be capable of being implemented, which would not be the case here.

4. The property lies within the heart of the Barley Conservation Area. A new replacement building would not be precluded under this policy, but it does require that any development proposal should maintain or enhance the character of the area and any development which does not respect and reflect the visual quality of the area because of its design, materials, colour, form and scale will be refused. We consider that this proposal does not meet or satisfy the provisions of this policy for the reasons outlined and should therefore be refused.
5. We note that undercroft/basement car parking is proposed for this development, although no particular explanation is provided as to the need for such a facility. However, given the potential risk of flooding in this area we do have concerns over the inclusion of a basement as proposed. The general topography of the site falls away from the front (Church End) to the rear of the site.

During periods of heavy prolonged rainfall and flash storms, the route taken by flood water runoff from Pudding Lane (an unmade road with no drainage, directly opposite the site), and the fields above, is straight across Church End into this property and the Fox and Hounds car park, and on down High Street. On such occasions there has been severe flood damage to properties in the vicinity including Kestrels. These drainage problems in this part of the village are already well documented.

While we note that it is proposed that pumps will be employed to drain the basement into soakaways that presupposes that there is both an electricity supply available and that the soakaways are capable of taking the excess surface water produced under such conditions. During periods of bad weather and thunderstorms the electricity supply to the village frequently fails which would leave this site and the basement particularly vulnerable to flooding.

6. We note that it is proposed to create a second access /egress from the property on to Church End directly opposite the junction with Pudding Lane. We consider this to be an unacceptable proposal and potentially dangerous on highway grounds. It would also be impossible to achieve the necessary sightlines given the proximity of the adjoining buildings at the neighbouring property, 2 Church End.

This second access should therefore be refused.

Case ref: 16/02760/1 The Gables, High Street, Barley – Fully Planning Permission: Residential development of nine dwellings, garages, parking and landscaping. New access road, car park for existing surgery, relocation of existing electricity substation and double garage and store attached to existing garage for ‘Chadwick’

This application was discussed at length and it was resolved to respond as follows:

Barley Parish Council objects to this application and in arriving at their decision wish the District Council to take the following comments into account:-

1. The site is wholly outside the Barley Selected Village Policy Area (village envelope) of the current 1996 NHDC Local Plan.

In excess of 50% of the site also lies outside the proposed Barley Selected Village Policy Area of the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan approved by NHDC at their meeting in September 2016 and which, following a final public consultation, is expected to go to the Planning Inspectorate for ratification later this year. This particular area of the site has previously been put forward by the site owner during previous local plan deliberations and on each occasion has been rejected by NHDC. The same site was put forward yet again as part of the current Local Plan review and once again was rejected by NHDC.

The proposed development is therefore contrary to both the provisions of Policy 7 of the current Local Plan (Selected Villages Beyond the Green Belt) and to its replacement policy in the new plan. It should therefore be refused.

2. The site lies entirely within the Barley Conservation Area. As such any development proposals must maintain or enhance the character of the area and proposals will be refused where they do not respect and reflect the visual quality of the area because of its design, materials, form and scale.

The site for this proposed development consists of either mature garden land or open grass field bounded by mature hedgerows and trees. Any development of the site will in our view be wholly contrary to the provisions of this very important policy.

3. The site also lies within Landscape Conservation Area LC2 of Policy 12 of the current local plan; we consider the proposal to be contrary to both paragraphs (i) and (ii) of that policy which generally require proposals to add to the character of North Hertfordshire's landscapes. Clearly these proposals do not achieve those aims.
4. The proposed development of 9 dwellings with the provision of some 36 car parking spaces, including the additional parking for the Barley Surgery and the property known as Chadwick, will potentially result in excess of 70 additional vehicular movements per day moving on and off the site. This traffic will be accessing and exiting the site onto High Street at the same point as all the other traffic currently using Barley Surgery, including the occupiers of Springfield who also use the same access. This would result in a totally unacceptable situation at a location where there are already all too frequent severe traffic and on street parking issues. There is also a busy garage opposite the surgery. The very minor improvements proposed for the access point on High Street will make absolutely no difference to the traffic entering and exiting the site and Surgery. On these grounds alone we consider the application should be refused.
5. We are aware of the comments made by Hertfordshire Highways with regard to the application and we fundamentally disagree with their comments under the headings Traffic Generation & Impact on the Adjacent Highway, Accessibility & Sustainability, and to the first part of their Conclusion. The detrimental impact of this development on the village in highway terms alone will be extremely significant and unacceptable.

The reference in Highways comments about proximity to bus routes and cycling to/ from Royston mitigating the traffic impact can best be described as something from cloud cuckoo land. Highways also comment that although they would be unlikely to adopt the new roads on the site they note that they are nevertheless to be built to an adoptable standard. If this includes street lighting, this would be wholly unacceptable as the village does not have any street lighting and the community would not wish to see any such lighting introduced. Villagers expressed very strong opinions on street lighting in The Village Plan.

6. The extent of the built form of the proposed development, the roads, and the car parking areas etc. will considerably increase the surface water discharge from the site severely exacerbating the already well documented existing surface water drainage problems in this particular area of the village. The development proposals do not properly address this issue in any meaningful way as is noted by Hertfordshire County Council in their LLFA (SUDS) reply to NHDC dated 4th January 2017 and their further comment about flow routes near the site with recorded flood incidents.

Having regard to all of the above we urge NHDC to refuse permission for this development which if allowed would have a serious detrimental impact on the village in so many ways.

Case ref: 16/03139/1HH Old Manor House, Shaftenhoe End, Barley. Full Planning Permission: Detached double garage and store

Following discussions it was unanimously agreed that there were no objections to this application.

Hansons Builders Yard, Pudding Lane, Barley

Further to our request for clarification on the level to which it was proposed that Pudding Lane would be up-graded, correspondence has been received from Mr Easton, the planning consultant acting on behalf of the Hanson family. Whilst this clarification is useful it doesn't allow the Parish Council to confirm its support for any future application as Mr Easton was requesting. The Clerk was asked to write to Mr Easton to thank him for the clarification but to confirm that we wouldn't be able to provide any further comment on their proposals until a formal application has been received.

Nobles Cottage, Smiths End Lane, Barley

The Clerk has received an email from Melissa Tyler of NHDC Planning Department confirming that she has now visited the site and inspected the wall, which she believed to be in the same state of repair as when she visited earlier in the year. Ms Tyler spoke with the owners of Nobles Cottage and informed that they would require planning permission to rebuild the wall and will wait for them to submit this.

Fox & Hounds Public House, High Street, Barley

The Clerk was asked to write Mr Adrian Parkes, following the dismissal of his appeal and the subsequent withdrawal of his appeal against the AoCV, asking him to confirm his intentions for the property.

Following earlier discussions with NHDC planning department with regard to our concerns over the condition of the building, particularly having regard to its status as a listed building, Cllr Lee and Cllr Carlisle visited the property alongside the Senior Conservation Officer for NHDC, Mr Mark Simmonds, the Planning Inspector, and others as part of the Planning Appeal last November and are therefore now generally aware of the current condition of the interior of the property. Dependant on Mr Parkes immediate intentions for the property the meeting deferred asking NHDC to take action to require Mr Parkes to undertake remedial work to put the property into a reasonable state of repair. Cllr Lee has spoken to English Heritage about the condition of the building and is now awaiting their feedback. In addition to the inside of the property concerns were raised about the boundary, which is now becoming potentially dangerous in places.

Dovehouse Shott, Smiths End Lane, Barley

The Clerk was asked to write to Mrs Georgina Northen of Ginmeister Ltd to ask for an update of the moving plans for the business and likely timetable.

7. Town House

Mr Tim Martin advised that the hot water tank in the cupboard upstairs had had its thermostat turned up to max and was therefore using a lot of electricity to constantly maintain that temperature. It is unknown who would have done this as only a few people have a key to this cupboard. It has now been readjusted and will be monitored going forward.

Mr Shaw, Chairman of Town House Management Committee, emailed the Clerk to advise that he had asked Mr Darren Partt to redecorate in the kitchen upstairs in preference to treating the floor, which had previously been agreed. Following discussions it was agreed that whilst the kitchen undoubtedly required some work because of the ongoing damp/condensation issues, it would be better to restore the floor and then tackle any minor redecoration once the damp/condensation problem has been dealt with.

Mr Partt has completed the repairs to the driveway down to the car park at the back of the Town House and whilst it was noted that there is still a bit of dip off of the road on to the gravelled area it was certainly a vast improvement.

8. Finance Officers report & signing of payments

Mr Martin reported that the following payments were due to be made.

Parish Council

Laura Childs	Clerk fees & office expenses (December)	£ 306.39
Hardcastle Burton	PAYE	£ 92.50
Darren Partt	Car Park repair	£ 325.20
HMRC	PAYE (Oct, Nov & Dec)	£ 359.40
Tim Martin	RFO (Dec) & printer cartridge reimbursement	£ 97.19

It was agreed that these payment should be made

Proposed by Cllr Clark and seconded by Cllr Turner

Town House

Carol Robinson	November cleaning	£ 72.00
Carol Robinson	December cleaning	£ 75.50
Nick Shaw	Cleaning (includes reimbursement for microwave & descaler)	£ 260.50
Busy Bee	Various electrical works	£ 651.38
Darren Partt	Clear gutters, make good in kitchen & repaint	£ 154.98
Alison Stacey	Letting officer fee November and December	£ 155.00

It was agreed that these payments should be made

Proposed by Cllr Clark and seconded by Cllr Lee

The bank statements and balances of accounts were distributed and reviewed.

Budget and Precept setting 2017 – 2018

Mr Martin confirmed that he had made the adjustments to the proposed budget discussed at our last meeting and it was unanimously agreed that the precept would be kept at £22,000 for 2017 – 2018. The Clerk was asked to write to NHDC to confirm this.

9. Recreation Ground

Cllr Clark has spoken to the installer of the new playground equipment who has said that he will inspect the equipment sometime during January and would rectify any dip in the slide at that time.

10. Website

Cllr McPartland reported that a meeting had been held with himself, Cllr Lee, Mr Martin, Mr Andy Lee and Cllr McPartland's daughter (who has an IT marketing background). Mr Lee had submitted a paper outlining the proposed website structure and content. Cllr Turner raised concerns over the need to appoint someone to update the website on a regular / ongoing basis and cautioned that in the past community projects and clubs hadn't supplied updates. Cllr McPartland confirmed that they aimed to be able to give the Parish Council a timetable for any new website to be up and running at our next meeting.

Cllr Turner left the meeting at 21:50

11. Scout Hut

Cllr Carlisle had nothing further to report other than he is waiting to hear from the Scouts legal representatives. Everything was progressing albeit slowly. Mr Ashcroft has checked to see if trimming the trees constituted commencing the development but this apparently doesn't qualify. Cllr Carlisle advised that we nonetheless do need to organise cutting back of the trees as some are beginning to pose a risk.

12. Lock Up

Cllr Lee is still waiting to hear from the proposed contractor regarding CDM & Health & Safety matters and once she is satisfied with their response will then write and officially instruct them to go ahead with the works. Cllr Lee agreed to chase.

13. Health & Safety

Cllr Carlisle is aware that he still needs to pass on the new Health & Safety information to Mr Shaw for the Town House, he will endeavour to get this done shortly. There are no other health & safety issues to report.

14. Correspondence

All correspondence received is to be circulated amongst Councillors.

15. Any Other Business

Cllr Lee raised concerns over a Rights of Way notice that she had seen posted along the footpath that runs from Smiths End Lane through to Pudding Lane and beyond, turned into a bridleway and for Pudding Lane to become a byway. This could prove to be problematic with motorcycles and horses perhaps starting to use the path.

After some research Cllr Lee has found that this is the same person who has made the application about Freemans Lane which runs from Shaftenhoe End to Morris Green.

Cllr Lee also found that all rights of way need to be registered on the Definitive Map by 2026 or we may lose them. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact the Herts County Council Rights of Way officer for further information and also to enter into a dialogue with the applicant of the change of status with regards to the footpath to confirm that local nuances need to be taken in to account, particularly with regards to this path.

Cllr Carlisle asked the Clerk to arrange a meeting with Mr Gary Henning of Hertfordshire Highways to walk around the village and discuss a number of Highways issues.

Mr Martin raised concerns over a large overhanging branch that is over the highway hanging from the trees on Bankside. The ownership of these trees, and therefore the responsibility for maintenance was never established. Cllr Carlisle will bring the matter up again with Mr Henning.

Concerns have been raised regarding the overhanging branches of trees and hedging along London Road, the Clerk has been asked to write to Mr & Mrs Sedgwick and Mr & Mrs Haigh to ask that they be cut back.

Meeting closed at 22:30