

# Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the twenty-fifth meeting of the Little Hadham Parish Council **Planning Committee** (2007 – 2011 Session) held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2009 at 8:00 pm in the Village Hall, Little Hadham.

**Present:**

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

Mr B Evans – Clerk, and 7 members of the public.

## 25.1 Democratic 10 minutes.

A resident was surprised to see Ashcroft Farm on sale so soon after planning permission for new houses had been granted. Cllr Skidmore said that he understood that the owner had received a number of enquiries but that he intended to proceed with the development himself.

A resident noted that a local landowner had suggested 200Ha as suitable for housing in the EHC ‘Call for Sites’. He said that this was the first he had heard about this. Cllr Morris said that anyone could suggest any site even if they did not own it. All suggestions would be examined by EHC before putting those that conformed to the Local Development Framework forward for consultation.

**25.2 Absent** Cllr Mrs Wilkinson [attending meeting with local police on behalf of the Council] and Cllr Williamson [holiday].

**25.3 Declarations of interest.** None.

**25.4 Minutes** of the meeting held on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009 were agreed and signed as a true record.

**25.5 Matters arising.** None.

**25.6 Review of how the Council considers planning applications.** Cllr Fairchild said that considering planning applications was one of the most important roles of the Council. Councillors were not professional planners and relied on applying common sense, a working knowledge of planning rules and sensitivity to the local environment, especially Conservation Areas. Planning matters were becoming more controversial and of greater significance because of regional development planning and the push for more housing, especially affordable. The Council had no decision-making role but could object or make comments for EHC to consider. Normally the Planning Committee was given reasonable time to consider applications but occasionally (especially in August), an extraordinary meeting might be required. In the light of this, he proposed that councillors accept the need for a more disciplined approach: Except in the case of minor alterations, councillors should attempt to (a) visit each site and (b) discuss the plans with both the property owners and affected neighbours. Advice would be sought from EHC planners when necessary. Two councillors would consider each application. In the event of needing to inform other members of the Planning Committee or to consult, for instance, on a potentially controversial application, they should do so if possible five working days before the planning meeting. The two councillors would complete the revised planning application form circulated by the Clerk. In the case of applications involving affordable housing, the over-riding priority was to make available housing for rent and that local families and their dependents would have first refusal. Agreed.

**25.7 Planning application for a number of houses at Ashcroft Farm.**

Cllr Skidmore said the owner of Ashcroft Farm had been granted planning permission for three market-price houses and two affordable houses. This was subject to EHC's agreement to the terms on which the affordable homes were offered, including their assignment to an approved housing association and the structure of the rental agreement. The Parish Council had been asked to consider a variation under which the owner would donate a parcel of land to Little Hadham School provided he was granted permission for the two affordable homes to be made available on a shared ownership basis under which the occupier would buy a percentage of the house and rent the remainder. The Council was trying to confirm with East Herts Council that there were residents of Little Hadham on the current waiting list. The likelihood was that they would only be able to afford to take up a tenancy if the property was offered totally for rent. He said that the Council supported the provision of affordable homes for rental and considered that priority should be given to local families and their dependents. This was in accordance with the majority view expressed in the Little Hadham Parish Plan, published in 2006. The housing survey carried out in conjunction with EHC subsequent to the Parish Plan confirmed the need for four affordable housing units for rent. EHC had stated that residents needing accommodation would be given first refusal of affordable homes in the parish. While the Council accepted that additional playing field space at the school would be highly desirable, it should not take precedence over the provision of affordable homes for rent to be offered, in the first instance, to local residents.

Cllr Skidmore proposed that in considering planning applications involving affordable housing, the Council give priority to affordable homes for rent as long as there were Little Hadham residents or their dependents on the housing waiting list. The Council would ask East Herts Council to offer affordable homes in Little Hadham to local families or their dependents in the first instance. Agreed.

**25.8 EHC Parish and Town Council planning information sessions.** Cllr Morris said that he expected to attend the meeting that concerned future planning policy.

**25.9 Planning applications considered by the Council**

- 25.9.1** 1030/09 6, The Grove, Bury Green. Single storey rear extension, two storey side extension, 1 metre front extension to integral garage and front canopy. Considered by Cllr Morris and Cllr Mrs Piccolo. Cllr Morris proposed there be no objection. Agreed.
- 25.9.2** 1269/09 The Thatched Cottage, Green Street. Replacement of existing windows at ground & first floor level in the front elevation. Replacement of existing external doors in eastern elevation. Insertion of new window at ground floor in western elevation. Considered by Cllr Morris and Cllr Mrs Piccolo. Cllr Morris proposed there be no objection. Agreed.
- 25.9.3** 1284/09 The Thatched Cottage, Green Street. Alterations including additional dormer window and re-thatching in reed to match original. Considered by Cllr Morris and Cllr Mrs Piccolo. Cllr Morris proposed there be no objection. Agreed.
- 25.9.4** 1351/09 Old Green Street Farm House, Green Street. Conversion of north barn to form a three bedroom residential dwelling. Considered by Cllr Morris and Cllr Mrs Piccolo.  
 1352/09 Old Green Street Farm House, Green Street. Conversion of north barn to form a three bedroom residential dwelling. Considered by Cllr Morris and Cllr Mrs Piccolo.  
 1362/09 Old Green Street Farm House, Green Street. Conversion of south barn to form ancillary living accommodation. Considered by Cllr Morris and Cllr Mrs Piccolo.  
 1363/09 Old Green Street Farm House, Green Street. Conversion of south barn to form ancillary living accommodation with a mezzanine floor. Considered by Cllr Morris and Cllr Mrs Piccolo.
- Cllr Morris said that he and Cllr Mrs Piccolo had spoken to the owners and neighbours. Cllr Mrs Piccolo said neighbours were concerned about the risk of flooding. Cllr Morris

proposed that a letter of objection that had been previously circulated should be sent from the Council [Appendix 1]. Agreed. Cllr Purvis expressed some reservations as the matter was important to the owners – he had not visited the sight.

**25.9.5** 1520/09 Bushes Croft, Cradle End. Amended proposal for part two storey and part single storey extension to private dwelling house and alterations to external materials including improvements to dormer windows. Considered by Cllr Morris and Cllr Mrs Piccolo. Cllr Mrs Piccolo proposed that there be no objection but that a letter be sent asking that the large Horse chestnut tree at the front of the site be protected. Agreed.

## **25.10 Planning decisions received from EHC**

**25.10.1** 1075/09 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, create internal lobby and replace main entrance door in south elevation. Granted.

**25.10.2** 1118/09 Ashdene, The Ford. Proposed garden wall with gate. Refused.

**25.10.3** 1119/09 Ashdene, The Ford. Proposed store extension to existing garage. Refused.

**25.10.4** 1127/09 Hillside Cottage, The Ford. Replacement of rear extension ground floor from plain tiles to welsh slate. Granted.

**25.10.5** 1220/09 Hillside Cottage, The Ford. Minor internal partition removal and external window/door alteration. Enlargement and alteration to two existing dormer windows on rear elevation. Granted.

## **25.11 Notification of appeal**

**25.11.1** Cllr Fairchild proposed that a letter concerning planning applications for Elfering Bank, the Ford, previously circulated to councillors [Appendix 2], be sent to the Appeal Inspector. Agreed

**25.12 Date of next meeting – Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2009.**

**25.13 Chairman closed the meeting to the Public and the Press at 8:37 p.m.**

## **Appendix 1 Letter concerning planning applications for Old Green Street Farmhouse.**

Dear Ms Morley

**1351/09 & 1352/09 Old Green Street Farm House, Green Street. Conversion of north barn to form a three bedroom residential dwelling.**

**1362/09 1363/09 Old Green Street Farm House, Green Street. Conversion of south barn to form ancillary living accommodation.**

These planning applications were discussed at the Council meeting on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

Old Green Street Farm is in the small rural hamlet of Green Street next to a single-track road. The single-track road is the only access to the hamlet of Green Street.

### **The Council objects to this application on the grounds:**

1. Creation of residential buildings in area beyond green belt.
  - Extra traffic that would be created on a single lane road.
  - Extra water discharge into water system, which is prone to flooding.
2. Change of use of two buildings from historic barns to residential, we believe they should be restored to their original state.

3. The roofs proposed are slate/clay. Currently the roofs are thatched, we believe that as this is a listed site the roofs should be renovated to their original appearance.

## **Appendix 2 Appeal following refusal of planning applications for Elfering Bank, The Ford.**

Dear Sir or Madam

### **Re. Elfering Bank, Little Hadham: APP/J1915/A/09/2110455/WF**

This Council submitted objections to the original application in a letter to East Herts Council on 4 February 2009. We understand that those objections, which we wish to reiterate, will be considered by the Inspector. We also wish to comment on the grounds for appeal against refusal submitted by John Ready Architects (JRA).

In their appeal letter, JRA assert that at the Parish Council meeting in February 2009, inaccurate statements were made and that the agenda was dominated by 'emotional assertion rather than reasoned discussion'. In the open forum session at the start of the meeting, when members of the public and interested parties are entitled to comment on agenda items, several perfectly valid points were made, especially about development in a Conservation Area. Any 'emotion' that was present at the meeting reflected the strength of feeling held by residents opposed to such development.

In a paper prepared by the two councillors who considered the application, specific grounds for objection were listed for consideration by our planning committee including the dominance of the development and its detrimental impact on the character of the area, and we cited the planning policies we believed they contravened. The paper also highlighted what were felt to be misleading drawings and a misleading interpretation of a meeting with residents.

It would have been possible for the owners of Elfering Bank or JRA as their representatives to have attended the meeting and spoken in the open forum. They did not do so.

We believe the Council provided a reasonable forum for all sides to air their views and that we came to a view based on planning grounds as well as an intimate knowledge of the local environment.