

DOWNTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the New Housing Development Committee held on Thursday 21st May 2015 at the Memorial Hall, Gravel Close, Downton at 7.00 pm.

Present: Cllr Quarmby (Chairman) and Cllrs Cordell, Ford, Hayward, Lacey, Mace, Sutcliffe, Yeates and Mr Richard Fishlock (from 7.10 pm).
Bev Cornish, Parish Clerk.

Seventeen members of the public were present.

NHD01/15: To elect a Chairman for 2015/16: Cllr Sutcliffe proposed, Cllr Ford seconded and it was agreed by the meeting that Cllr Quarmby be elected as Chairman for 2015/16.

NHD02/15: Apologies: None.

NHD03/15: Minutes: Cllr Ford proposed, Cllr Sutcliffe seconded and it was agreed by the meeting that the minutes of the meeting held on 19th March 2015 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

NHD04/15: Declarations of Interest: None.

NHD05/15: Public Question/Statement Time:

Mr Rick Ladds drew the attention of the Committee to the recently uploaded Heritage Statement for the Primary School's planning application. He said it was incorrect in stating that the height of the classroom was not higher than the belfry. He said it was as high as the lightning conductor which was above the belfry. He also mentioned a statement which required the children to cross a small bridge over the Bunny to get to the new sports area, so although it was recently published, it was already out of date.

Mrs Jenny Saxby made reference to the Environmental Noise Report which was to be discussed at item 9 on the Agenda. She said it had used the figure of 270 children whereas everyone had been told by Mr Fishlock that the school would accommodate 315 children. It stated that the fence on the boundary of the playground was 1.8 metres high whereas it was, in fact, 1.5 metres high. Furthermore, the height of the children at 1.2 metres high was the height of a 7 year old and the adult height was for someone who was 5'4" tall. She also said that the company had done the report on information provided and wished to know what information had been provided.

Cllr Quarmby proposed from the Chair that the meeting should remain open so that members of the public could continue to ask questions of Mr Fishlock.

NHD06/15: To consider a response from Mr Richard Fishlock, Chair of Governors at Downton Primary School, as agreed at the Parish Council meeting on Monday 27th April 2015, to:

- i. The 'Possible Way Forward' set out in the letter from the neighbours living adjacent to the School dated 20th April 2015 to the Parish Council;**

ii. The requests for additional statistical information on Department of Education requirements for play and organised games space for primary schools.

and to consider any actions to be taken and recommendations to be made to the Parish Council: Mr Fishlock talked through the facts and figures contained in his two responses to the Parish Council. He said he had not seen either the Noise Assessment Report or the Heritage Statement, although he may have read the Heritage Statement some months ago.

He said the proposal put forward by the neighbours was, in the view of the school, not a workable solution due to the separation of the new play area from the existing playground. He said it would require more staff supervision for which the school did not have the resources.

Mr Fishlock gave an explanation as to why the Memorial Gardens were not included in the figures he had provided on the existing and recommended amount of play and games space required for the school. He said the school appreciated having the use of the Memorial Gardens but as it was a small percentage of the play and games time needed by the school, he had not included it in the figures contained in his letter.

Mrs Saxby stated that Mr Fishlock had made reference to Bulletin 99 in his letter whereas this had been superseded last year by Bulletin 103. She said the school had taken account of additional PE space with the proposed extension to the hall and that use of the Memorial Gardens should be taken into account when calculating the net site area. In view of this, she said there was no requirement for the additional play area.

Mrs Nikki Wilson, speaking on behalf of the Downton Society, said that Mr Fishlock's comment that 90 percent of the community had supported the school expansion in the survey for the Neighbourhood Plan was incorrect. She said that 90 percent of those residents who responded to the survey had supported the expansion. She also said there was substantial support for classrooms to meet the needs of local children but not for the MUGA or the additional space now to be used for the swale.

Mr Bryan Morris said in mid December the neighbours had seen the two-storey classroom and the MUGA. Subsequently they had seen the swale, so the plans had got worse and the problems greater on paper than they had been in mid December. They had put in their objections and since then nothing had changed. Mr Fishlock had verbally stated that the school did not want the MUGA but the talking had gone round and round in circles for three months and no action had been taken. He said at some point something had got to give.

Mr Nigel Walker asked if the meeting could have a clear statement from the school that they did not require the MUGA.

Mr Fishlock said he did not feel comfortable in giving such a statement because it would depend on the views of the Southern Area Committee as to whether they approved the MUGA or not. He said that the school was concerned about the views of Sport England and further meetings could be held to consider changing the plans for the use of the MUGA after they had been considered by the SAC. He said at that point the school could work something out which would suit everyone.

Cllr Quarmby said that his understanding of the planning system was that a Committee could only give a decision on the plans which were put in front of it. A planning application could not be negotiated at a Committee meeting.

Cllr Hayward said it would be far better to agree a way forward now rather than to leave it until after the SAC had made its decision. He said the Parish Council and others had fundamental objections to the plans so asked that everyone should agree a way forward and then go to SAC with the approval of the Parish Council.

Cllr Quarmby said that the Parish Council had had its objections in the public domain for several months so there had been time for the school to re-look at its plans.

Mr Fishlock said that the objections were disproportionate to the issues. He said they were only over small margins such as the height of the classroom, which was only 13 percent above the other buildings and it was not located immediately behind some neighbours' gardens but 25 metres away.

Cllr Ford thanked Mr Fishlock on behalf of the Committee for providing the answers to its questions. He said the bulletins mentioned in Mr Fishlock's and Mrs Saxby's letters related to new build schools on greenfield sites not extensions to existing schools on a limited area of space with the challenge of more and more children to educate.

Cllr Ford also said that Mr Fishlock had mentioned the lack of resources to manage the extended playground and asked whether his comments were based on the existing staff, because presumably with more children at the school it would need to recruit more teachers and teaching assistants. He also said in relation to the issue of Sport England, it had already submitted an objection to the school's plans on the grounds of the size of the MUGA.

Cllr Quarmby confirmed from the chair that no recommendations be made to the Parish Council.

NHD07/15: To consider any actions to be taken in response to a letter from the Downton Society regarding the Primary School's planning application and the leasing of parish land. It maintains that the 'current plans are neither required by the school nor supported by the community and will have significant detrimental conservation, environmental and social impacts': Following a discussion and comments commending the well-argued statements made in the letter, Cllr Quarmby confirmed from the chair that no action be taken at this time.

NHD08/15: To consider an email from Mr Malcolm Dodds asking the Parish Council to confirm that it will agree in writing to the use of the Memorial Gardens for the swale, the hard play area and any other associated works, assuming that the current planning application secures planning permission and to consider any actions to be taken and recommendations to be made to the Parish Council: Following a discussion and comments that Mr Dodds was effectively asking the Parish Council to write a blank cheque for the school, Cllr Ford proposed, Cllr Sutcliffe seconded and it was agreed by the meeting that the Committee should recommend to the Parish Council that it should not agree in writing to the leasing of the Memorial Gardens on the following grounds:

- 1 There had been no changes made to the plans following the Parish Council's objections to the height of the classroom and the public access to the MUGA so they were still valid. However, the lease would not be conditional on the building extension.
- 2 No clear decision had been received from the Environment Agency on the Swale as to the fact that its implementation would not have any negative impact on the flood risk and the Parish Council strongly supported the alternative solution to expand the capacity of the ditch in the field upstream of the Memorial Gardens.
- 3 The Parish Council had not agreed the Heads of Terms with Charles Church in relation to the community benefit to be achieved from the new development in the form of the extension to the Memorial Hall.

Cllr Quarmby commented that the changes requested by the Parish Council could be achieved either by varying the current planning application or withdrawing the application and resubmitting it with amended plans. Either way, he said he thought it should be done.

NHD09/15: To consider the Environmental Noise Report carried out by Acoustic Consultants Ltd on the proposed playground extension and the MUGA at Downton Primary School and to consider any actions to be taken and recommendations to be made to the Parish Council: Following a discussion, Cllr Ford proposed, Cllr Sutcliffe seconded and it was agreed by the meeting that no further action be taken at this time to enable Mr Fishlock to be briefed on this by the project manager. Cllr Quarmby said that this could be revisited after the decision had been taken by the Southern Area Planning Committee by means of a planning condition containing noise reduction measures.

NHD10/15 : To consider any next steps in relation to:

- i. The provision of community access to the MUGA and a Lettings Policy:** Cllr Quarmby confirmed from the chair that there had been no changes made to the Parish Council's stance on this issue
- ii. The height of the two-storey classroom block:** Cllr Quarmby confirmed from the chair that there had been no changes made to the Parish Council's stance on this issue.
- iii. The current inaccurate plans for the MUGA and the swale shown on the Wiltshire Council website:** It was agreed that the Clerk should seek clarification from the Planning Officer on which plans amongst the several versions uploaded to the website were the correct versions.
- iv. The Parish Council Chairman's statement on the Primary School's application and any other documentation to be read out and submitted to the Southern Area Planning Committee:** Cllr Mace proposed, Cllr Cordell seconded and it was agreed by the meeting that a recommendation be made to the Parish Council that a small working group made up of Cllrs Ford, Mace, Quarmby and Sutcliffe formulate with the Clerk the Chairman's statement and any other documentation to be read out and submitted to the Southern Area Planning Committee.

and to consider any actions to be taken and recommendations to be made to the Parish Council: Cllr Quarmby confirmed from the chair as follows:

- 1 The Parish Council continued to support the extension to the Primary School and the use of the parcel of land in the Memorial Gardens.
- 2 There was strong support for no increase in flood risk and the Environment Agency was currently in the process of assessing this. However, the Parish

Council was strongly in favour of the solution to expand the capacity of the ditch in the field upstream of the Memorial Gardens but if the EA did not approve the upstream solution but approved the Swale then the Parish Council would accept the Swale.

- 3 There was no change to the Parish Council's stance in requiring no community access to the MUGA and this would form part of the conditions of the Lease for the land.
- 4 It recommended that the applicant either varied or resubmitted its application with revised plans to reflect the requested changes.

Cllr Ford asked that the Parish Council be reminded to link the Charles Church and Primary School applications and to consider the community benefit which was the extension to the Memorial Hall.

NHD11/15 : To consider a letter from Mr Luke Wordley regarding planning application:

15/01766/FUL - 58 The Borough Downton - Proposed change of use to existing 1st floor flat over dental surgery from class C3 to class D1. Proposed erection of 2 storey 4 bedroom dwelling to the rear of the existing property

setting out additional information and the rationale for separating the business from the domestic dwelling and requesting that the Parish Council rescinds its previously made decision to request that the s106 agreement contains a clause which requires the dwelling and business to co-exist as one entity and to make a recommendation to the Parish Council: Following a discussion, Cllr Lacey proposed, Cllr Mace seconded and it was agreed by the meeting that the Committee should recommend to the Parish Council that it rescinds its previously made decision.

NHD12/15: Next meeting: Monday 20th July 2015 at Downton Library at 7.30 pm.

With no other business, the meeting closed at 9.10 pm.