

# Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the ninth meeting of the Little Hadham Parish Council **Planning Committee** (2007 – 2011 Session) held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2008 at 8:00 pm in the Village Hall, Little Hadham.

**Present:**

<b>Mr T Skidmore</b>	<b>Chairman</b>
<b>Mr M Fairchild</b>	)
<b>Mr A Morris</b>	)
<b>Mrs C Piccolo</b>	) <b>Councillors</b>
<b>Mr J Purvis</b>	)
<b>Mr G Williamson</b>	)

Mr B Evans – Clerk, and 11 members of the public.

9.1 **Absent** Cllr Darken – resigned.

9.2 **Declarations of interest** Cllr Fairchild and Cllr Williamson declared prejudicial interests in Ford Hill House, The Ford as they were near neighbours. These councillors left the room when this application was discussed.

9.3 **Democratic 10 minutes.** A resident asked who owned the cottages next to May Cottage, Cradle End. Cllr Mrs Piccolo said that she did not know but she would try to find out.

9.4 **Minutes** of the meeting held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2008 were agreed and signed as a true record.

9.5 **Matters arising**

9.5.1 **Cottages next to May Cottage, Cradle End.** Cllr Mrs Piccolo said she had spoken to Mr Day of EHC Development Control Enforcement. It appeared that two sets of developers were involved with the property. The first set were facing prosecution with a hearing before a magistrate during March 2008. The current set of developers was working with their agent to produce a new schedule of work. Work would proceed if and when this schedule was agreed by Mr Day – timing was far from clear. Cllr Mrs Piccolo said that she thought the two sets of developers were connected in some way.

9.5.2 **Bury Green Farm** Cllr Skidmore said that no planning application had been submitted concerning the redevelopment of the main part of the site.

9.5.3 **Church End Farm** Cllr Fairchild said that he had spoken at the meeting of the EHC Development Control Committee concerning the application to convert redundant farm buildings for B1 and B8 use. He said that he had put forward the Council's concerns about inappropriate development in a rural area and increases in traffic. Cllr Fairchild had said that developments at the farm and at Hadham Water should be considered together and he had asked that a design brief be developed for the area. The committee decided to grant permission for the application as permissions for developments already existed for the site. The committee decided that there were insufficient resources available prepare a design brief.

Cllr Fairchild said that he written to the owners of the farm and Hadham Water inviting them to discuss an informal design brief. He awaited their reply.

9.6 **Local Development Framework rural awareness meeting** – Little Hadham Village Hall, 7:30 p.m. Tuesday 25th March 2008.

Cllr Skidmore said that this concerned new planning system to replace the current EHC Local Plan that runs up to 2010. The new LDF would run up to 2021. Posters round the parish and in the Parish News advertised the meeting. The meeting would include an introduction and explanation by EHC planning people. EHC would like, as part of the consultation the village community's views on a number of questions. What do you like about your village and the rural area? What don't you like about your village and the rural area? What do you think are the issues facing your village and the rural area?

Cllr Skidmore proposed that councillors note and support the meeting on the 25th March 08. Agreed.

- 9.7 **Housing Capacity Assessment consultation.** Cllr Purvis said that the assessment was of urban capacity and urban potential – it was looking for possible infill sites. No sites had been identified in Little Hadham though there were a number of sites at The Ash and The Ford that had been proposed and rejected in the past. These sites might be put forward again. Cllr Purvis said that the assessment would feed into the core strategy for the county. He said that he would ask at the LDF meeting how the assessment related to the LDF consultation.

- 9.8 **Validation of Planning Applications and the National Standard Application Form** consultation.

Cllr Skidmore said this concerned Government district council local government changes that were aimed at improving the planning service. The planning application form had already been changed in Nov 07 and further changes were planned in April 08. Cllr Skidmore said that the people who will be most affected by the changes to the planning applications were those submitting planning applications. It was claimed that it would be easier to submit a planning application, and for applications to be processed through the approval system. Cllr Skidmore said that at parish council level there should be better quality and more detailed applications to look at. He said he had spoken to Mr Paul Burt, EHC Business Manager Development Control, who assured him that the Council did not need to respond to the consultation other than to note the planned improvements in the planning application service.

Cllr Skidmore proposed that the Council note the report. Agreed.

- 9.9 **Planning applications considered by the Council**

- 9.9.1 0105/08 Ashcroft Farm, Stortford Road. Erection of three detached residential dwellings together with change of use of agricultural land to school playing field (revised scheme). Considered by Cllr Skidmore and Cllr Morris.

Cllr Morris said that the application was very similar to one that had been refused. The new application did not include affordable housing and he thought that the flooding assessment was still flawed and that access was dangerous. Cllr Skidmore referred to a draft letter prepared by the Clerk and previously circulated to councillors, objecting to the application [enclosed]. He proposed that the letter be sent as the Council's response to the application. Agreed.

- 9.9.2 **0234/08** Lower Farm, Bury Green. Alterations to existing consented scheme ref. 3/05/1956. Considered by Cllr Skidmore and Cllr Mrs Piccolo.

Cllr Skidmore said it was a well executed barn conversion. A recreational area was to be changed to residential. He proposed that there be no objection. Agreed.

- 9.9.3 0318/08 Ford Hill House, The Ford. First floor extension. Considered by Cllr Skidmore and Cllr Mrs Piccolo.

Cllr Skidmore said this was a resubmission of a refused application. The Council had not objected to the original application that had been refused by reason of its size, form and design being out of keeping with a conservation area. Cllr Skidmore said that in the new application the roof had been lowered but its elevated position still made it prominent. He thought the Council should object. Cllr Morris asked why the Council should change its mind. Cllr Mrs Piccolo said the Council should follow EHC guidance. Cllr Purvis said that as the Council had not objected to plans for a larger development it would be illogical to object now. He proposed that there be no objection. Agreed.

- 9.10 **Planning decisions received from EHC – to note.**

- 9.10.1 2413/07 2 The Gatehouse, Hadham Hall. Internal alterations to provide WC and shower facilities at ground floor level, relocation of staircase, replace oak panelled door under archway with glazed sections, lower level of the ground floor at eastern end of building and provide mezzanine level above. Listed building consent granted.

- 9.10.2 2638/07 The Thatched Cottage, Green Street. Demolish stables and garage and build new garage with new fencing to boundary. Granted.
- 9.10.3 2642/07 Toad Cottage, Hadham Hall. Second floor dormer window to north elevation and erection of cloakroom on south elevation (amendments to approved scheme 3/03/1909/FP). Granted.
- 9.10.4 2560/07 Church End Farm, Church End. Change of use of two buildings from agricultural use to B1 and B8 use. Granted.
- 9.10.5 2606/07 Ivy Farm, Cradle End. Garage extension. Refused.
- 9.11 **Date of next meeting – Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008.**
- 9.12 **Chairman closed the meeting to the Public and the Press at 8:46 p.m.**

## **9.91 Letter of objection**

### **Re. Ashcroft Farm, Stortford Road, Little Hadham**

This application was discussed at a meeting of the Council on Tuesday 4th March 2008.

This application seems to have few significant changes compared to application 3/07/1255/FP/LH that was refused by EHC. 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 does 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 available affordable housing in Little Hadham – the initial results of a recent parish survey on affordable housing in Little Haddam indicate the need for a small number of affordable houses for rent. The new application shows a 50% increase in the area of land being offered to the school. However, the planning office informs the Council that the land on offer has been reduced to the area stated in the original application.

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 the 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 most 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 and from 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. The vehicles crossing the pavement into the heavy traffic will be a very significant danger to children walking to and from school.