

North Wootton Parish Council



Clerk to the Parish

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Minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting of North Wootton Parish Council held in the North Wootton Village Hall on Thursday 7th February 2019

PRESENT Cllr S Shimmin (Chairman), Cllr A Bovey, Cllr M Hoddinott, Cllr M Smith and Cllr A Townend

Eleven members of the public were also present.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 19.30.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from the clerk, Ms H Brinton, and Mr Lee Wright, who had advised that he would have spoken in support of the application on behalf of the applicant had he been available.

2. Declarations of interest

there were no declarations of interest.

3. Planning Matters

3.i. Proposal 2018/0626/FUL – Change of Use of Land from Agricultural to Siting a Tourism Development of Seven Self-Contained Lodges and Associated Infrastructure (Additional Supporting Info and Amended Plans) on Land South West of The Crossways Inn, Stocks Lane

Standing orders were suspended to allow members of the public to speak on the application which was being re-consulted following amendments.

A message from Mr Lee Wright supporting the revised application on behalf of the applicant and explaining the changes made to it since it was originally considered by the Parish Council in May last year was read out.

Several of the members of the public present raised concerns and questions about the proposed development. One person present drew attention to a submission he had already made to Mendip District Council on behalf of a villager opposing the application on various specific planning grounds. No one present spoke in favour of it.

After standing orders had been reinstated the Chairman reminded members of the public of the importance of registering their comments, if they wished to and had not already done so, on the Mendip District Council Planning Portal.

Chairman's signature.....

In their subsequent discussion, councillors agreed that the changes proposed to the original application did not address the fundamental concerns which had led them to recommend to Mendip District Council last May that it should be refused.

Councillors also expressed their concern that a negotiation appeared to be underway between the planners and the applicant. There had been no contact between either the planners or the applicants and the Parish Council or interested villagers. Nothing in the revised application had addressed the apparent contradiction between the justification for the already approved housing development on the adjacent car park site and the proposed lodges. The application appeared to be being justified principally on its commercial merits without proper consideration of its detrimental impact on the village.

There was also concern that the District Councillor had not so far confirmed that the application would be referred to the Planning Board if the Case Officer recommended it should be approved.

In conclusion Councillors agreed that, after a careful review of the new details, they saw no reason to change their previous views on the proposal. They were also disappointed that there had been no consultation with them about the scheme and they felt it should definitely be referred to the Planning Board if it was not refused by the Case Officer. The previous questions about the relationship between the lodges proposal and the previously approved housing development should also be answered.

Councillors resolved by a majority of four with one abstention to recommend that the application should be refused on the above grounds.

3 ii No other planning applications had been received at the time of the meeting.

4. Refurbishment of Finger Posts

Cllr Bovey explained that he had received and reviewed two quotations for the refurbishment of four of the fingerposts in the Parish. He was satisfied that the contractor providing the cheaper quotation of £2,235 plus VAT, Somerset Forge, was competent to carry out the work.

Councillors agreed unanimously to approve a budget of £2,950 to include VAT and a contingency to allow Somerset Forge to start work on the four posts in the worst condition. A decision on further work would be made once these first four had been done.

5. Date of next Meeting – 19th March 2019

It was agreed that Phil Appleton, the Village Liaison Officer for the Glastonbury Festival, should be invited to attend.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 20.40.

Chairman's signature.....