

Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the sixteenth meeting of the Little Hadham Parish Council **Planning Committee** (2007 – 2011 Session) held on Tuesday 4th November 2008 at 8:00 pm in the Village Hall, Little Hadham.

Present:

Mr A Morris	Chairman
Mr M Fairchild)
Mrs C Piccolo) Councillors
Mr T Skidmore)
Mr J Purvis)

Mr B Evans – Clerk, and 7 members of the public including PC Tracy Fegan and PCSO Lauren Howell of the local police and District Cllr Michael Tindale.

16.1 Absent Cllr Mrs Wilkinson [family matter] and Cllr Williamson [attending a work training course].

16.2 Declarations of interest. Cllr Fairchild declared a prejudicial interest in Ford Hill House as he was a near neighbour.

16.3 Democratic 10 minutes.
There were no comments.

16.4 Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 7th October 2008 were agreed and signed as a true record.

16.5 Matters arising

16.5.1 Cottages next to May Cottage, Cradle End. Cllr Mrs Piccolo said that work was progressing on the site with some work being done on the roof. She had asked Ms Hill of the planning office to send a copy of the latest consent notice but it had yet to arrive.

16.5.2 The future of Bury Green Farm excluding the major developed site – including the Millennium Wood, the cricket field, the polo pitch and the rest of the farm. Cllr Mrs Piccolo presented the draft of a letter to Romehold [Appendix 1] expressing the wish that the Millennium Wood continue to be available for local people to use into the future. The Chairman suggested developing the ‘wish list’ to include such matters as access to the Wood for village events and continued access to other areas of land owned by Romehold. Cllr Mrs Piccolo said that she would amend accordingly, ask local residents to sign the letter if they were in agreement and proposed that the revised letter be sent under the Council’s name. The Cricket Club would be urged to make its own representations to Romehold. Agreed.

16.5.3 The granting of planning permission for a garden shed for Ford Hill House, The Ford. Cllr Skidmore said the Council had protested that its objections to this development had not been taken into consideration by EHC. The Council had made its point, the shed had been built and the planning consent could not be revoked. He proposed no further action. Agreed.

16.5.4 EHC Local Development Framework. Cllr Skidmore said it was a complex project that would replace the EHC Local Plan, of April 2007, in 2010/2011. He said he did not yet have all the information needed to give the Council a proper report. EHC were talking about a consultation in the summer of 2009, when all the options for the new plan would be taken into consideration. Cllr Skidmore said that the question of possible development sites in Little Hadham was very much a “Technical Study” and the Council would have the opportunity to register its views on this before the summer 2009 consultation. He said that he would present a paper for the Council to consider at the December meeting.

16.6 EHC Draft Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation – Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Cllr Skidmore said the draft document has been produced by EHC for consultation as part of a series of supplements to the current East Herts Local Plan. The SPD set out the EHC approach to the provision of open space, sport and recreation in conjunction with new housing development. The document would assist developers in preparing planning applications. Cllr Skidmore said that EHC owned/managed 120 open spaces including village greens, formal gardens, woodland naturalised areas and 40 parks. The council's five main parks included Castle Grounds, and Grange Paddocks in Bishops Stortford. At the local level – not part of the EHC managed sites – the Council had recently reequipped two playing fields at the Village Hall and the Ridgeway and was working to preserve the Millennium Wood in Bury Green and local footpaths. Cllr Skidmore proposed that the Council should support the EHC SDP on Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation. Agreed.

16.7 Planning applications considered by the Council

16.7.1 1727/08 Briar Wood, Pigs Green, Westland Green. Provision of lighting columns to serve existing tennis court. Considered by Cllr Skidmore and Cllr Purvis. Cllr Purvis proposed there be no objection. Agreed.

16.7.2 1745/08 Ashcroft Farm, Stortford Road. Erection of 2 detached and 1 semi-detached market dwellings and 1 semi-detached affordable dwelling. Considered by Cllr Morris and Cllr Skidmore.

Cllr Morris said that this was the third application for the site. He presented a draft letter of objection, previously circulated [Appendix 2], and proposed that it be sent in the Council's name. Agreed. Cllr Morris asked the Clerk to send a copy to the Environment Agency.

16.8 Date of next meeting – Tuesday 2nd December 2008.

16.9 Chairman closed the meeting to the Public and the Press at 8:25 p.m.

Appendix 1 Letter to Romehold concerning the Millennium Wood

Re. Millennium Wood – Bury Green

I am writing on behalf of the Council and the residents of Bury Green in connection with my recent conversations with you regarding the future use of the Millennium Wood, Bury Green.

We thank you for the opportunity to express the wish of the community of Little Hadham to have continued use of the Millennium Wood for the present time and beyond 2010. We have enjoyed the use of the wood and are grateful that Mr Roat has agreed to the community's continued use for the foreseeable future.

We fully understand that Romehold is not able to make any long-term written commitment to the community regarding the use of the wood, however Mr Roat has acknowledged our wishes and feelings and has confirmed these will be made known to any future owner/s of the site.

Attached please find a list of signatures, all these villagers express a wish to have continued use of the Millennium Wood for many years beyond 2010.

Appendix 2 Letter to EHC

Re. Planning application 3/08/1745/FP/EH Ashcroft Farm, Stortford Road, Little Hadham

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

This application, unlike two earlier applications, includes one affordable home. The Council objects to this application on three counts – the dominant size of the largest house, the risk of flooding and dangerous access.

Size of the largest house

A reason given by EHC for refusing the two earlier applications was that the housing “would be unduly dominant and conspicuous within the rural area, being detrimental to the visual amenity of the area.” Although some of the houses have been slightly reduced in size, the largest house is still very large and will dominate the area for the existing residents.

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 Flood Risk

Assessment report produced by ATPEC Environment Agency, ref E/2005/013499-1/1, is incorrect in its calculation of flood levels. The Environment Agency did not question the calculations within the report and used it as the basis for giving the development the go ahead.

The model produced in the report gives the '100 year + 20% for climate change' flood contour as 68.30m when entering the property from the North. The enclosed photograph of the most recent serious flooding was taken on the 21st October 2001 and was published in the Observer dated 1st November 2001. If the photograph is compared with the contour map included in the flood risk assessment, the extent of the water in that event was to the 68.40m contour. Assuming that this flood was a 1 in 20 year event then, as the difference in contours for the modelling is $68.13 - 67.76 = 0.37\text{m}$ between the 20 year and '100 year + 20% climate change', then it must be assumed that a more realistic estimate of the '100 year + 20% for climate change' would produce a contour level of $68.40 + 0.37 = 68.77\text{m}$. Using this value the whole site would be covered with floodwater even with the proposed levelling alterations to the site. Therefore the planned development needs be moved above the 68.77m contour to keep it out of the floodplain. The maximum flood contour level will be even higher than this due to the removal of part of the flood plain due to new buildings. The Council seeks assurance that the planning office will clarify this matter with the Environment Agency. 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.

Dangerous access

The development consists of three large houses and a small affordable home, some 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.

Land for the school

The two previous applications included an offer of a parcel of land for the village school to compensate for the lack of affordable housing. Although this application does include an affordable house the Council would like to see the offer of land reinstated. If the application does receive consent there would at least be some planning gain for the local community.

Photograph of 21st October 2001 flood from Herts & Essex Observer dated 1st November 2001

