

Melksham Town Council

Minutes of the Economic Development and Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday 30th January 2024

PRESENT: Councillor S Rabey (Chair)

Councillor P Alford
Councillor P Aves
Councillor G Ellis
Councillor Stokes
Councillor J Westbrook

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor T Price

OFFICERS: Andrew Meacham Committee Clerk

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Five members of the public and one member of the press were present and one member of the public was present virtually.

Paul Carter

Firstly, feels it is important to take ownership of Cooper Tires War Memorial. Secondly, on the subject of council support for a museum, he recognises that a museum forms part of the discussion on the Assembly Hall/Blue Pool but he is asking for support for the idea.

Nick Holder, Wiltshire Councillor for Bowerhill

Spoke on the planning application 2023/11188.

A similar application 2023/01949 for 650 homes was still to be determined, with a decision due by 15 March. Planning Officer will be recommending refusal. There are 15 pages of comments. The Planning Officer suggested to the applicants that amendments should be made in light of this but they declined, as they are entitled to do.

2023/11188 is for a different number of houses on a slightly different piece of land but is fundamentally the same. The site does not conform with any existing planning guidance. Some people have commented that it is similar to the site allocated in the Local Plan. Site in Local Plan for 425 homes with a slightly larger area of employment land and 2 hectares of land for a two form entry primary school. 01949 and 11188 refer to a smaller area and a single form entry. All new primary schools in the Wiltshire Council area need two form entry or provision to become a two form entry. Councillor Holder urged the committee to treat as a brand new application and comment accordingly. Important to consider the Emerging Local Plan and Wiltshire Council Design Guide consultation. If adopted will have guidelines for size and scale of plots, size and scale of gardens, commitment for community orchards and allotments and other important facilities.

This is an outline application and therefore does not give consideration to Wiltshire Council climate policies such as solar panels and EV charging points, or to the question of affordable housing. It is important that the council's submission mentions such things, so they are taken into account in the full application. The draft Local Plan is looking to move affordable housing from 30% to 40%. If the application is approved at outline stage the developers would be able to apply the existing rules.

In Councillor Holder's view the application is premature, does not satisfy issues around ecology, does not satisfy planned development, does not take account of emerging Local Plan or Supplementary Planning Guidelines

Joe McCann

In view of the changes to NPPF, Melksham Without Parish Council are planning to resubmit comments on large planning applications. Does Melksham Town Council intend to do the same? The chair confirmed that they would be resubmitting comments.

629/23 Apologies

There were no apologies.

630/23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest, save that Councillor Price advised he now works for the company that provides the Parish Stewards.

631/23 Minutes

The minutes of 9 January 2024, having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by Councillor Rabey.

632/23 Presentation from Melksham Lions

Simon White, Vice President of Melksham Lions gave a presentation on building a Wishing Well on the site of the old well in the Market Place, to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Melksham Lions. Members thought that a commemorative Wishing Well was an excellent idea but wanted more details, design plans, costings etc. Members also asked Simon to consider and provide details of alternative sites for the well.

Councillor Westbrook offered her assistance.

633/23 Planning Considerations

634/23 Planning Applications

635/23 PL/2023/10718

It was noted that the reply date has passed and a decision had already been made.

636/23 PL/2023/11135

It was proposed by Councillor Rabey, seconded by Councillor Westbrook and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to support the application.

637/23 PL/2024/00327

It was proposed by Councillor Alford, seconded by Councillor Stokes and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to support the application.

638/23 PL/2023/11188

Members discussed the application and took note of the comments of Councillor Holder. Councillor Alford commented that the proposal conflicted with NPPF, Wiltshire Council Core Strategy (Core Policy 2), the allocation in the draft Local Plan, the draft Neighbourhood Plan, the existing Neighbourhood Plan and the Wiltshire Design Guide. The proposed Primary School does not comply as it is a one form entry. There is no information on affordable housing or environmental study.

Other councillors echoed Councillor Alford's concerns. Councillor Westbrook also expressed concerns about infrastructure & traffic, biodiversity, archaeological matters and Swift Bricks.

It was proposed by Councillor Alford, seconded by councillor Westbrook and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to object to the application for the reasons mentioned above.

639/23 Planning Decisions

640/23 PL/2023/09269

Noted.

641/23 PL/2023/10184

Noted.

642/23 PL/2023/10357

Noted.

Before moving on to the next item Councillor Alford referenced Joe McCann's question about resubmitting comments on planning applications and whether a resolution was required. The Committee Clerk advised that the matter was not on the agenda and therefore could not be resolved on. The Committee Clerk agreed to look back for relevant applications.

643/23 Motion to Take Ownership of Cooper Tires War Memorial

This item was advanced up the agenda.

Councillor Price outlined his motion and put a figure of £150 on the cost of moving the memorial. There was discussion on storage.

It was proposed by Councillor Rabey, seconded by Councillor Alford and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve the motion to take ownership of the Cooper Tires War Memorial.

Councillor Price left the meeting at this point.

644/23 Local Cycling and Walking Plan (LCWIP) for Melksham

Councillor Rabey thanked Councillor Ellis for his work on this subject and he gave a short summary.

Councillor Alford mentioned the lack of a footpath on the A350 opposite Cooper Tires and heading towards Aldi and McDonalds.

It was proposed by Councillor Ellis, seconded by Councillor Aves and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to adopt Councillor Ellis' work, with an amendment to include the footpath on the A350, as Melksham Town Council's submission to the consultation.

645/23 Local Highways and Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG) Issues

646/23 Footbridge Westbury View-Primrose Drive

Mike Sankey, Wiltshire Councillor for Melksham East spoke on the request.

It was proposed by Councillor Westbrook, seconded by Councillor Stokes and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to support the request and submit to LHFIG.

647/23 A350 Signal Refurbishment

Noted.

648/23 Revised NPPF Briefing Note

Noted.

649/23 Neighbourhood Plan

Councillor Ellis reported on the results of Reg 14 consultation and the Steering Group meeting of 17 January 2024. The changes to NPPF have reduced the urgency of processing JMN2. The Steering Group have decided to continue as previously agreed, with the knowledge that extra time is available if required. There were many comments in reg 14 consultation, including 900 relating to Cooper Tires Plot B, that need to be considered.

650/23 Sparkle Team and Parish Steward

Councillor Alford asked if preventative weeding work could be identified and undertaken, to try to avoid bigger problems later in the year. Other than this the only requests were the usual for leaf clearance and keeping bus shelters tidy.

Meeting Closed at: 7.55 pm

Signed:

Dated: