

TILEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on-line on 9 February 2021

An audio recording was taken of this Meeting, in order to overcome potential technical difficulties, but will be deleted as soon as the Minutes are approved in the Meeting due to be held in March

Present:

Councillors - Mr K Page (Chair), Mr C Taylor (Vice-Chair), Mr G Dennis, Ms A Foster, Mrs J Lane, Mr L Marino, Mr T Marino (arrived late), Mrs R Reynolds

District Councillors - Mr R Jones, Mr T Linden, Mr T Marino (arrived late)

Public - 35

Members of the public had registered to join the meeting, with several forwarding questions and comments to the Chairman in advance, with regards to the amendments to the planning application for 265 houses on land to the east of Pincents Lane.

Prior to the commencement of the Meeting the Chairman explained matters of procedure to members of the public who had joined the meeting and wished to speak. He also reiterated that the final decision on any planning application is made by West Berkshire Council.

21/018 Open Forum:

a) Members of the Public and District Councillors : Comments made with regards to the development on land east of Pincents Lane -

i) District Councillor T Linden advised that he would be opposing the proposed development on land to the east of Pincents Lane when the application is discussed at the Eastern Area Planning meeting on the 10 March. He also stated that District Councillor J Stewart will similarly be opposing the application.

ii) A representative from U + I and Town gave a brief update on changes to the original application, in which they had attempted to address some of the concerns that had previously been identified.

iii) Several members of the public who are opposed to the development asked questions and made comments on their ongoing concerns, which included –

- Volume of traffic.
- There is no local doctor's surgery, and the local health authority have indicated that they are not prepared to support and maintain the proposed healthcare hub.
- Destruction of an important open natural habitat, and detrimental effect on wildlife.
- Destruction of a healthy and free leisure facility enabling walking, bird watching, running and cycling.

- Obstruction of existing footpaths across the site.
- Concern that existing school placements in the area would be affected by the extra families moving into the development.
- Neighbourhood Plan survey results show that the majority of 900 residents who replied object to the proposed development. This should be sufficient on it's own for the application to be refused.
- Concern about additional pressure that will be placed on existing infrastructure.
- Overload on local roads, in particular Pincents Lane, with resultant increase in air pollution.

b) Parish Councillors – There were no comments or questions raised at this point.

21/019 Apologies for absence: Apologies for absence were received from District Councillor J Stewart. District and Parish Councillor T Marino advised that he would be late arriving.

21/020 Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest relevant to the Agenda.

21/021 Approval and Adoption of Minutes: The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 12 January 2021, having been previously circulated to Members, were taken as read. They will be signed by the Chairman in due course.

21/022 Matters Arising: Ms Foster advised that she had not heard anything regarding the question she raised at the January meeting about the parish receiving a regular overview on the activities provided by the Community Hub to support residents. Ms Stewart, prior to this meeting, had advised the Clerk that she has requested further information from the Hub, and was still waiting for a response.

21/023 Clerk's Report, including Covid-19 Update: See Appendix C

21/024 Planning:

a) Eastern Area - Members will be advised if there is anything relevant to the parish on the Agenda for the Eastern Area Planning Committee Meetings due to be held on the 17 January and 10 March 2021, in order that the parish can be represented.

b) Decisions - See Appendix A

c) New applications - See Appendix B

21/025 Planning Application 19/00113/OUTMAJ Land East of Pincents Lane: Members stated their views and objections on the revised documentation which has been submitted to West Berkshire Council by the applicant. In view of the comments made Mr Taylor proposed that this Council objects to the proposals. This was seconded by Mr Dennis and agreed by all Members. The full objections put forward by this Council can be found in Appendix D.

21/026 District Councillors' Reports:

Ms J Stewart has forwarded the Monthly Parish Report for January, which can be found on this Council's website.

Mr R Jones –

- i) WBC will be debating their draft budget at their meeting on the 2 March. They are in the best position they have been for a long time, mainly because the government has covered the additional costs incurred resulting from Covid-19.
- ii) The increase in Council Tax for the 2021/22 year will be limited to 1.99%.
- iii) The Public Protection Committee (service provided jointly with Bracknell Forest District Council and Wokingham Borough Council) are setting up a scheme of Covid Marshalls. This will be for three months, and will help residents understand Covid-19 rules.
- iv) In the next few months there will be four community testing centres being set up across the district.

Mr A Williamson said it was interesting to hear the views of the residents who had joined the meeting, regarding the proposed development at Pincents Lane, and thanked everyone who participated.

Mr T Linden –

- i) Echoed Mr Williamson's comments.
- ii) He agreed with the comments made by the parish councillors regarding the proposed Pincents Lane development, and advised that residents can contribute to the Eastern Area Planning meeting on the 10 March, but would need to register beforehand.
- iii) In response to a question raised by a member of the public, Mr Linden confirmed that a planning application can be submitted repeatedly if there are changes.
- iv) West Berkshire Council are planning to invest £10m in a solar farm at Grazeley on land that was recently earmarked for development, but which is now not going ahead.

Mr T Marino agreed that it was nice to see so many members of the public taking part in this meeting.

21/027 Maintenance Report: The Clerk advised that the recent weather had not been favourable to much work being carried outside, although the parish maintenance officer had finished the drainage work at Hilden's Park play area, which so far appears to be working well. He has also been carrying out the usual routine jobs e.g. litter picking, checking all play areas, emptying bins. All the parish owned salt/grit bins have also been checked and refilled where necessary.

21/028 Consultation on the West Berkshire Council Proposed Submission for Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Having looked through the documents provided, Members resolved that, although they made interesting reading, there was nothing contained in them on which this parish needs to comment, other than the response sent from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group regarding the draft Local Plan 2020-2037. Mr Page confirmed that this response has been sent on behalf of the parish (Minute 21/010).

21/029 Update from ASB Working Party: A further meeting has been arranged for the 22 February, which will also be attended by Sergeant Daniel Lond and a representative from Berkshire Youth, at which they will be discussing the use of mobile security and also a possible contract with Berkshire Youth.

21/030 Quotations for CCTV: Mr Taylor submitted a Report prior to the meeting, setting out details of quotes which have been received for the provision of CCTV at the parish recreation grounds. Three systems are to be replaced (Calcot, Cornwell and Turnhams Farm), and one new system at Cotswold recreation ground utilising the Westwood Farm Community Association building.

An initial shortlist of eight was narrowed down, with quotes being obtained from the remaining three. Of those three, one was immediately discounted as the cost, at almost double the lowest figure, was considered to be excessive.

One quote for £20,584 was received from GCD Security, and the other for £18,433 from Lantec. GCD also quoted £5,000 to update the CCTV system at Cotswold Sports Centre, but this is something that will need to be decided separately, after discussion with West Berkshire Council who lease the building from the parish.

The ASB working party are recommending that the Council accept the quote from GCD Security mainly because the specification is higher, with a better warranty. All Members agreed to accept this quote.

21/031 Barton Rovers FC: Barton Rovers Football Club have requested use of Turnhams Farm recreation ground to use for parking when they hold their annual football tournament at Little Heath School playing field on the weekend of the 10th and 11th July. The football club have marshalls in attendance to monitor the parking, with no problems occurring in the past. Members agreed to the request, with the usual conditions, after being proposed by Mr Taylor and seconded by Ms Foster –

- The condition of the ground should be reviewed prior to the event and is obviously weather dependent.
- After the event, the grounds should be litter picked and left clean and tidy.
- A roped off access path to the skateboard park must be put in place.
- The car park area must be patrolled and monitored at all times.
- Confirmation that this event will be covered by their public liability insurance, with a copy supplied to this Council.
- Additionally, that the playing of football is allowed at that time under government regulations relating to Covid-19.

21/032 Request for new salt bin: A request has been received from a resident in The Knoll, Tilehurst for the provision of a new salt bin. After some discussion, Members asked the Clerk to discuss with the resident further before a decision is made, as there is already a bin in The Knoll. The final decision will be made by the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, under delegated authority, as this issue is time sensitive because of the current weather conditions. As usual, the final decision on siting will be made by West Berkshire Council.

21/033 Practitioners Conference: The Clerk asked if Members would agree to her attending an on-line Practitioners Conference on 23rd, 24th and 25th February at a cost of £75 plus vat. She did apply last year, but all places had already been taken up. Mr Page proposed that the request is agreed, seconded by Mr Taylor, with all Members in agreement.

21/34 Review and Adoption of Standing Orders: Prior to the Meeting, Members had been forwarded a copy of the Standing Orders, the Clerk having made a few minor changes. The Standing Orders will need to be reviewed again in September to bring the date in line with the timescales set out therein. Mr Page suggested that the wording relating to public participation in meetings could be tightened up, and asked Members to bring any further suggestions to the September meeting.

21/35 Review and Adoption of Governance and Risk Management Assessment: Prior to the Meeting, Members had been forwarded a copy of the Assessment. The Clerk explained the relevance and implementation of the Assessment, in response to questions raised by Mr L Marino. After discussing with Members, the Clerk confirmed that she could produce a regular report detailing any risks that had occurred, and the outcome.

21/36 Financial Information: Members reviewed the expenditure for January, which was retrospectively noted. Mr L Marino raised a query concerning some of the figures on the cash book, which the Clerk will look into and respond in due course.

21/37 Chairman's Remarks:

- i) Thank you to all members of the public who had joined the meeting.
- ii) It was good to see that Lin Jenkins, who lives in the parish, has been named Volunteer of the Year 2020 under the WBC Community Champion awards, for her fund-raising efforts for the Motor Neurone Disease Association.
- iii) Thank you to the Clerk, Mr Taylor and other Members for the work put in to prepare the application for CIL monies to refurbish the building previously used by the Calcot Community Association. Our bid has been recommended for approval, and we await the final decision.
- iv) Changes have been made to the format of the Clerk's Report, which in future will include a regular update on ongoing projects.

- v) Mr Page recently attended an on-line meeting of the North Wessex Downs AONB, which he found very useful.
- vi) It is good to hear that WBC will have only a small tax increase in the next financial year. Hopefully this Council's effort in keeping the precept at the same level had some contribution to this.

21/38 Exclusion of Public and Press: Members voted unanimously to exclude members of the public from Part 11, because of the confidential nature of the item to be discussed.

The Meeting closed at 9.50 pm

The next Meeting will be held on Tuesday 9 March 2021

Chairman

PART 11

21/39 Staffing Committee: The Chair of the Staffing Committee updated Members on discussions from the first Staffing Committee meeting, which had recently taken place. Members of the Staffing Committee recommended that a payment be made, in lieu of holiday, to a member of staff who is leaving employment at the end of the financial year. Mr Page commented on the fantastic job and valued contribution made by this member of staff during their years of employment.

The recommendation made was proposed by Ms Foster, seconded by Mr Page, with all Members in agreement.

The Clerk was also asked for an update on another member of staff, who is currently on long term sick leave.

APPENDIX A - DECISIONS

20/02923/NONMAT	<u>21 Bay Tree Rise, Calcot</u> Non material amendment to approved number 18/03054/HOUSE – single storey extension to parking under-croft. Re-built rear extension with continuous pitch roof to match existing. Amendment – Flat roof and minor internal alterations.	Refused
20/02590/HOUSE	<u>25 Normanstead Road, Tilehurst</u> Single storey rear extension.	Granted
20/02852/HOUSE	<u>28 Conifer Drive, Tilehurst</u> Single-storey side extension with internal alterations.	Granted
20/02782/HOUSE	<u>54 Cotswold Way, Tilehurst</u> Addition of new single storey rear extension.	Granted
20/02509/FULD	<u>145 Long Lane, Tilehurst</u> Extension/alteration of existing bungalow to provide 2No. 2 storey 4 bed dwellings including raising ridge height and demolition of existing garage.	Granted
20/02447/HOUSE	<u>The Oak House, 5 Carew Close, Tilehurst</u> Retrospective: Single storey detached car port and outbuildings.	Granted

APPENDIX B - NEW APPLICATIONS

20/03020/HOUSE Apple Tree View, Alder Drive, Tilehurst
Single storey side extension.

This Council has no objections to the proposal provided that the issues with the parking spaces, as identified by highways and one objector, are resolved.

20/03023/HOUSE 201 Overdown Road, Tilehurst
SECTION 73 – Removal or Variation of Condition 2 (approved plans) of approved application 20/02083/HOUSE: Front porch. Two storey side extension. Single and two storey rear extension.

This Council has no objection to the proposal.

20/03030/HOUSE 1 Bath Road, Calcot – adjacent Parish
Two storey front addition to form entrance lobby, staircase and galleried landing at first floor. Demolish part of existing double garage and conversion of remaining garage to habitable accommodation. Two storey rear and part side extension to form kitchen and family area on ground floor with two additional bedrooms over. Create and construct a new comprehensive roof design to the altered/extended building with loft storage area for non-habitable use. Carry out internal alterations as required to support the new layout of rooms.

This Council has no objections to the proposal so long as the applicant satisfies the comments made by the Highways Officer.

21/00045/HOUSE 27 Vicarage Wood Way, Tilehurst
Formation of habitable rooms in roofspace with rear dormer.

This Council has no objections to the proposal so long as the applicant satisfies the comments made by the Highways Officer.

20/02536/HOUSE 44 Fairford Road, Tilehurst
Proposed 2 storey side and rear extension including a 1 bed annex following demolition of garage and lean-to store.

Note: Amended plans/additional drawings have been received

This Council continues to object to this proposal. The block plan has not been amended and still shows the use of the public land/grass verge for parking and this Council therefore reiterates the previous objection comments returned.

20/03052/HOUSE 3 Sage Road, Tilehurst
Retrospective timber hut.

This Council objects to the proposal as it is considered to be an inappropriate use of the garden, and is out of keeping with surrounding houses. Concern was also raised over the potential pollution from the chimney, which has been installed to allow use of an open fire pit.

21/00054/HOUSE

14 Dark Lane, Tilehurst

Demolish Conservatory; convert garage to habitable space; single storey rear extension.

This Council has no objection to the proposal.

APPENDIX C - CLERK'S REPORT, including COVID-19 Update

1.0 Background

1.1 This report provides information to the council on activities undertaken by the Clerk and other team members along with other matters appropriate to the council.

2.0 Activity updates

2.1 As reported within the Clerk's Report at the January 2021 meeting, a quotation for the footpath at the Cornwell Centre has been received however it was higher than expected and contained a number of items which the Clerk is unsure about. Before being presented to members, the Clerk is liaising with Volker Highways in order to address these concerns.

2.2 Further to minute 21/012 Community Foodbank, the Clerk has contacted the resident who originally submitted the proposal to advise that members were in agreement, in principle, subject to the receipt of additional information. With the potential refurbishment of the building within the coming months, this has also been discussed as any permissions given will be time limited as the building will need to be vacant for works to commence.

3.0 COVID – 19 Updates

3.1 Following reports that Thames Valley Police had recently requested that the skatepark at Victoria Park, Newbury be closed, the Clerk once again contacted the local Police for further guidance on whether or not our skatepark should be closed. The response received advised that their position was that it could remain open. The area will continue to be monitored by the parish Maintenance Officer.

3.2 Under the current restrictions, having reported last month that grassroots football is not permitted to take place, it has been established that football training is also not permitted. As we are aware of football training taking place, the Clerk and Maintenance Officer will monitor this situation.

3.4 The Clerk has noticed that some of the government guidance notes relating to the safe use of community buildings have been updated. The Clerk continues to keep up to date with the latest versions of these documents, and any others relating to Council activities, in readiness for easement of the current national lockdown.

4.0 Other matters

4.1 The Clerk has received an update on the recently submitted bid for a grant from the West Berkshire Council Community Infrastructure Levy Fund. The notification confirmed that the assessment panel have recommended approval of our bid and

this will now been discussed by the West Berkshire Council's Executive at their meeting on 11th February.

5.0 **Further reports**

5.1 The Clerk will provide further updates at the meeting, should this be necessary.

APPENDIX D

Planning Application 19/00113/OUTMAJ – Land East of Pincents Lane, Tilehurst

Comments submitted by Tilehurst Parish Council

This Council would like to re-affirm its objection to the proposed development, and submits the following reasons, in addition to the previous comments returned to West Berkshire Council in January 2020.

1. The application site remains outside the settlement boundary. This Council believes that any development would be contrary to West Berkshire Council Policies for this reason alone.
2. West Berkshire Council currently has a DPD that extends to 2026 and Tilehurst is meeting all house build requirements within that plan. This includes the developments at the two Stonehams Farm sites and the completed development at Clements Mead. It does not include Land East of Pincents Lane, indeed it is specifically excluded.
3. The West Berkshire Council draft Local Plan which runs to 2037 includes a requirement for Tilehurst Parish to allocate housing sites for a further 175 houses up to 2037 i.e. 16 years in the future. The Pincents Lane development amounts to 265 new housing units which is 90 above that required in the whole parish over the next 16 years. Therefore this Council considers that this application is both premature and in excess of the proposed plan requirements.
4. In relation to the above points, it is worth remembering what the Secretary of State concluded from the Inspectors report in 2011 in response to a developers appeal to an earlier, albeit larger, application. This reads as follows :

“Overall, the Secretary of State concludes that, although the appeal proposal would provide a range of housing, including affordable units, plus facilities and services, it lies outside the current settlement boundary and within open countryside where policies of restraint apply and within which it would cause substantial harm. The Secretary of State also concludes that there is a robust case for accepting that the Council has in excess of a five year supply of housing land without developing the appeal site, so that this harm could not be justified in terms of an inadequate supply of housing land; and he therefore sees no justification for permitting a proposal of the scale proposed at the current time given the risk that it could adversely affect the overall spatial planning of the area through the Council’s Local Development Framework.”

This Council considers that little has changed to the circumstances since 2011. The site remains outside the settlement boundary and West Berkshire Council has an adequate supply of houses in Tilehurst at least until 2026.

5. This development would harm and erode the strategic gap between the Tilehurst,

Calcot and Theale settlements. This is a further fundamental reason for refusing this application.

6. West Berkshire Council should focus future development in Tilehurst on brownfield sites only. This Council would suggest that such sites are situated in the immediate vicinity of Pincents Lane, including business sites that are declining in their use and where currently more than half of the buildings lie empty.
7. A West Berkshire Environmental Health memorandum issued in the last two weeks points to the excessive noise at the site in excess of WHO recommendations. The memorandum concludes that houses at the site would need to be built with enclosed windows, i.e windows that will not open, but with mechanical ventilation. It can be confirmed that this is a very noisy location, primarily due to traffic noise from the M4, even at this time of lower than usual traffic volumes. People should not be expected to live in these conditions. Whatever measures are taken to reduce noise penetration into the houses, gardens and outside space would continue to experience these unreasonable noise levels for many years to come. People's health and wellbeing should always be a primary consideration before the need for new houses.
8. As far as we are aware, the Parish Council's earlier objections regarding the inadequacy of emergency vehicle access from the north has received no proper response. This Council would therefore repeat that this is a narrow, windy, steep lane with few passing places. It has two streams running down the steepest part of the hill which freeze over in cold weather and meeting vehicles coming the other way can take some time to overcome. We remain concerned and would like to add that the steepest part of the hill has very recently been completely iced over. It is not gritted presumably because gritters cannot turn around in this lane.
9. This Council previously objected to the access points from the development site onto the parish recreation ground. This has not been discussed with the parish council and if introduced the impact on public safety, crime, and security of the recreation ground would cause concern.
10. Even though some landscaping improvements have been introduced it is considered that views from the northern end of the Council recreation ground and from the open land further east of the proposed development would be severely impacted by the development. Additionally, the view from Pincents Lane when walking in a southerly direction from City Road, which provides spectacular views of Pincents Hill itself, would be lost.
11. A field in Pincents Lane, currently used for horse grazing with some structures for housing horses, forms part of the development and would be lost, damaging the important equestrian feel of this area that stretches from Pincents Lane through to the Equestrian Centre at the end of Little Heath Road. The constant removal of local land for horses is of considerable concern.

12. The Pang Valley Ramblers have expressed concerns over the footpaths and proposed cycle path across the site, including the safety risks where footpaths cross new roadways. This Council shares and supports the concerns and objections included in their input to the consultation.
13. The developer has proposed including a health hub, in response to concerns from local residents at the shortage of GP places locally. However, the NHS Local Commissioning Group has already stated that it sees no need to use this hub. The Developer has indicated alternative proposals for the hub, such as private health facilities, but this defeats the objective of providing more local GP services in an area where GP service provision clearly needs improvement.
14. AWE Burghfield has in the past year extended the boundaries within which they must be consulted on future development. This is already affecting the large development proposed at Grazely. Part of the Pincents Lane development lies within the new outer zone where developments above 200 houses require consultation. This Council would want to see AWE Burghfield comments on this development being taken into consideration before any planning decision is made.
15. Travel analysis:
 - i) West Berkshire Council Highways have had concerns regarding the traffic analysis which appear not to have been resolved. The studies show high degrees of traffic saturation along Pincents Lane between IKEA and the A4 at weekends, and which are presumably even higher on bank holidays. At the highest level these were at 98.5% saturation. The studies do not appear to have taken into account the probable development of the former Pincents Manor Hotel. A care home was proposed, now withdrawn, and we await further plans.

Additionally, the traffic surveys carried out during 2020 when, for most of the year, people were working from home or on furlough, and many retail businesses were closed, do not give a true picture of traffic movement.

- ii) Ongoing congestion problems at the IKEA car park do not appear to have been resolved. Future developments in Theale, with the resulting extra traffic have not been included in traffic analysis. Given the complexities of the A4 junction with Sainsburys (both public and delivery roads), Mac Donalds, the petrol station, Dorking Way and of course Pincents Lane itself, can any traffic analysis be accurately carried out?
 - iii) It likely that many residents of this site would continue to use cars, rather than walk or cycle - elderly residents are less likely to walk to the bus stop unless buses could be routed to the estate. Doctors' surgeries, schools, churches and many facilities such as Theale Station will be too far for many to walk to, and the walk up Pincents Lane would be a challenge for many. Car usage may have been underestimated and this Council remains very concerned at the possible traffic impact of this development. The developers' Travel Plan promotes the relative closeness of some facilities such as

schools but these may be full and school places may have to come from further afield, thus increasing car use. Further, Springfield School is too far for young children to walk to, even if there were spaces available. Prospect Park Hospital is mentioned as a close facility. This would be too far to walk to, especially if unwell, and in any case it is not a general hospital.

- iv) There is still concern at the very narrow part of the lane outside the proposed entrance to the site, where it passes the entrance and hedges that border the former Pincents Manor Hotel and the small business unit at No 1 Pincents Lane. This is extremely narrow and there is concern for pedestrian and cyclist safety at this point.
- 16. The site has an abundance of mature trees and plants, and wild life that includes foxes, deer, badgers, bats, rabbits, hedgehogs, red kites, magpies, and butterflies, to name but a few. It has a rich biodiversity and is a beautiful piece of wild green space that should be retained for local people, visitors and the wildlife itself to enjoy. It's use during the Covid lockdowns increased substantially as people took advantage of this place to relieve stress and take their daily exercise away from their housing estates.
- 17. There are currently almost 1000 letters of objection to this proposal; two-thirds of the 740 responses to a survey carried out by local MP Alok Sharma favoured no development at this site; and the Tilehurst Neighbourhood plan survey of over 900 parishioners found a clear majority not wanting any future housing development in Tilehurst Parish. Within the last two weeks a new facebook group has been formed that has attracted over 1000 members opposed to the development, and a separately organised petition has been signed by nearly 900 people also opposed to the development.

To try and bring an end to these many years of repeated planning applications this Council would appeal to West Berks Council and other organisations to look at ways of preserving this land as open green space, in order to bring to a close the constant uncertainty on the future of this piece of land.