BROAD CHALKE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the 1051st Meeting of the

Broad Chalke Parish Council

held at the Village Hall, Broad Chalke on

Wednesday 9 November 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Mr M Pickford (Meeting Chairman)

Mrs E Richter

Mr S Carter

Mr Martin Altham

Mr E Fry

Mr S Dawes

Mr C Littlemore and Ashley Truluck were in attendance as advisers to the PC on planning matters.

Mrs L Wiltshire, Mr A Wiltshire, Mr P Jones, Mr T Kimber and Rev B Jones were also in attendance.

The Clerk, Mr C Rothwell, was in attendance.

1. To receive apologies for absence. Cllr T Cave Gibbs and Cllr T Hitchings.
2. To record Declarations of Interest. Cllr M Pickford declared a non-pecuniary interest in Planning application PL/2022/01196 being an adjacent landowner.
3. Chairman’s announcements. The Chairman sought approval from the Council to hear public representation from Mrs L Wiltshire in connection with planning application PL/2022/08054 and to receive advise from the Council’s advisors on this application. The Chairman also sought approval to alter the agenda and bring forward items to which the public were in attendance for including item 7 on access issues and item 15 on planning applications. The Council agreed.
4. To receive report on access issues in the village. Mr P Jones had undertaken an audit of access issues at the request of the Clerk and had submitted pictures to illustrate. These had been circulated to the Council and were displayed for the meeting. Mr Jones explained that it is not about creating new footpaths just making access easier on the existing infrastructure and this required some cutting back of overgrown vegetation and looking into securing funding for some dropped kerbs to enable wheelchair and push chair access.

The Clerk had discussed potential funding with Wiltshire Council through their LHFIG and had been advised that a budget cost for a pair of dropped kerbs should be £3,000.

It was agreed that a priority list be established by Mr Jones and the Clerk from the work already undertaken and the Clerk to look at applying to LHFIG.

At this point PJ and Rev BJ withdrew from the meeting.

1. To consider planning applications.

PL/2022/08054-Land adjacent to Knapp Farmhouse. The Chairman reminded the Council that they had received a presentation from Mr I Sutton earlier in the year and had fed back that it was down to the landowner and developer to determine whether to submit a planning application, but should an application come to the Council for a building on this land it would be unlikely to receive Council support. A letter of support from Mr Sutton had also been circulated to the Council members prior to the meeting.

The Chairman invited Ashley Truluck to set the context of the application within the Neighbourhood Plan. AT reminded the Council that the NP was overwhelmingly supported by the village at the Referendum in July 2021 and is now part of Wiltshire Council’s adopted Core Strategy. AT referred to a number of the NP Policies and particularly that the proposed development site lies outside the settlement boundaries set out in the NP. AT then summarised the position of the application against three NP tests:

1. Does the application enhance and preserve the environment?
2. Is the development necessary to meet housing need in Broad Chalke?
3. Do the community of Broad Chalke no longer support the NP?

As the NP advisor to the Council, Ashley’s view is that the answer to these tests is ‘no’ on all counts and the Council should object to the planning application.

The Chairman thanked Ashley and then invited Mrs L Wiltshire to address the Council. LW read out a statement setting out her objections to the proposed development and summarised by saying that her reasons for objecting is that the application breaches the development provisions of the Broad Chalke Neighbourhood Plan adopted by the planning authority in August 2021. The proposed property falls outside the designated settlement boundary and does not qualify to meet local needs.

LW further stated that the NP was adopted following overwhelming support in a local referendum. The Parish Council issued a flyer in support of the referendum stating that the plan limits development strictly to our own (village) needs and standards and that the Plan was a once in a lifetime opportunity to shape our own future. LW commented further that, should this application be granted, it would effectively mean that the Plan has no standing which is unacceptable and contrary to what we were informed. LW requested that the Council object to the application.

The Chairman thanked LW for her succinct presentation and then asked Mr C Littlemore to present any further information relevant to the Council to assist it in deciding on the application.

CL spoke to the meeting and summed up that development of this site is not appropriate and should be refused for the following reasons: -

1)  The proposal is contrary to the recently established and adopted Neighbourhood Plan policy defining the settlement boundary. The site lies outside the defined settlement. The settlement boundary should not only be considered in the two-dimensional plan view. This boundary defines areas of land appropriate and not appropriate for development by virtue of their setting, views in and out, other built context and access. The settlement boundary includes other properties in the near vicinity, but these are at a much lower level (approx. 5- 8m) and are consequently not visible from High Lane – unlike this site.

2)  The proposal is contrary to the Neighbourhood Plan policy which looks to enhance or improve access or appreciation of the Water Meadows.

3)  Development of the site could potentially harm the protected view across the water meadows. (View 2 in the NP).

4)  Development would cause harm to the soft landscaped and open setting of the conservation area (in Character Area 1) when viewed from along High Lane in either direction and from the public footpath of Perret’s Drove.

5)  Housing provision has been recently assessed within the village in detail and policies have been included within the NP to ensure the village can adequately meet its future housing needs. The result of this survey indicated that 9 houses were felt to be required, (more than that imposed by Wiltshire Council due to the sensitive context of the village conservation area and location within the Cranborne Chase AONB). These 9 houses now have land allocated for affordable and market housing and excellent progress is being made with specialist housing providers and Wiltshire Council towards these being brought to fruition.

6)  The Neighbourhood Plan allows also for appropriate small scale new infill development within the settlement boundary. Since the advent of the Neighbourhood Plan (i.e. within the last 18 months), a total of three new dwellings have been created on land adjacent to Brook House; the development of one chalet bungalow into two dwellings on High Lane and the development of a house in Butlers Yard into two dwellings). Of these – two are self-build homes which are encouraged by Local Authorities.

7)  There is therefore no need for further additional housing on any unallocated sites outside the settlement boundary.

8)  The house proposed is far from being a dwelling to satisfy local needs. It is of approx. 240sqm gross internal area (incl garage) which is well over twice the size of a 3Bed 6 Person dwelling of ‘affordable’ criteria.

If permission was granted on this site, the Neighbourhood Plan and its essential policies would be found to be at least questionable and at worst irrelevant within the first 18 months of its adoption. The NP could therefore be considered to be without foundation and all other potential sites within the village could be considered as being appropriate locations for development with the end result that the special character and environment of Broad Chalke becomes irretrievably and permanently eroded. On this basis, any future application for development on this site should be considered to be inappropriate, contrary to established planning policy on several grounds, and be refused.

The Chairman thanked CL for the guidance and information and then asked if there were any further public questions/comments. Mr S Kimber asked that if the application was rejected by Wiltshire Council would the applicant have any right of appeal. CL was able to advise that there would be a right of appeal.

The Chairman invited any comment from Wiltshire Councillor Najjar who advised the meeting that he had been approached by the applicant and had viewed the site. Cllr Najjar felt that it should be a fairly straight forward decision for Wiltshire Council for refusal and that he would not call it in on behalf of the applicant but, if there was an officer approval at Wiltshire Council, he would be inclined to call it in if there was sufficient public view.

The Chairman thanked all contributors to the discussion and opened discussion to the Council members following which a vote was taken with 6 voting to object to the application and 0 in support.

At this point LW, AW and CL withdrew from the meeting.

PL2022/01196 1 Knighton Bridge Cottages.

The Chairman reminded the Council that they had objected to the previous application for a two-storey development on this site. This is a new application for a single storey garage/workshop and guest accommodation. The Chairman declared a nonpecuniary interest in this item.

The Clerk read the notes on the application that CL had been asked to provide to assist the Council in considering this application.

The application lies outside the settlement plan but these cottages pre-date the plan by many decades. Proposals should therefore be considered on their merits and so as not to present harm to the setting.

The revised proposal for the garden store and shed is visually less impactful than the previous proposal, now being single storey. It does have a larger ground floor area, however. The garden store appears to be some 7.5m by 4m (pdf scale – not measured digitally) which seems excessive for a 3 – 4 bed property on a relatively small plot and could be reduced somewhat to be more in keeping with the scale of the cottage and pushed back from the road frontage.

The quality of the materials and detailing is exceptionally high and if the floor plate could be reduced, this would be an attractive addition to the assembly of buildings.

However – the previous application info for a two-storey building, stated that there would be no habitable accommodation at ground floor level to avoid any risk of future flooding. There is now a bedroom situated at GFl level – i.e. a habitable room.

Whilst the nearby flood risk zones lie outside the floor plan, there is risk of higher floods in the future.

If the application was considered for approval, I would recommend that the GFl slab level be set a minimum of 150mm above the highest anticipated flood datum and the flood risk assessment be revisited to demonstrate that this would be possible without raising the building height to an unacceptable level. I would also suggest that the separate bedroom and building not be permitted to be used as a separate air-bnb unit as this would increase the parking and vehicular movement and occupation of the plot beyond its capacity. A section 106 should be required by Wiltshire Council to exclude any separate use of this building by Air BnB or any other type on this site.to ensure this.

The Chairman invited Council views and then asked for a vote in which the Chairman took no part. There were 4 votes objecting to the application, principally around over development of the site and concerns that this becomes a second house on the plot. There was 1 abstention.

**PL/2022/08592 The Willows, Knapp Hill**: No objections.

1. Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 October 2022

These were accepted as a true record.

1. Matters arising.

None that are not delt with elsewhere on the agenda.

1. Report from Wiltshire Councillor Najjar. NJ updated on work being done by Wiltshire Council around cost of living; Warm Places initiative (CR had brought this to the attention of the Hub but they didn’t feel they were a particularly good fit- CR will mention again as there is some funding available); Area Board funding; the highways maintenance contract and the speeding issue in the Chalke Valley.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Najjar for his update and continued support to the Parish.

1. To receive update on Low Lane Project.

The Clerk reported on the meeting he and Ashley Truluck had with Linda Nunn, Chief Executive at the AONB, and the case they had presented for Low Lane. LN had written to the Clerk yesterday setting out a basis for the AONB to fund the shortfall, which is excellent news. There will be links and synergy with AONB initiatives that the village will work in partnership on.

There has also been a commitment to a contribution from the landowner.

The Clerk to update the Contractor and seek feedback from him about scheduling of works which in the current weather and ground conditions needs to be considered carefully, and most likely delayed until the early spring.

AT suggested that the route back to LHFIG should be kept open for now until there is certainty over timings, costs, and funding.

The Chairman wished to formally acknowledge thanks to the AONB and looked forward to working with them

CR to contact the contractor. A Low Lane Project Group meeting to be arranged.

1. To receive update on Councillor Priorities

Cllr Richter raised the matter of maintaining the volunteer database that she has championed in an accessible location and one that is easy to update and link with the voluntary organisations. After discussion it was agreed that the most appropriate place was on the Council’s website. Cllr Richter to pass the existing info to the Clerk to add and Cllr Dawes to look at providing link to the organisations. Needs to be ongoing publicity on the database to make it a working document.

Cllr Dawes to resurrect work on Neighbourhood Watch and to liaise with Inspector Sparrow who had emailed him and the Clerk earlier that day..

Cllr Fry to pick up with the Parish Steward the reports of flooding at Slate Farm, Howgare Road.

1. To discuss the approach to Playground Replacement

This has been a standing item on the agenda for some months pending progress withy raising funding (Special Precept to be discussed at Item 13). In light of change to Area Board funding requirements and capital grants no longer being made to parish councils there is a desire to establish a Friends of Broad Chalke Playground to work with the Council to take this forward. The Clerk is meeting with parents that attend Teddy Bears at the village hall for initial discussion.

1. To discuss insurance cover for the Chalke Valley Sports Centre

Cllr Fry commented that he felt that the rebuild costs were high and this could be reduced. The cost used was the lower quartile point from a desk top exercise on current building costs. It was however agreed to use this value and accept the additional premium of £217.68/an for an insurance level at £450,000.

1. To discuss 2023/24 Budget and setting a Special Precept

The first draft budget had been considered at the October meeting. The Clerk had updated and circulated a revised budget for consideration at this meeting. Amendments took account of an increase in the insurance premium if the Council wished to amend upwards the rebuild costs of the Chalke Valley Sports Centre; and an update to Clerks professional services costs to follow the National Pay award arrangements recently agreed.

In their absence both Cllr T Hitchings and Cllr T Cave-Gibbs had submitted comments to the Clerk and their concerns around raising a special precept at this time given the cost-of-living crisis. The Chairman opened the budget discussion to the Council. There was significant debate around the special precept recognising the need to raise funds for the playground whilst at the same time being conscious of family finances currently.

The Clerk had this week received information from Wiltshire Council on the tax base for Broad Chalke which has changed from 315.94 in 2021/22 to projected to be 324.77.

This means if the budget is accepted with the Special Precept the Band D Council Tax for the Parish would be £52.15. Without the Special Precept it would be £36.75. The current year Band D level is £33.71.

The Chairman asked for a vote on two points:

1. Support for a Special Precept: 5 against; 1 in favour.
2. To agree the budget as set out in the November 2022 Draft circulated, not including the Special Precept: 5 for; 1 abstention.

It was therefore RESOLVED not to levy a Special Precept for 2023/24 and to set the Broad Chalke Precept at £11,937.

1. To discuss Queens Head pub and patrons parking- raised by a Councillor.

Cllr Dawes raised concern about parking in the general vicinity of the Queens Head and the Hub; that it was sometimes difficult to see around the ‘T’ junction from the Causeway due to cars parked; and it was often dangerous with cars parked on the sharp bend either side of the road around to Chalk Pyt from Doves Meadow.

There was significant discussion on this, noting that it is not illegal to park where most of the cars do, although it is illegal to park on a junction; that the number of cars parked can help to slow vehicles down; that it is difficult for large vehicles to swing around the bend; and that cars still come into the village above the 20mph speed limit into this bottle neck. It was also recognised that both the hub and the pub contribute to the volume of parked cars.

It was agreed that the Clerk would write to both organisations to enquire if they had any ideas to improve the situation; and to discuss with the police (although they have previously commented it is not a criminal matter so they would generally not get involved).

1. To receive Clerks Update

Parish Council vacancy - The formal Notice has been published and runs to 17 November. The Clerk has received one firm approach and one tentative approach, and he will talk to both.

Bank Balance: £16,355.54

1. To plan Remembrance Sunday

This is Sunday 13 November 2022. Cllrs Pickford, Carter and Richter volunteered to assist the Clerk in traffic management. The Chairman will be reading the Roll Call and the service will be led by Kate Woolvern.

Ed Gairdner will undertake the Last Post.

There being no further business the Meeting ended at 8.55pm