

MALVERN WELLS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the **Planning Committee** duly convened and held in All Saints Church, Wells Road, Malvern Wells on Wednesday 22nd July, 2015 - commencing at 7pm

Present Councillors: -

N Chatten (Chairman), Mrs H Burrage, Mrs J Smethurst,
P Bennett, K Wagstaff, J Wagstaff, B Knibb, M Victory

Apologies recorded: - Cllrs J Black, S Freeman and N Johnson

In attendance: - David Taverner – Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer
Mr Ian Burrage - (re application 15/00626)
Mr Andy Pitt - (Chairman Upper Welland Action Group)

1 Declarations of Interest

a) Register of Interests: Councillors were reminded of the need to update their register of interests if necessary. No such changes were declared.

b) Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature.

Cllr Mrs Burrage declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item - *Planning application 15/00636 Land at Assarts Lane - Proposed new dwelling with new vehicular access*. Cllr Burrage indicated that she would leave the meeting before the item was discussed.

c) Declaration of other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature.

Agenda item - *Planning application 15/00636 Land at Assarts Lane*. It was formally noted that, Cllr Mrs H Burrage, one of the joint applicants in respect of this site, was known to members of the committee in her capacity as Chairman of the Parish Council.

d) To Consider Written Requests from Councillors for the Council to Grant a Dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011). No additions were necessary to dispensations which had been previously granted.

2 Approval of the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 3rd June

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd June, having been previously circulated, were unanimously approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record of that meeting.

3 Matters arising from the minutes. There were none

4 Public questions.

The Clerk read out the following question which had been received From Mr Andrew Pitt, Chairman of the Upper Welland Action Group, regarding major planning applications made in the local AONB.

“Following the approval of Lawn Farm for development a ‘domino effect’ has now occurred in Welland resulting in the construction of several major housing estates in and around the village. Given the recent spate of similar planning applications in Malvern Wells, including the land south of Upper Welland Road, Rothwell Road and Hanley Road, what additional assurances / strategies can be sought from Malvern Hills District Council, AONB Unit, local MP etc. to stop the same ‘domino effect’ happening in Malvern Wells with the loss of the remaining green AONB that defines this picturesque area? The concern by residents is that if one of the green field sites in the Malvern Wells AONB is approved for housing then the precedent will have been set and other fields will be lost to development. Also, historically what surveys have been undertaken locally to assess the actual need for housing in Malvern Wells?”

The Clerk then read out the Parish Council’s response as follows:

“Dear Mr Pitt,

Thank you for your question regarding planning applications which have been made within Malvern Wells and neighbouring parishes.

The Parish Council (PC) strongly shares your concerns regarding the recent proliferation of large scale planning development applications, both locally and throughout the wider district of Malvern.

The PC is keen to support the preservation of the special characteristics of the Malvern Hills AONB and Conservation Area- both for the benefit of local residents and for the promotion and development of tourism to the area which is vital to the local economy.

Throughout the AONB there are recognisable features and patterns that make an important contribution to a sense of local distinctiveness. The PC remains committed to ensuring, via the planning consultation process, that any new development does not impact unfavourably on the existing characteristics of the area and we will work with partners, not only to further those goals, but also to prevent the ongoing decline in local services, facilities, and public transport provision.

The Malvern Hills District Profile makes the following statement in relation to Malvern Wells:-

Access to Services: - “Five Output Areas in Wells are ranked amongst the 10% most deprived nationally in relation to geographical barriers to services. Another six Output Areas are ranked in the worst 20% nationally. The geographical barriers sub-domain of The English indices of Deprivation measures the geographical distances between local populations and basic local services such as doctors, primary schools, food stores and post offices.”

This evidence has been continually ignored in the recent applications that have been presented to the PC for consultation and we will continue to draw attention to these facts as part of the responses which we present to the local planning authority (LPA).

The most recent housing needs survey undertaken in Malvern Wells dates back to 2010. The views of respondents to the survey clearly highlighted the need for the development of a mixed, balanced and inclusive community through the provision of smaller 2/3 bedroom houses and bungalows for young families, wishing to live in the Parish, and who currently find themselves “priced out” of the local housing market.

In the year 2010 some 240 house sales were registered across the area of South Malvern with just 10 being sold for less than £150k; with not one of those sales being a house.

The survey at that time also identified a need for some 22 units of affordable housing to be built within the Malvern Wells area.

Whilst this data may now need some updating, the PC strongly believes that it should be possible to work with developers to increase the mix and supply of

affordable housing by the use of small infill developments throughout the Parish, rather than the large scale "estate style" building which has recently been promoted.

The PC will thus continue to co-ordinate policies aimed at preventing the destruction of the AONB and to help to develop a consistent approach to development which is more aimed at meeting local need and at securing much needed improvements to the area's social and transport infrastructure. PC Planning policy, and its resultant responses to planning consultations, will continue to pay close regard to the importance of these key aims and objectives.

The PC remains very aware that the overwhelming majority of parishioners expect it to do what it can to protect the local character and distinctiveness of the built environment and the PC will focus its attention on the design, location, density, and layout of any new development proposals.

We remain acutely aware that Malvern Hills AONB is relatively small and so more vulnerable than larger designated landscapes to significant impacts from development on the special qualities that help to define its natural beauty

The (LPA) will continue to be reminded that The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that "great weight" should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs. Section 115 states that:

"Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which should be afforded the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty."

The PC will continue to emphasise those points as part of any response to planning applications which it considers may be directly harmful to the local area.

Whilst we may remain be sceptical about the merits, or otherwise of the SWDP and the ability of local residents to play a full, part in shaping the future of their local area, the PC does take heart from the fact that the objections it has lodged against major planning applications within the parish during recent years have all been successful.

The Parish Council is fully committed to the prevention of any urban sprawl, which would detract from the views from the ridge of the Malvern Hills and which would destroy the character of the AONB. It remains our contention that any development of the immediate area should be undertaken in such a way that it meets the aspirations of the local community, as well as making a valid and properly evidenced contribution to local housing need.

The Council's over-arching objective is to maintain, preserve and enhance the existing character of the Parish. We believe that it is vitally important that planning controls are focussed on the need to foster and retain the natural beauty and unique characteristics of the AONB, as well as the views from the Malvern Hills, not only for local residents, but also for the many thousands of people who visit the area to enjoy its charms."

Mr Pitt thanked the Chairman for the Parish Council's comprehensive response to his letter and he drew the Committee's attention to the recent requests to MHDC for an Environmental Impact Assessment to assess the cumulative effect of multiple developments in Welland and neighbouring parishes - aimed at safeguarding against domino type development.

5 South Worcestershire Development plan – confirmation of the content of a letter of reply sent to J Hegarty –Chief Executive of Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC) - regarding future planning developments within the Parish.

The Clerk advised that a letter had been sent to the Chief Executive of MHDC in response to comments that had been made in his letter to Harriet Baldwin MP regarding the SWDP and the future of potential planning developments within the Parish. The letter is reproduced at **Appendix A** to these minutes.

It was agreed that once a reply was received, to the Parish Council's letter, copies of the correspondence would then be sent to Harriet Baldwin for her information.

During a general discussion on the very slow progress of the of the SWDP process the Clerk was asked to ensure that the Parish Council was represented at any future consultation on the SWDP proposals in respect of its likely impact on the Parish

6 Planning notices received from Malvern Hills District Council

The following decision notices had been received.

15/00549/HOU **86 Fruitlands, Malvern, WR14 4XB** - Alterations and extensions to side and rear

Application approved 12th June, 2015

15/00639/HOU **8 Homestead Close, Malvern, WR14 4HG** – Rear Extension

Application approved 16th July, 2015

15/00577/HOU **St Davids, 117 Wells Road, Malvern, WR14 4PD** - Domestic extension and alterations.

Application approved 8th July, 2015

14/00890 FUL

Land at Assarts Lane, Malvern WR 14 JU Proposed new dwelling
Appeal dismissed 1st July, 2015

7 To consider **Planning applications** referred by **Malvern Hills District Council** for comment, as follows: *(please visit the highlighted web links to view the application details)*

Note – Cllr Burrage left the meeting at this point

15/00626/FUL **Land at Assarts Lane Malvern WR14 4JU** - Proposed new dwelling with new vehicular access. (amended plans)

Members gave careful consideration to the amended plans and information presented by the applicant. Whilst some members re-iterated their previously expressed concerns regarding the application, there was a view that the amended plans would now satisfy the objections which had previously been made and would present the

opportunity for the construction of a dwelling which would enhance the local area.

On that basis Cllr Victory proposed that the Parish Council should raise no objections to the amended plans. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Smethurst.

Cllr K Wagstaff requested that a named vote should be recorded on the vote on the proposal and these were recorded as follows:-

For the proposal = Cllr M Victory, Mrs J Smethurst and Cllr Chatten (3)

Against the proposal – Cllr K Wagstaff, Cllr J Wagstaff and Cllr P Bennett (3)

Abstention = Cllr B Knibb

The proposal was then declared as carried on the casting vote of the Chairman.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.00pm.

Minutes approved Chairman

Dated 23rd September

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