

Corsley Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Reading Rooms on Monday 10 March 2014

Present: Neil Britten (NB) Chair
Robin Chapman (RC)
Olly Hares (OH)
Simon Jasper (SJ)
Mike Bird
Mike Butler
John White
Members of the Public

(Please Note See also the copies of the slides used as part of the Chairmans report which form part of these minutes.)

Introduction

The Chair of the Parish Council, Neil Britten, opened the meeting by welcoming all those present and introducing the Parish Councillors. He explained the purpose of the Annual meeting and briefly outlined the Agenda, advising that the first item was to be a presentation on Neighbourhood Planning and the opportunities and challenges that this could provide the village.

Neighbourhood Planning – A Presentation by James Proyer, Wiltshire Spatial Planning Officer

James PROYER, Wiltshire Spatial Planning Officer, gave a very helpful presentation which put Neighbourhood Planning in context with national and County policies and the limitations which these might impose on any plan that Corsley might wish to develop. He also explained the limited financial assistance available to Parishes for development of such plans and the significant time and resource implications of embarking of such a plan. Plan development could be a two year project requiring a significant input from Village organisations and individuals.

There was considerable discussion around the limitations of a Neighbourhood Plan, particularly in the lack of any scope for generating fully integrated plans which could go beyond simply building development. For example, Wiltshire would retain total control of such issues as drainage and highways. Corsley was identified as a “Large Village” grouped with others not detailed in the presentation. The overall Community area, including the villages, has a total overall allocation of allowable house building, a large part of which had been already been used up over the years. Large villages have defined limits of development and there is no specific housing or employment requirement for Corsley. There appeared little scope for a Corsley Neighbourhood Plan to be influential in offering radical change to the current planning development climate.

The general conclusion of the discussion was that to proceed with an attempt to generate a Neighbourhood Plan would result in expenditure of a lot of time and effort, unlikely to yield any useful results. This view was unanimous. It was agreed that the PC would sign off on the issue of Neighbourhood Planning by some further confirmatory investigation on the specifics of how the National and Wiltshire Core Strategy affect and constrain what could be achieved and then file a reasoned and agreed position. A link to James PROYER’s presentation will be provided on The Bridge web site

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Chairmans Annual Report

This was a wide ranging presentation covering the Parish Council, Traffic issues, Planning, Finance, the Old School Playing Field (OSPF) and Footpaths. All of these have all been covered in varying degrees in previous Bridge briefs and a link to the Chairmans Report can be found on the Bridge web site. It should be noted that the report covered the last two months of the tenure of the previous Chairman, Malcolm HOLLEY.

The chair took questions during the report and there was considerable discussion around two of the items covered in particular:

Traffic Issues.

- ≡ **Steiner Academy Free School (SAF) Traffic.** There was strong feeling that SAF traffic, parents and staff ferrying children in cars to and from school and the daily bus journeys, were hazardous to other road users, pedestrians and to private property along the road. In combination with the very wet weather, this traffic is also viewed as responsible for considerable deterioration in the road-side verges and a contributor to the blocked drains and regular flooding of the road.

The declared position of SAF with respect to their occupation of the Corsley Centre site was explained. SAF fully intend to leave as soon as practically possible after the end of the Summer term 2014. Conversion works in Frome have commenced and SAF are in negotiation with the D of E and their contractors to accelerate the build programme to ensure that they can fully operate from the Frome site at the beginning of the Autumn term this year.

SAF planning approval in Corsley runs out on the date they leave the Corsley Centre site or the end of September (whichever comes first). The lease with the Corsley Centre terminates at the end of this Summer term, as does the Licence with Corsley PC for use of the car park and the playing field. SAF have no planning approval for further classrooms at the Corsley Centre and cannot physically accommodate the anticipated September intake at the Corsley Centre. It is thus fairly certain that the current SAF traffic issue will cease in July this year. The road from Lane End to Divers Bridge is now on the Highways Department list for a speed limit review, though this is not likely to take place until the FY 2014/15.

It was agreed that an opportunity would be arranged for a deputation to be presented to the SAF expressing the concerns of residents. The Chair

The PC accepted a suggestion from the floor that the position of the Old School Playing Field (OSPF) and car park be re-iterated to Cooper & Tanner, vendors of the Corsley Centre, to ensure that potential buyers' expectations are realistic.

Longleat Caravan traffic. The results of the consultation with those affected by the proposal to re-route caravan entry traffic through Whitbourne Springs and Knapps Gate were unequivocally against. Over 70% responded; only two were in favour. Negotiations with Longleat and the Caravan Club will carry on with added professional input from Mr John PHILLIPS of Knapps Gate. It is proposed that a public meeting be held to discuss this one issue. Attempts will be made to get all interested parties to attend.

Old School playing Field

The chair briefly outlined the background to the Parish Council decision taken in December, and reported in the January Bridge, regarding the OSPF:

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Over the last 12 months or so the OSPF Jubilee plantation had become very overgrown with thistles and other weeds, plus a canopy of rampant growth in what had originally been planted as a hedge on three of the boundaries. The thistles and weeds around the plantation trees were cleared and it was evident that the trees were generally thriving in the main area of planting but not under and adjacent to the boundary canopy. After SAF vacate the site grass cutting on the OSPF becomes a PC expense and the budget includes provision. However, a decision was required on how best to tackle, economically, the boundary growth to allow the plantation to thrive. The PC agreed that: *“The plan agreed for the OSPF maintenance is to cut down the so called “hedge” on the northern boundary of the field, as this has been allowed to run wild and in no way functions as or looks like a hedge. The mature trees in front of the “hedge” will then be drastically thinned out and the lower branches of those remaining taken off. The jubilee plantation trees, now that they are beginning to establish themselves, will be slightly thinned out to reduce overcrowding and to allow the grass in between to be cut at the same time routine mowing of the main playing field”*. Whilst no comment was received at the time regarding this it was agreed it would be proper to raise the matter at the APM. It should be noted that the Elizabethan Evening has donated money to assist with this proposal and that the plan is to use “Young Offender” no cost labour.

Some disquiet was expressed at the PC decision by one individual and whilst there was no move to rescind the PC decision the Chair agreed to meet the individual concerned ‘on site’ to go through the issues.

Format of Future Annual Parish Meetings

The Chair outlined the possible format for future Annual Parish Meetings; to provide a forum for village based organisations to ‘sell themselves’ There was little enthusiasm for this suggestion and no other ideas were forthcoming.

That finished the meeting proper, and the Chair thanked everybody for their attendance.

It had previously been agreed that a planning application that had been received should be considered. Parishioners were invited to stay for consideration of the application.

Planning Application – 114/01648/FUL Erection of a two storey side extension and single storey rear extension at 60 Dertford

It was agreed the Parish Council would have no objections to this application and that the following observations should be made.

Whilst the Parish Council has no objections to this application, it is considered that the addition of the extensions proposed added to an already large house close to the highway bring this site very close to being over developed. It should also be noted that the answer to question 7, 'are there any trees or hedges.....within falling distance of your proposed development' is put down as no. Unless there is an intention to fell at least one tree in the garden, of which there is no mention, this is incorrect.

Signed.....

Date.....