

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING OF SWANTON ABBOTT
HELD ON SEPTEMBER 24th. 2019 IN THE VILLAGE HALL,
SWANTON ABBOTT AT 6.15p.m

PRESENT – Cllrs. Haden (Chair), M. Vaughan, R. Gee, S. Taylor, C. Belsham, A. Brown & R. Talbot, the Clerk, G. Kimmerling, NNDC Cllr. Penfold & 46 members of the public.

Cllr. Haden outlined how the meeting would run. Members of the public would have one hour for discussion and all points to be addressed to the Chair. He invited the public to speak.

1. Narrow roads in and into the village; sewerage system could not cope with extra properties; ground becomes waterlogged, only 13m above sea level; historic flooding; proposed flats do not provide the type of affordable housing needed; present village hall adequate and more parking may be possible and one main user has no complaints; development detrimental to village community; clubs need volunteers not halls; common can be used for amenity land.
2. Village hall build in 1981 and respect for people who fundraised for this but now not fit for purpose; on offer, new, efficient, larger hall on village green; present hall not vacated until new one complete and fully equipped guaranteed by legal documents; drainage problems will be addressed; should consider future generations.
3. Present properties should be connected to the sewer before any new houses.
4. Existing sewerage system not adequate; have the people who gave the land for the present hall given permission for building on the site?
5. Is land south of development for phase 2? *Cllr. Haden said in earlier plan there was a covenant of 99 years on this land but there is no indication about the land in the planning application. Cllr. Belsham said it was a 50 year covenant originally.* Problems with the sewers and flooding in The Street near The Aylsham Road.
6. In survey and vote majority not in favour; flooding, septic tanks, narrow roads, unsuitable affordable housing, changing village hall are all problems; village does not need the development.
7. A consultation process with NNDC has shown that there cannot be significant development on present village hall and offered land by hall only temporary car parking use; grants available for new loos but must be within current footprint so severely limited; total takings last year £4500, running costs for new hall £4000 per annum; village hall has just had the best two years ever; present hall high maintenance costs; lost former users as hall inadequate and unable to attract new users; confident new hall would be used.
8. Access issues to site along Long Common Road & The Hill as B1150 dangerous junction; narrow, single track road, no maintained passing places & no speed limits; problems with beaching on sides of road in The Hill; already many deliveries in village so expect chaos with increased traffic; proposed development more like inner city development and too large. **Page 211**

9. Septic tank at end of garden so expects complaints from new houses; ground is higher so properties will look into resident's garden.
 10. What are the ramifications of this meeting? *Cllr. Haden explained that the Parish Council is one of several consultees. NNDC is guided by Planning Policy. The consultation period ends this Friday and a decision should be made by NNDC by 26th. November. They may go back to the developer with any concerns. NNDC Cllr. Penfold said he could request that the application goes to the Development Committee, they would make a site visit, members of the public would have a chance to speak at NNDC. The policy relating to this development is SS2 Cllr. Haden said it should be 100% affordable housing. NNDC Cllr. Penfold said, in theory, a lot more houses could be built on the site but this was unlikely. 33 houses is about 1/3rd of what the site could hold. Present policy states 12% affordable housing in any development but this could be offset by the land & new hall.*
 11. Concern that there could be more development in the village; roads are a problem.
 12. NNDC accept 10 affordable properties with 4-5 marketable houses.
 13. How can 4 1 bedroom properties make 12% affordable? *Cllr. Haden said the case officer has raised this point.*
 14. Could be 60-75 additional vehicles per day in village; this scheme completely different from original – reduced benefit & housing gone up from 20 to 33; some merits in first scheme but gone too far; affordable properties should be better; development wrong size, too large & therefore, not sustainable.
 15. No footpath from new hall to old hall site for parents taking children to school; very dangerous corner and road gets flooded. *Cllr. Haden said landowner has indicated he would put in new footpath by Church Road.*
 16. Change brings conflict to the village; put view forward to NNDC but not in an emotional way. *Cllr. Haden said the Parish Council has encouraged people to write to NNDC. There will be a link on the Facebook page.*
 17. Consider ways that land could be developed for the village; offer to purchase the land, sell some for development, make it a resident-led proposal.
 18. Area is a holiday destination so people want quiet countryside; will open door to further development.
 19. Swanton Abbott has welcomed people for years so depressing to know it is less tolerant towards newcomers; opportunity to limit number of houses on site; no affordable housing; proposed site best in village for development; hope Parish Council and residents can work together to sort out problems; SAS group says everyone is welcome but are against the development; only 40 out of 177 houses have responded on website so lot of people not against proposal.
 20. Knocked on doors to get opinions and no-one wanted new hall; people had been scared by possibility of larger development.
 21. Would love a larger hall and space for children to kick a football; playing field & new hall would be an asset for the children.
- END OF PUBLIC DISCUSSION.

AGENDA

19.50 a. Apologies for absence.

NNC Cllr. J. Timewell and Dr. & Mrs. Day.

b. Declaration of Interest in items on the Agenda.

Cllr. Gee signed the book as a Village Hall Committee member and Cllr. Brown signed as a SAS Committee member. The Clerk explained that Cllr. Gee had been granted dispensation to take part in discussion and to vote. She has no personal interest in the development.

19.51 PLANNING

PO/19/0813 Alternative reference PP-07798338

Land west and south of The Poplars, Swanton Abbott.

Demolition of existing Village Hall. Redevelopment of village hall site for residential use, and development of agricultural land for residential purposes and construction of a new Village Hall and associated car park and formation of sports pitch/play area. Residential development to total 33no. dwellings across both sites. (Outline application with all matters reserved except details of access at both sites)

Cllr. Haden explained that councillors had drawn lots to determine the order of speaking.

Cllr. Brown. The development has benefits such as the village green as an open space for village events. Details on the new hall are not in the public domain and the SAS group has not found the present hall restricting. Lack of housing is a burning issue in this country including the provision of affordable housing and she laments there are only 4 units of affordable housing in the proposal. NNDC has said it should be 100% and this is a cynical attempt by the developer to get his proposal through. It is not a community led development. The drainage problems will not be helped and the narrow roads situation has not been addressed at all. The traffic will increase bringing safety concerns. There are likely to be continuing problems.

Cllr. Talbot. The Parish Council should work for the future benefit of the village. He had spoken to lots of residents and thanked them for their comments. Swanton Abbott must evolve to survive. This is an exciting, sympathetic development and as custodians of the village the Parish Council has a responsibility to act in the best interests of the village. Swanton Abbott requires what this development is proposing. The Village Hall with a sports field attached is a huge advantage. The present hall is no longer fit for purpose. The drainage issues must be addressed.

Cllr. Vaughan. People have asked why the solid village hall building should be knocked down. There is land on offer which has been refused and money was raised for a ramp which was also refused. There are 30-40 properties on septic tanks in the village. The roads in and around the village are narrow and Highways have said there are no funds to improve these. One social housing property has recently been sold off and land which could have been used has also been sold.

Cllr. Gee. She has read the comments on the NNDC portal. We need housing for young people; the village has a high proportion of older residents. **Page 213**

There are currently 45 people on the waiting list for affordable housing & 16 of these are for 1 bedroom accommodation. Young people enhance the community. There is a campaign to save the village pub and more residents would support this. The village has a good school but numbers are falling so new families would help to keep this open and there would be less cars on the school run. She has visited a Heritage site and all the houses are good quality, including affordable housing & would blend in. Older children want a park area and the new hall would be linked to the Play Park. The village green could offer many healthy options. Only 23% of the village have written to NNDC so there is support in the community.

Cllr. Taylor. Opposed to building on green-field sites. The developer has been economical with the truth. The first proposal was for 16 dwellings and this has increased to 33. The approach roads to the village are narrow and speeding has always been a problem. It is a shame to sell the present village hall for the sake of a new hall.

Cllr. Belsham. Believes the Parish Council is the representative for the residents of the village and it was imperative that she sought as much understanding of the application in it's entirety and not focused on individual parts. Key aspects - additional traffic & impact on highways including pedestrian safety; demolishing the hall when there may be additional land available; positives of a bigger hall to accommodate more functions & be eco friendly; new sports field for bigger events creating a village hub; Play Park being more accessible & so reducing maintenance costs; potential drainage/flooding issues & their impact on the village. She has taken into account positives and negatives of the potential impact on residents of the whole village and will base her vote on this and comments made from both sides.

Cllr. Haden. He thanked his fellow councillors for all their time and effort in looking at this proposal. He also thanked the community for their engagement with the Parish Council and NNDC. There are 36 objections and 19 in favour on the NNDC portal but some of these are from the same people so are duplicated. The Parish Council is only one consultee and the final decision will be with NNDC Planning. This is an out-line planning application so there are grey areas. The Parish Council is voting on this application. If it is withdrawn and another application presented we will go through this process again. The original request from the Parish Council was for land for a village green. How will 33 properties, a new village hall and village green impact the village now and in the future? It will irrevocably change the village. Will the houses and hall make it a better village? Will the flooding problems be alleviated? The playing field/village green meets a popular and long-standing desire. Notwithstanding what we have heard tonight, he is concerned that the village hall could be a White Elephant as he has not seen a business case. Additional houses could put a further strain on the overstretched sewerage system. It could negatively impact on the reasons people wanted to live here in the first place.

Cllr. Haden asked the Parish Council to vote on the planning application.

For 2

Against 5

The Parish Council voted to oppose planning Application PO/19/0813

The meeting closed at 7.45p.m.

Page 214