

COLMWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of Colmworth Parish Council held on Thursday 10th August 2017 at 7.30pm in the Roman Room of the Village Hall at Colmworth.

Present: Cllr. D. Michell (Chairman), Cllr. E. Pegler (Vice Chairman), Cllr. P. Ball, Cllr R. Jones, Cllr T. Frew, L. Crawford (Clerk), and nine members of the public.

1. Apologies. Cllr. B. Brightman and Cllr. L. Knight

2. Declarations of Interest. None

3. Minutes of the last Parish Council meeting held on 5th July 2017.

Having been previously circulated these were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr. D. Michell and seconded by Cllr. P. Ball.

4. Public Open Forum

Regarding the Golf Course application for a wood store the following points were made:

- Concerns about fire risk, noise, and additional lorries on unsuitable roads if material was ever to be imported onto the site. The store seems large and there were concerns that material might be imported onto the site in future.

Regarding the Paddocks development the following points were made:

- there is no need for additional houses and planning permission for the Three Horseshoes will provide three additional houses and has yet to built. There is no need for more.
- This is outside the Settlement Policy Area and development here would set a precedent for development in other areas of the parish outside the SPA.
- People come to Colmworth for its quiet, rural setting and the consultants for the village survey two years ago noted that the open aspect of the village was particularly appreciated by parishioners.
- This development is very unlikely to be built by those who have drawn up the plans and is much more likely to be sold on to developers who could vary the plans considerably and unfavourably.
- The affordable homes are three bedroom detached houses which are unlikely to be very affordable. There is concern that developers might remove these at a later date and say they are not economically viable.
- A petition with more than 70 signatures has been raised for delivery to Bedford Borough Council to say that:

"We, the undersigned, being inhabitants of Colmworth are concerned about planning application 17/02101/FUL which has recently been submitted and which appears to be in flagrant breach of existing planning policy. The application for 8 houses is outside the Special Protection Area (SPA) and is therefore excluded from development under the current rules. We have been advised that these will appertain until replaced by provisions in Local Plan 2035 in due course.

If approved, this breach could create a precedent which will encourage similar applications in Colmworth. There have been a number of responses through the "call for the sites" initiative which are outside the SPA. It is also probable that the precedent created by approval would encourage similar applications in other groups 3 and 4 villages in the Borough.

We petition, therefore, that this application be rejected at this time and be reconsidered under a new planning policy when Local Plan 2035 is implemented.

We also petition that the Council confirms that the existing planning policies will remain in force until replaced in the context of the local plan 2035."

- Noone was aware of any petition in favour of the development
- It would be hasty to grant this application when the draft local plan to 2035 states that there is no need for new houses to be built in Grade 3 villages unless there is evidence of local support.
- The housing needs survey in 2015 expressed a need for 5 houses and 6 bungalows of which 5 required affordable housing. None of the 5 requiring affordable housing were on Bedford Borough Council's Housing Register. The sizes of property required by those who expressed a housing need were as follows: one bedroom 1, two bedrooms 5, three bedrooms 3, more than three bedrooms 2. However, this was prepared in the context of the previous Local Plan which proposed 20-30 houses for category 3 villages. The draft Local Plan to 2035 states that development in category 3 villages such as Colmworth should only be developed if there is evidence of local support. It was suggested that the survey results might have been very different in the current context of the draft plan to 2035 because this new draft plan proposes to meet the need for additional housing in new, more sustainable, larger developments. In addition, the housing needs survey proposed those houses be developed in the life of the Neighbourhood Plan not in one development.
- Burnix Court was supposed to be smaller, affordable homes and ended up being 4 expensive detached houses so parishioners are concerned that the same might happen again.
- One member of the public suggested that it was a shame to lose the affordable housing element as that might enable some younger people to move into the village or stay in the village. However, others did not believe that the affordable houses would be truly affordable for young people and many expressed scepticism that they would be built at all as they felt that developers might complain that they were not economically viable and the condition would be waived.
- One member of the public suggested that since there are not many young or old people due to lack of infrastructure the council should consider adding more facilities and improving the infrastructure eg. schools, a shop, a pub. Others suggested that 8 new houses would not be enough to support these and that people moved to the village for peace and quiet and didn't want to be in a large village which would be able to support this extra infrastructure.

5. Determine how the Parish Council should respond to planning application 17/01679/FUL for erection of an open-fronted wood chip compound building at Colmworth Golf Club. Deadline 10th August.

Councillor R. Jones proposed a motion that the Parish Council support the application provided that:

- a planning condition was applied to the application to state that no wood chip material could be imported or exported from the site and
- risk of fire would be minimised.

Councillor D. Michell seconded the motion and Councillors voted unanimously in favour. The motion was passed.

6. Determine how the Parish Council should respond to planning application 17/02101/FUL for a residential development comprising eight dwellings with associated accesses and infrastructure. Location: Land off Little Staughton Road, Colmworth. Deadline 22nd August. (8.15)

Councillor T. Frew proposed a motion that the Parish Council object to the application on the grounds that it is outside the Settlement Policy Area, there is no proven need and there is local opposition to the development as per the feedback in the Open Forum. Councillor P. Ball seconded the motion. Councillors voted unanimously in favour of the motion to object to the application. The motion was passed. Councillor Jones will draft a response to the planning application and circulate it to Councillors for approval.

In addition, the Clerk will request that the application be called in to the planning committee.

Other Business

Councillor David Michell resigned from the Parish Council. Councillor Jones expressed his disappointment and thanked him for his years of service to the parish.

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 13th September 2017