

Melksham Town Council

Minutes of the Economic Development and Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday 14th November 2023

PRESENT:

Councillor J Oatley (Vice-Chair)
Councillor P Alford
Councillor P Aves
Councillor G Ellis
Councillor Stokes
Councillor J Westbrook

IN ATTENDANCE:

OFFICERS:

Linda Roberts
Andrew Meacham

Town Clerk
Committee Clerk

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

Bruce Saunders asked questions on EV.

Why is it that Wiltshire council are providing grants to Parish and Town Councils to put infrastructure in their own car parks. Would it not have been simpler for Wiltshire Council to put them in themselves? What is the benefit? Why are we being asked to consider doing it? Mr Saunders said he was not sure if he had understood correctly but believed there had been discussion on paying compensation to Wiltshire Council of £10000 for each parking bay converted to EV Charging. He felt that car parks were rarely full and the loss of revenue to Wiltshire Council would be minimal.

The Town Clerk confirmed that Wiltshire Council were providing grants for EV Chargers in any suitable location, not just Wiltshire Council owned car parks. A grant will be available to Melksham Town Council to proceed with EV Chargers in KGV car park, which is owned by Melksham Town Council. Following the feasibility study 2 car parks had been identified for full funding by the providers MER. There would not be any compensation payments to Wiltshire Council but Melksham Town Council and Wiltshire Council would have to enter into a lease agreement for the parking bays used. The cost is not known but would not be anywhere near £10000.

561/23 Apologises

Apologies were received from Councillor Rabey and Councillor Cooke.

562/23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

563/23 Minutes

The minutes of 24 October 2023 having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, Councillor Oatley.

564/23 EV Charging Points

This item was advanced up the agenda as Bruce Saunders was present for this item.

Councillor Alford asked if the grant money originated from central government. The Town Clerk confirmed it had. Councillor Alford commented that Wiltshire Council were presumably acting as a conduit for the funds.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders.

Bruce Saunders asked if local supermarkets had been approached about the grants and having EV Charging Points in their car parks. If there was another round of grants would the council consider promoting it with supermarkets?

Standing orders were reinstated.

Councillor Alford felt it would be a good idea to promote but did not think supermarkets would qualify for grants.

Councillor Oatley asked Councillor Ellis if the matter had come before Environment and Climate Working Group. Councillor Ellis confirmed it had not but he would support the idea of promoting to local businesses.

Members were advised that the Town Clerk was currently liaising with Wiltshire Council. Councillor Aves asked if income from the chargers would cover the cost of the lease agreement with Wiltshire Council. The Town Clerk advised this information was not available and would be affected by take up of the chargers.

Standing Orders were suspended.

Bruce Saunders asked that when infrastructure was installed it take account of future increase in usage. The Town Clerk confirmed that the contractors are very experienced and looking to the future, including possible solar power supplies.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

Noted.

565/23 Planning Considerations

Noted.

566/23 Planning Applications

The Council considered the following applications.

567/23 PL/2023/08688

It was noted that the application had previously been considered and the committee had objected. The details of that objection were reviewed.

It was noted that the plans now showed two bedrooms rather than three.

It was proposed to object to the application on the same terms as before. Councillor Alford argued that the issues raised were not material planning considerations and that there were not enough of this type of entry level housing being.

It was noted that the Housing Needs Assessment identified this type of housing as being required.

Councillor Stokes asked if the committee could suggest two houses instead of three. Councillor Alford said that was a matter for the applicant and planning officer and may result in plans being amended to three bedrooms.

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

RESOLVED to support the application but express concerns as follows.

- The only point of access to the site is through King Street Car Park.
- The previous issues with drainage have not been addressed in the revised plans.

568/23 PL/2023/08930

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to support the application.

569/23 Planning Decisions

Members noted the following planning decisions

570/23 PL/2023/03797

Noted.

571/23 PL/2023/07184

Noted.

572/23 PL/2023/07661

Noted.

573/23 PL/2023/07260

Noted

574/23 Appeal Decision

The Town Clerk advised that The Planning Inspectorate had allowed the appeal in respect of outline permission for up to 210 residential dwellings and a 70 bed care home on land to the south of Western Way, Melksham, Wiltshire, citing the lack of 5 year housing land supply and the Neighbourhood Plan was out of date for protection from this.

575/23 Local Plan Consultation

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to accept Vaughan Thompson's response as shown in the agenda pack as Melksham Town Council's response to Wiltshire Council's Local Plan.

576/23 Local Highways and Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG) Issues

Councillor Aves advised she had recently attended a meeting of LHFIG.

The Town Clerk had recently met with Martin Rose regarding the Dunch Lane Consultation.

Maple Close is on hold awaiting probate and signing of legal agreement.

577/23 Neighbourhood Plan

The Committee noted the completion of public events and the current statutory consultation underway, closing on 3 December 2023. Councillors urged people to comment on the proposed Neighbourhood Plan and thanked staff and councillors of Melksham Town Council and Melksham without Parish Council for their work at the consultation events.

578/23 Temporary Road Closure Notifications

The Temporary Road Closure Notifications were noted.

579/23 Queensway

The road closure was noted. The Town Clerk commented that the item was originally on the agenda to discuss co-ordination of roadworks but noted and read out an email from Wiltshire Council regarding existing and upcoming roadworks.

It was proposed by Council Oatley, seconded by Councillor Stokes and

RESOLVED to thank the Wiltshire Councillors for their help and work in resolving the issues.

580/23 Sparkle Team and Parish Steward

Councillor Aves asked for wet leaves to be removed from pathways and encouraged residents to do so if possible.

The committee clerk asked members to submit suggestions for a regular list of items to be submitted to the Parish Stewart/Sparkle Team.

It was noted with thanks that the hedge referred to at the previous meeting had been cut back. The Town Clerk advised she had been contacted by the resident.

Councillor Aves asked if residents generally could be encouraged to cut back their hedges. Councillor Alford suggested something in the Melksham News.

Meeting Closed at: 7.55 pm

Signed:

Dated: