

Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the eighteenth meeting of the Little Hadham Parish Council **Planning Committee** (2007 – 2011 Session) held on Tuesday 3rd February 2009 at 8:00 pm in the Village Hall, Little Hadham.

Present:

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

Mr B Evans – Clerk, and **18** members of the public.

Before the meeting Mr Derek Turner of the Countryside Management Service talked about the Parish Paths Partnership [P3]. He said P3 worked to improve the quality and accessibility of footpaths. This would encourage enjoyment of the countryside, help improve residents' health and help landowners by marking paths clearly. Mr Turner said that most surrounding parishes were involved. About £1,000 a year would be available to improve paths within the parish. Work might be carried out by contractors but would often involve local volunteers. Cllr Fairchild said that the Council would discuss the matter later in the meeting.

18.1 Democratic 10 minutes.

A resident thanked Cllrs Morris and Piccolo for help in finding out about planning applications. He asked if the Council had a policy about developments in a conservation area and whether the Council took professional advice on planning applications. Cllr Morris said that there was no specific policy and the Council did not seek professional advice though it did seek advice from the planning office. Cllr Skidmore referred to the EHC Local Plan and noted that all the applications for The Ford were technically permissible under the plan.

A resident said there should be a presumption of no development in a conservation area. A resident said that, although Elfering Bank was not listed, listed buildings surrounded it. Cllr Fairchild said the Council tried to apply common sense and the planning rules. He reminded people that the Council had no powers to approve or refuse planning applications.

A resident asked what was the Council's view on building new houses in conservation areas. The Chairman said the Council considered each application on its merits. Two councillors considered each application and if they thought it appropriate they would draft a letter detailing any objections for the Council to consider.

A resident said the existing bank between Elfering Bank and one of the fields he owned was very steep. The new plans showed this being made steeper and so very likely to collapse. He also noted that the new house at Ford Hill House would be built over a drain that carried water away from the road and this should not be blocked.

A resident asked if the Council usually spoke to property owners making planning applications. Cllr Morris said they did not.

A resident said that the view of hedgerows along the bridle path by the Ash should be preserved and a 1.8m wall should not be built in front of Ashdene.

A resident complained that there would be an increase in light pollution from the enlarged Elfering Bank.

18.2 Absent None.

- 18.3 Declarations of interest.** Cllr Fairchild declared a prejudicial interest in Elfering Bank, and Ford Hill House as he was a near neighbour. Cllr Williamson declared a prejudicial interest in Ford Hill House as he was a near neighbour and Ashdene as he knew the owner. The councillors left the room when these were discussed. Cllr Mrs Piccolo declared an interest in Corner House though she noted the application had already been granted.
- 18.4 Minutes** of the meeting held on Tuesday 2nd December 2008 were agreed and signed as a true record.
- 18.5 Matters arising**
- 18.5.1 Advertising signs on the A120 verge near Church End Lane.** Cllr Morris said that he had spoken to Mr Mark Collins who was responsible for the farm but not to Mr David Collins who was responsible for the factory units. A ‘for sale’ sign had been removed and he understood that the Collins were working toward having just one sign. The ‘A’ signs were the responsibility of the verge landowners who he thought was Herts Highways.
- 18.5.2 EHC Local Development Framework.** Cllr Skidmore presented a briefing paper [appendix 1]. Cllr Fairchild asked if the recent housing survey would suffice to show local housing need. Cllr Skidmore said this was unlikely, as the survey had only concerned the need for affordable housing. Cllr Morris said he was worried that the Cat 2 status for much of the parish might be lost.
- 18.6 Planning applications considered by the Council**
- 18.6.1** 1973/08 Harley House, Westland Green. Demolition of 2 existing outbuildings and erection of a detached replacement outbuilding. Considered by Cllr Morris and Cllr Mrs Wilkinson. Cllr Morris proposed there be no objection. Agreed.
- 18.6.2** 2018/08 Little Hadham School, Stortford Road. Single storey rear extension. Considered by Cllr Morris and Cllr Mrs Piccolo. Cllr Morris proposed there be no objection. Agreed.
- 18.6.3** 2070/08 Ford House, The Ford. Change of use from short term lets to permanent residential use. Considered by Cllr Morris and Cllr Williamson. Cllr Morris proposed there be no objection. Agreed.
- 18.6.4** 2071/08 Corner House, Cradle End. Single storey rear infill extension. Considered by Cllr Morris and Cllr Skidmore. Cllr Morris proposed there be no objection. Agreed.
- 18.6.5** 2067/08 Willowgate, 3 Baud Close, Hadham Hall. Garden Room. Considered by Cllr Morris and Cllr Skidmore. Cllr Morris proposed there be no objection. Agreed.
- 18.6.6** 0033/09 Hadham Park, Hadham Road. Change of use of land to residential curtilage, erection of cartshed parking and erection of new section of garden wall. Considered by Cllr Morris and Cllr Skidmore. Cllr Morris proposed there be no objection. Agreed.
- 18.6.7** 2023/08 Elfering Bank, The Ford. Extension to existing bungalow and conversion of the enlarged roof space. Erection of cart-lodge. Considered by Cllr Morris and Cllr Mrs Piccolo.
- 18.6.8** 2022/08 & 2021/08 Elfering Bank, The Ford. Demolition of existing bungalow. Construction of replacement dwelling and cart lodge. Considered by Cllr Morris and Cllr Mrs Piccolo. Cllr Morris read a draft letter of objection to the three applications for Elfering Bank [appendix 2]. He proposed that the letter be sent to EHC in the Council’s name. Agreed.
- 18.6.9** 2094/08 Ford Hill House, The Ford. Proposed new detached house. Considered by Cllr Morris and Cllr Skidmore. Cllr Morris read a draft letter of objection to the application [appendix 3]. Cllr Mrs Piccolo asked that mention be made of the loss of trees and hedges

if the house were to be built. Cllr Morris proposed that the letter be sent to EHC in the Council's name with the amendment suggested by Cllr Mrs Piccolo. Agreed.

- 18.6.10** 2095/08 Ford Hill House, The Ford. Proposed barn conversion and extension to barn to form separate dwelling – amendments to planning approval ref. 3/07/1538/FP. Listed building consent to rebuild northern wall to barn. Considered by Cllr Morris and Cllr Skidmore. Cllr Morris proposed there be no objection. Agreed.
- 18.6.11** 0083/08 Ashdene, The Ford. 1.8 metre front garden wall. Considered by Cllr Morris and Cllr Skidmore. Cllr Morris read a draft letter of objection to the application [appendix 4]. He proposed that the letter be sent to EHC in the Council's name. Agreed.
- 18.7 Planning decisions received from EHC – to note.**
- 18.7.1** 1745/08 Ashcroft Farm, Stortford Road. Erection of 2 detached and 1 semi-detached market dwellings and 1 semi-detached affordable dwelling. Granted.
- 18.7.2** 1827/08 Junction A120, Cradle End. Residential signboard. Granted.
- 18.7.3** 1887/08 The Bungalow, New Road. Proposed porch, front dormer window and rear balcony. Granted.
- 18.7.4** 1903/08 Sunfield, Bromley Lane, Wellpond Green. Retrospective application for amendments to existing approval, ref. 3/07/1574/FP, for rebuilding of existing substandard workshop / games room. Granted.
- 18.7.5** 1973/08 Harley House, Westland Green. Demolition of 2 existing outbuildings and erection of a detached replacement outbuilding. Refused.
- 18.7.6** 2071/08 Corner House, Cradle End. Single storey rear infill extension. Granted.
- 18.7.7** 2018/08 Little Hadham Primary School, Stortford Road. Single storey rear extension. Granted.
- 18.7.8** 2070/08 Ford House, The Ford. Change of use from short term lets to permanent residential use. Granted.
- 18.8 Planning applications in conservation areas.** Perceived changes to planning rules. Cllr Fairchild read a paper describing how he thought conservation areas in the parish were under threat from numerous planning decisions [appendix 5]. Cllr Morris said the Parish Plan included statements on the future of the parish and he understood that these could be adopted by EHC. Cllr Fairchild said that EHC had failed to adopt the policies included in plans from other parishes. He said the parish needed to give a clear statement that the essential rural nature of Little Hadham should be preserved. Cllr Skidmore said that EHC would likely say that it was rewriting the local plan as the LDF and that there were too many parishes to hear presentations from all of them. Cllr Fairchild proposed that he should prepare a document to be sent to the Development Control Committee and the planning department. Agreed.
- 18.9 Date of next meeting – Tuesday 3rd March 2009.**
- 18.10 Chairman closed the meeting to the Public and the Press at 9:24 p.m.**

Appendix 1 Briefing paper on EHC Local Development Framework by Cllr Skidmore

East Herts Council (EHC) Local Development Framework (LDF)

1. At our Dec 08 LHPC meeting I committed to bring this back and report progress, particularly regarding the “Call for Sites” where developers or land owners may be suggesting sites as potential areas for Housing or other development.
2. EHC have issued LDF Bulletin No 2 (Winter 2008/09) – copy attached. Key points to note from this Bulletin, plus updates from EHC Policy Planning Officers -
 - a. “Call for Sites” will go out March 2009. EHC currently have some 50 expressions of interest, which may/or not convert into serious proposals for development.
 - b. The current local plan will remain as the adopted local plan, which means that LH is still a Category 2 Village (Hadham Ford and Little Hadham the Ash) where only” infill housing development may be permitted”. These current arrangements will remain in place until replaced by the new LDF 2010/2011 – which will then run for 15years.
 - c. The LDF will include a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). This will look at Housing Needs Surveys, this study is being done on a sub-regional basis – including East Herts, Broxbourne, Harlow, Epping Forest, Brentwood and Uttlesford.
 - d. A Question - when the new LDF is in place (2010/11) will we still retain our Category 2 Village status? The answer is we don’t know at this stage but whatever comes out of “Issues and Options” /”Preferred Options” will be subject to a full public consultation.
 - e. Core Strategy – Timetable:
 Call for Sites – March 2009
 Issues and Options -Consultation Autumn 2009.
 Preferred Options – Summer 09
 Presubmission consultation – Summer 09

Comments and Recommendations

3. LHPC will continue to monitor the key stages in the LDF development process: particularly the “call for sites” as affecting Little Hadham when this goes out in March 09.
4. We may not like how this appears to be going? But we have nothing specific to object to until we see what is contained in the “Issues and Options” consultation Autumn 09. We may get some earlier information as “call for sites” becomes clearer including , any possible sites in Little Hadham.
5. Councillors to note this report, and agree that we continue to report and monitor.

Appendix 2 – Letter of objection to planning applications for Elfering Bank

Re. Planning applications 3/08/2023/FP/NB, 3/08/2022/LC/NB and 3/08/2021/FP/NB Elfering Bank, The Ford, Little Hadham

These applications were discussed at a meeting of the Council on Tuesday 3rd February 2009.

The first application plans to make extensive additions to the existing house while the second two plan to demolish the existing and build a new house. Both schemes would result in properties of similar size and design so this letter addresses all the applications.

The Council objects to these applications on the grounds:

Elfering Bank is on an elevated plot in a conservation area. Any change of size or character would have more impact on its surrounding than usual. The proposed change of size and appearance by reason of its position would be detrimental to the character of the area and contrary to policy ENV1, ENV5 and BH6 of the East Herts Local Plan. The proposed plans would result in a building that would be too dominant in relation to neighbouring properties and this area of the village in general, and would encroach on the privacy of nearby residents.

The CAD model drawings in the application give a very misleading indication of space round the building. The building is in fact in a very tight fit amongst the earth bank and the neighbouring property of Stumbledon which, under the proposals, would be overshadowed to a much greater extent than at present.

The demolition of a building in a conservation area should not be allowed, unless it cannot be repaired. The existing house should be altered and not demolished provided the alterations do not significantly increase the height and bulk of the building.

In the design brief it was noted that a meeting was held with neighbours and that the neighbours were “reassured by the changes to the scheme since the 2007 design”. This is a misleading representation of the meeting according to the parties present.

Appendix 3 – Letter of objection to planning applications for a new house at Ford Hill House

Re. Planning application for a proposed New Detached House Ford Hill House 3/08/2094/FP

This Planning Application was considered at the Council meeting on the 3rd February 2009.

This latest application at Ford Hill house is in addition to the recently approved large shed in the SW corner of this site, and the refurbishment of the Thatched Barn, and conversion to a dwelling/dwellings. We consider this to be overdevelopment in a Conservation area that fronts a narrow winding lane (Ford Hill).

The developments currently underway at this site have involved the loss of several mature trees and hedges. Construction of a new house will inevitably result in the loss of more trees and hedge. This will have a significant detrimental effect on the visual aspect of this conservation area.

Ford Hill is currently used as a “Rat Run” from Cradle End and Bury Green to relieve traffic queuing problems at the A120 Little Hadham traffic lights, and as a short cut from Bishop’s Stortford to Much Hadham. This lane is very narrow, and there are already problems for passing traffic. Adding an additional new house, together with the Thatched Barn conversion, will add parking problems, with traffic inevitably parking in this narrow road.

This Council Objects to this application

1. On the grounds of overdevelopment in a conservation area and in the grounds of a grade II listed building with the demolition of a historic thatched storehouse.

2. The off road parking provision is not considered adequate for the three properties to be served. Adding increased on-road parking on Ford Hill, which is a narrow and at times busy road. The proposed house would front directly onto this busy and narrow road, and present a hazard to residents coming out of their properties and to passing traffic.
3. Loss of trees will have a detrimental effect of the visual aspect of Ford Hill in the conservation area.

Appendix 4 – Letter of objection to planning applications for a new garden wall at Ashdene

Re. Planning application 3/09/0083/FP Ashdene, The Ford, Little Hadham. 1.8 metre front garden wall.

This planning application was discussed at the Council meeting on Tuesday 3rd February 2009.

Ashdene is on a rural bridle path by the side of the river Ash near the centre of a conservation area.

The Council objects to this application on the grounds:

1. The height and design of the wall and gate are not in keeping with other boundaries in the area. This is necessary to preserve the character of the conservation area.
2. Removal of the hedge would alter the rural setting and remove a feature that provides some screening to the existing garage.

Appendix 5 – Paper concerning Planning applications in conservation areas – Cllr Fairchild.

I've put this item on the agenda because I believe the essential 'rural village' nature of Little Hadham is under threat from a whole bunch of planning applications and recent planning approvals: the establishment of a trading estate at Church End, the Ashcroft Farm development, completed or proposed conversions of bungalows into houses (Chapel Lane, Albury Road; Ashdene and Elfering Bank at The Ford), and applications for a new-build in Ford Hill and a wall at Ashdene that would look appropriate in Hampstead.

The current planning category status for different parts of the village will be reviewed under the Local Development Framework (LDF) and that increases the risk of a further slide into urbanisation.

On the other hand, we have to be realistic. As the Parish Plan says, "... overall, there is a wish to preserve the essential character of Little Hadham while recognising that we have to move with the times". We must also recognise that planning authorities will be under increasing pressure from government for more housing, and what we may be seeing is an easing of planning restrictions with that in mind.

There are a number of possible actions: take a stand now and ask to address EHC's development control committee (thus firing a shot across their bows in respect of the LDF), creating our own development criteria to be enshrined in the next parish plan and ask EHC to adopt it (in the spirit of the Government's claimed support to increase grass roots empowerment), wait for the result of the 'call for sites' under the LDF to gauge the scale of threat.

This is a big and long-running issue and there will not be time to discuss it in depth but I would like to raise it and at least agree how we move forward.