

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING MEETING OF EARLS CROOME PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 30th NOVEMBER 2021 AT 7.30 PM AT EARLS CROOME VILLAGE HALL.

PRESENT: Mark Smith (Chairman), Penny Green, Robin Tomkins, Tom Goodwin, Katie Etherington (Members), Martin Allen (County Councillor) and the Clerk.

5 Members of public were in attendance

1) APOLOGIES

It was noted that Margaret Herbert, Charlotte Bloomfield and District Councillor Owenson may join the meeting late.

2) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: Katie declared an interest in application 21/01970

The Chairman clarified that nobody else wished to declare an interest in either planning matter to be discussed.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow the public representations.

The applicant for 21/01970. Addressed the Council. Using a handout and drew Members attention to the application as defined in the planning statement to be for the creation of an agricultural access. The applicant advised the Council that this is what they are obliged to deliberate on – nothing more, nothing less. The applicant drew attention to the statutory consultees of WCC Highways, Environment Agency, Natural England, MHDC Landscape Officer, MHDC Natural Heritage and Biodiversity, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and SW Land drainage partnership, the applicant advised that at this time all of the above either support the application or offer no opinion.

The applicant then asked the Council to confirm that they are acting with integrity, partiality, compliance and probity. A number of statements questioning the process of the Council were read out with each statement ending with a query 'Could the Clerk please clarify'

The queries related to correspondence sent from ECPC to notify residents, ask detailed questions of WCC Highways and Exolum Oil. There were a number of queries regarding ECPC policy and procedures.

The Chairman thanked the applicant and stated he would address the issues raised and the queries at later date.

An Earls Croome resident raised their concerns regarding the application and its impact on increasing the traffic and increasing the number of larger vehicles accessing the A38. The resident drew attention to the fact that the applicant already had two accesses to his farm, one of which was fairly close in proximity to the new access. The resident raised concerns over increased noise, dust and pollution and also asked queries regarding the direction the traffic would be heading in once it leaves this new access.

Another resident raised the query that if the agricultural vehicles drove directly from the field to the service road there would be mud and debris deposited onto the service road, the resident asked if a wheel washing facility would be provided. The applicant said he was not aware of wheel washing facility being provided from other agricultural fields.

The Chair asked the applicant if any of the traffic from his farms commercial units would be using the new access. The applicant replied that it was an agricultural access only and that any further access applications would require a separate application and a separate deliberation from the Parish Council.

The Chairman asked if the access would be used for any festival traffic – the applicant replied that any use other than agricultural would require a separate licence and was not relevant to this applicant.

The Chairman thanked the Members of the public and re-opened the meeting.

3) 21/0970 Planning application for new access at Elgar Inn (Yorkshire Grey)

Mark summarised the application for the agricultural access drawing attention to the fact that ECPC had been contacted by several residents raising concerns regarding the application and noting that there were already a number of residents objections on the MHDC planning portal.

Mark advised that he thought the existing accesses were safe and that the primary concern here was road safety and that he thought the new access raised serious road safety concerns.

Penny commented that she felt that ECPC should be supporting the general feeling of residents that the access is not in the best interests of Earls Croome Village. Noting that a number of residents were in attendance this evening and even more had already commented on the MHDC Planning portal. Martin Allen advised that the Parish Council must have an objection that is backed by the national planning framework and not just on the feelings of the residents. The Chairman stated that road safety was the overwhelming concern with the application.

Robin noted that from his 30-year experience driving large vehicles that the existing access at Hazelden was not as safe as the new access. Commenting that a large slow heavy vehicle exiting straight on to the 50mph A38 needed time to get up to the speed of the traffic, the service road at the new access could act like a motorway slip road allowing traffic to get up to speed with the A38 before joining it.

Martin Allen advised that if ECPC had a Village Plan the determination to object or not would be lead from the Village Plan. Martin advised that as he may have to vote at MHDC on the application in is role as DC he couldn't pre-determine himself. He summarised the process for the public gallery and advised that MHDC would decide upon the application at that stage the applicant could choose to accept the decision or if it was not in his favour appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. Martin explained as a County Councillor he would not get a vote but he had taken opportunity to speak to WCC Highways and that the Highways dept still had concerns regarding the traffic exiting the proposed new access turning south and crossing the traffic on the A38, it was unclear how fast traffic exiting the new roundabout would be travelling and there was a concern there.

The Clerk clarified for the applicant, Members and the Public Gallery that the correct procedure had been followed as stipulated in the delegation schedule, namely that the Clerk had notified all Members via email of the consultation. No Members had notified the Clerk that they wished to not object to this application at that time. The PC had objected to the application prior to its withdrawal at the first time of presentation and the Clerk was not made aware by any Member that ECPC had changed its stance. Robin raised that there was a planned PC meeting so it would be discussed then. The Clerk confirmed there was but it would not be normal practice to wait until the meeting to disclose how a Member felt and that the meeting was 18 days into the consultation period. The Clerk advised that as a PC meeting bi-monthly it would be unusual to discuss planning applications at a meeting and that during the annual meeting in May responding to planning consultations was delegated to the Clerk.

Robin queried if the planning representatives were acting as a subcommittee and raised a concern that they had met without including Margaret. The Clerk confirmed that ECPC had not created a formal sub-committee, this would require term of reference and publicly notified meetings. Mark confirmed that Margaret had been away during the consultation period.

Margaret Herbert joined the meeting 8.10pm

Mark asked the applicant if he would be withdrawing the application again – the applicant stated he could not answer that query.

The Clerk asked Margaret if she had received her email regarding declarations of interest, Margaret confirmed she had. The Clerk asked if she was happy to declare her personal interest as a friend of the applicant and Margaret advised that she hadn't been formally asked yet. The Chairman asked Margaret if she had an interest to declare – Margaret stated that she did not have an interest to declare. The Clerk advised that CALC had advised her that a close friendship was a declarable interest.

Charlotte Bloomfield joined the meeting.

Martin Allen advised that at County and District Council level it would be considered most inappropriate to join after the majority of the discussion and still be allowed to vote. Margaret then left the meeting and Mark advised Charlotte that following Martins advice she would not be included in the vote.

Tom advised the Council that although he considered the applicant a friend, he felt it was appropriate to still vote.

The Chairman then called the vote which resulted by show of hands, 2 Members for objecting and 2 Members against objecting. The Chairman used he casting vote in favour of the Council objecting to the application 21/01970.

The Chairman and The Clerk would write the objection to be submitted to MHDC by the date of the extended consultation being Friday 3rd December.

4) Planning comments regarding Appeal : 19/01878/FUL at Baughton View Caravan Site, Baughton, Earls Croome.

The Chairman asked Members if they were all in agreement to submit comments reiterating ECPC position in objecting to the appeal. Members unanimously agreed.

The Chairman summarised the main concerns of the Council as follows, The existing site was temporarily granted for 6 pitches and restricted to set people. There are now two appeals against the application for 12 pitches and removing the restriction on who can reside there.

Mark advised that due to the deadline for submission being tomorrow he had compiled a comment to be sent to the inspectorate based on ECPC previous objections and in line with the national planning frame work. Mark advised Baughton was a small hamlet and that the increased number of pitches would make the site disproportionate with the number of local residents he reiterated that there were no facilities eg shops and schools and that the site was against national planning guidelines, with increased use of vehicles due to accessing facilities needed by the residents noting that the nearest town was Upton some considerable distance away and certainly not in walking distance.

The Chairman asked all Members present to review the suggested wording to be sent to the inspectorate.

This was reviewed and agreed by all to be sent to MHDC and the planning inspectorate by the Clerk the following day.

There was a discussion about the MHDC planning portal that at various stages of the consultation appeared not having all the correct documentation accessible to the Members and or the public. Katie accessed the portal and still could not view the relevant documents. The Members asked the Clerk to raise this to MHDC. It was also noted that some but not all of the residents who commented on the original application had been notified of the appeal and given opportunity to further comment, this too was inconsistent.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.

The Meeting was closed at 8.50pm

DRAFT