

Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of the Little Hadham Parish Council **Planning Committee** (2007 – 2011 Session) held on Monday 23rd July 2007 at 8:00 pm in the Village Hall, Little Hadham.

Present:

Mr T Skidmore	Chairman
Mr M Fairchild)
Mr N Darken) Councillors
Mrs C Piccolo)
Mr G Williamson)

Mr B Evans – Clerk, and 0 members of the public.

3.1 **Absent** – Cllr Morris [on holiday] and Cllr Purvis [on holiday].

3.2 **Democratic 10 minutes.** There were no members of the public present

3.3 **Declarations of interest** Cllr Darken said that he had an interest in The Croft, Bury Green as he lived opposite.

3.4 **Planning applications considered by the Council**

3.4.1 1255/07 Ashcroft Farm, Stortford Road. Erection of 3 detached dwellings with change of use of agricultural land to school playing field. Considered by Cllr Skidmore and Cllr Morris.

Cllr Skidmore referred to a draft response circulated to Councillors before the meeting in which the Council objected to the application. The Clerk read the letter to the Council:

The Council objects to this application on three counts – lack of affordable housing, risk of flooding and dangerous access.

Affordable Housing

The Ash area of the Parish of Little Hadham is classed as a Category 2 village in the local plan. This allows small infill developments such as this. The policy on affordable housing states that a development of three or more houses must include a proportion of affordable housing. This proposal not include any affordable housing but instead offers a small area of agricultural land to be added to the playing field of the village school. The cost of this land, valued as agricultural land, would be insignificant compared to the cost of building three large houses. If this application were granted, a very bad precedent would have been set, allowing developers to escape the requirement to provide affordable housing at little cost to themselves. As in all towns and villages in East Herts there is an almost total lack of affordable housing – the initial results of a recent parish survey on affordable housing indicate the need for a small number of affordable houses for rent.

The planning application includes a letter from Mrs Stockley, the Head of the village school, enthusiastically welcoming the potential increase to the school's play area. The Council supports the school and is reluctant to object to a possible increase in its sports field. However Mrs Stockley was under the impression that a much greater area of field was being proposed and was disappointed to see how little was shown in the application. Although welcome, this small patch of field would not significantly add to the school's sports facilities.

Risk of flooding

The site of the proposed development is on the floodplain of the River Ash. The application includes a flood risk assessment based on modelling water flow in the river. However the Council believes that the assumptions on which the modelling is based are flawed. The Ash has overflowed its banks three times in the last ten

years – the last in October 2001 when about 10% of homes in the area were affected and almost half a million pounds worth of damage caused. The frequency of floods and the area affected are both greater than suggested by the flood risk assessment. To build more housing so close to the river seems likely to increase the risk to homes nearby, as the new buildings will impede the flow of floodwater along the valley. The new houses themselves will be at great risk of flooding.

Dangerous access

The development consists of three large houses with double garages and extra standing room for vehicles. The many vehicles from the development would share a drive with an existing house on the site. This drive opens onto the A120 – close to the traffic lights and very close to a bus stop. The A120 is very busy with long queues of traffic either waiting for the lights or fast moving to pass the junction before the lights change again. When the lights are red there is fast moving traffic on the other side of the road going to Bishop's Stortford. In term time there are large numbers of extra vehicles carrying children to the village school. Many children walk to school along the pavement that vehicles from the new houses will have to cross.

Despite the letter from Herts Highways making no objection to the development, the Council believes that the extra traffic would cause an unacceptable increase in the danger and congestion of this very busy junction.

Cllr Morris said that his main concern was the potential flooding risk – he thought the flood risk assessment included in the application was flawed. Cllr Morris thought that the letter addressed his concerns. Cllr Skidmore proposed that the letter be sent as the Council response to the application. Agreed. Cllr Fairchild asked that a copy of the letter be sent to District Councillor Tindale. Agreed.

3.4.2 1313/07 The Gatehouse, Hadham Hall. Internal alterations. Considered by Cllr Skidmore and Cllr Williamson. Cllr Skidmore said the Internal alterations were in sympathy with the listed building. He proposed there be no objection. Agreed.

3.4.3 1308/07 Woodsfield, Stortford Road. Erection of a detached bungalow. Considered by Cllr Skidmore and Cllr Morris. Cllr Skidmore said that this was a single small house so that the matter of affordable housing did not arise. He proposed that there be no objection as the house would have little effect on traffic and was not on the floodplain. Agreed.

3.4.4 1378/07 1 Clinton Hall Cottages, Bury Green. Two-storey rear extension. Considered by Cllr Darken and Cllr Williamson.

Cllr Darken said that the application was for an enlargement of an existing extension to side of the house. He proposed that there be no objection. Agreed

3.4.5 1398/07 Bury Green Farm, Bury Green. Revised garaging and parking layouts for plots 8, 9 and 10. Considered by Cllr Darken and Cllr Williamson.

Cllr Williamson said that the application was for a relatively minor rearrangement of the planned garages at the new houses and they would not be visible from the Green. He proposed that there be no objection. Agreed.

3.4.6 1171/07 The Croft, Bury Green. Single storey 2 bay barn consisting of 1 garaged bay and 1 car port utilising the upper floor for storage – replacing existing. Considered by Cllr Fairchild and Cllr Williamson.

Cllr Fairchild said the application was to demolish an unattractive modern garage to a period thatched cottage. It was to be replaced by a double garage with a similar footprint to the existing. It would have a pitched roof with dormer windows and could have the potential for living accommodation although there was no sewerage facility. The garage would only be seen from the front of the driveway. Cllr Fairchild proposed that there be no objection but that the Council should ask that a condition be applied preventing any future development of the garage as a residential building. Agreed.

- 3.5 **Planning decisions received from EHDC – to note.**
- 3.5.1 0997/07 Hogs Bogg, Acremore Street. First floor front extension. Granted.
- 3.6 **Withdrawn applications – to note**
- 3.6.1 0843/07 Thatched Cottage, The Ford. Replacement double garage.
- 3.6.2 0959/07 Thatched Cottage, The Ford. Demolition of small wooden garage and horse stable. [Listed building consent].
- 3.7 **Any other business**
- 3.7.1 Cllr Skidmore spoke of the planned meeting on 31st July 2007 between Ms Sally Smallwood, an EHDC planning officer and a number of councillors to discuss affordable housing. Some of the topics for discussion included: the categories of The Ash, The Ford and other areas of the parish in the Local Plan; the extent of the affordable housing stock in the parish; which existing houses might count towards the 4 homes for rent identified in the Housing Needs Survey; the status of the new affordable housing being built at Bury Green.
- Cllr Fairchild said that he would like information on how the local housing association worked and how ‘local people’ were identified. He noted that a number of houses in The Smithy and at The Ridgeway were in a very poor state with rubbish in the gardens. This gave affordable housing a bad name and he would like to know how the housing association managed its property.
- Cllr Williamson said that he would like an explanation as to how the conclusions to the housing needs survey were arrived at.
- 3.8 **Date of next meeting – Monday 3rd September 2007.**
- 3.9 **Chairman closed the meeting to the Public and the Press at 8:53 p.m.**