



Aldworth Parish Council

Minutes of the Planning Recommendation Meeting

Monday 20th February 2023, 7pm on Zoom (Village Hall unavailable)

Minute ref: 009/200223/PRM

Members Present:	Cllr. Tim Chapman, Cllr. Donna Roach, Cllr. Nick Williams, Cllr. John Clark
Members Absent:	Cllr. Kate Walters (joined 19:44)
Officers Present:	Mrs Fenella Woods (Clerk & RFO)
In Attendance:	9 members of public.
Meeting Start Time:	19:00pm
Meeting End Time:	19:57pm

- 104/23 Cllr. Chapman welcomed all to the online meeting. Apologies were received from Cllr. Walters who would join the meeting after item 6. Quorum was achieved.
- 105/23 There were no declarations of interests received from members, nor the Clerk.
- 106/23 Two members of public requested permission to speak during item 6 of the agenda, Cllr. Chapman agreed. There were no representations made by any member who had declared an interest.
- 107/23 The minutes of the Full Council Meeting dated 11th January 2023 were **read** and **approved** as a true and accurate record. Cllr. Chapman would sign a copy when we met face to face in March.
- 108/23 The two outstanding actions from the meeting on 11th January would be discussed during this meeting, under item 7 (access path) and item 8 (defibrillator). All other actions had been completed.
- 109/23 The planning application ref: 23/00228/FUL for the construction of a 30m calf rearing shelter at Bower Farm was discussed. A summary of the main points is below, including comments from members of the public invited to speak by the Chairman:
- The existing calf shelters are visible from nearby houses.
 - There is concern that the farm is spreading further out into the surrounding countryside.

- There is currently a 'glow' of lights, visible through the walls of the two existing calf shelters; a further shelter would add to the light pollution in the area. The farm's position on high ground in the village makes any lighting more visible.
- It was noted that the response from Highways had not raised any concerns about a potential increase in farm traffic, nor about the currently used farm access. However, at some point, there might be additional strain on the surrounding road network if any further development took place.
- Concerns were raised about the potential overuse of the current farm access drive, which might disturb local residents. With this being a possibility, one member of the public suggested that a new entrance off the B4009 be considered.

The Applicant's response to the above comments from members of the public was as follows:

- This is a resubmission of the rejected plans from last year.
- A Planning Officer had given advice as to the location of the third calf shelter which had been followed.
- The 'glow' of lights that people were seeing at night was on an automatic timer and was set to switch off at 8:30pm. The additional shelter would only have a light on when it was being used for milking.
- The calves would be fed on grain produced on site, which would limit the amount of feed trucks entering the premises, and thus reduce traffic.
- Vehicle movements through the village, and in and out of the farm, would be reduced by the relocation of the calf shelters to Bower Farm from their current location across the village at Pibworth.

Members of the Council had a full discussion about these points, which is summarised below. The two members of the public who had expressed a desire to contribute to this section of the agenda were also invited to raise their points in the debate.

- It was noted that there were only a small number of trees in the planting plans that would assist with screening off the view of the shelters. The plan showed that hedging was the primary means of screening the shelters. With the three shelters being nearly 4.4m in height, it was requested that trees be planted to provide taller screening, particularly as hedging alone would take many years to achieve the required height.
- Some residents, who lived near the front farm access drive, had reported an increase in vehicle movements. However, the suggestion of a potential new access off the B4009 near Westridge Green was equally concerning, as this 40mph stretch of road is quite dangerous in terms of fast-moving traffic and poor visibility. A new farm access at this location would also divert farm-related traffic, heading to and from the Newbury direction, past the houses to the east of the Bell Lane junction on the B4009 - a narrow spot where there is already heavy traffic. Furthermore, any new access from this spot would need to be very long and would cut a scar through an open field adjacent to the by-way leading out of Westridge Green and heading towards the Ridgeway. Any farm-related vehicles travelling up and down this route would be audible and visible to residents and walkers in the area, creating undesirable urbanisation. Should Highways permit such a route through this Yattendon Estate-owned field, further urbanising modifications to the B4009 might be necessary in terms of signage etc. Such a plan could be seen as an invasion of the countryside, and the relationship between the farm and the village might change as a result.
- Councillors sought assurance that there would be no further plans to expand the physical development of the farm after this application, and that relocating the

farm shelters to Bower Farm would, indeed, decrease the number of vehicle movements. An eye would be kept on the traffic situation.

Council members gave their vote, with three members voting 'no objection' and one voting to object. A **majority decision** of '**no objection**' was therefore **agreed**, and the Council **recommended** that the Clerk inform WBC of this decision.

- 110/23 *(Cllr. Walters entered the online meeting at 19:44pm)*
The Clerk advised the Council that the £3,000 Members' Bid awarded to us to help with the cost of remodelling the access path to the village hall must be requested by 31st March 2023. As the progress of this project had halted since the January meeting, it was unlikely that any work eligible for funding would be carried out prior to the end of March. The option of putting a new access path by the Bell pub was not thought to be possible due to the steep slope. No further contractors had yet been found who were able to provide a quotation on the project. It is with regret that we would have to write to West Berkshire Council and Cllr. Alan Law advising that we would not be able to request the funds. All members present **approved** this decision and hoped to apply for more funding in the future.
- 111/23 The Clerk had received information about support (in terms of maintenance) for the new defibrillator from the Community Heartbeat Trust. It was **agreed** to pay the £165.00 annual support costs for the Mindray Defibrillator. The Clerk has put out a request for residents to become 'guardians' of the defibrillator and hoped to have this set up in early March.
- 112/23 The Clerk advised all those present in the meeting that the nomination forms for the local election on 4th May had been received, that these would be printed and distributed, both to current Councillors, and to others who had expressed an interest in standing for election to the Parish Council. Assistance from the Clerk could be offered, if required, in filling out the form, but all were reminded that hand-delivery of the completed forms, to West Berkshire Council offices, would be required by the nominees themselves.
- 113/23 It was **agreed** to move the March meeting date to 15th March due to councillor absence.
- 114/23 The Clerk advised that the playground inspection would take place on 1st March and no response from our usual handyman, Mr Buckle, had been received regarding the leaf-clearing. A member of public who was present at the meeting volunteered clear the playground ready for the inspection, and the Council gave their grateful thanks.
- 115/23 There were no further questions or comments from members of the public.

With there being no further business to discuss, Cllr. Chapman thanked everyone for attending and the meeting ended at 19:57pm.

Signed:

Position:

Date:

Actions from the Meeting:			
	Description	Assigned to	Completed
1	Complete the Parish Observation Sheet for Bower Farm	Clerk	✓
2	Write to WBC / Cllr. Alan Law to advise we are unable to claim for the Members' Bid due to a delay with the project	Clerk	
3	Set up support package for the defibrillator and seek guardians	Clerk	
4	Print off and send out nomination forms for the election in May	Clerk	
5	Move the meeting date from 8 th March to 15 th March	Clerk	✓

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