

Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the 31st meeting of the Little Hadham Parish Council Planning Committee (2015-2019 Session) held on Tuesday 1st May 2018 at 8:09 pm in the Village Hall, Little Hadham.

Present:	Mrs M Wilkinson	Chair
	Mr T Hoodless)
	Mrs E Lloyd-Williams)
	Mr G Pearson) Councillors
	Mr G Tooke)
	Mr N Wardrop)
	Mr W Wright)

Mr B Evans – Clerk, and 9 members of the public.

31.1. Absent None.

31.2. Declarations of interest. Cllr Pearson said his new post with the Police prevented him from commenting on planning applications. Cllr Tooke said he had an interest in the application for Ashcroft Farm as he lived in a house next to the site. Cllr Lloyd-Williams said she had an interest in the application for Ashcroft Farm as she was a governor of the school. They took no part in discussion concerning this application. Cllr Wilkinson said she had an interest in the application for High Oaks as she lived next door.

31.3. Democratic 10 minutes.

Mr Bampton of Pelham Construction spoke of his application for Ashcroft Farm. He said permission for 5 houses at the site had been granted but his researches into market conditions had led to the application for 8 smaller houses. He said this would result in a slightly smaller area of housing and a significantly smaller area of hard standing. Access to the site would be improved by making the road wider and building a pavement.

31.4. Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 3rd April 2018 were agreed and signed as a true record.

31.5. Matters arising from the minutes. None.

31.6. Planning applications considered by the Council.

31.6.1. 0540/18 Ashcroft Farm, Stortford Road. Erection of 8 dwellings, change of use of land to school playing fields and associated works. Considered by Cllr Wardrop and Cllr Wright. Cllr Wilkinson said she was concerned about the access. It was close to traffic queuing at the traffic lights and to the village school. She said there had been a number of crashes. She said the houses were on the flood plain with an inevitable increased risk of flooding. She said she was against the development. Cllr Wardrop said the extra three houses would increase the load on the sewers that were unable to cope at the moment. Cllr Wight said that he had supported the previous application now there was a 6.2 year housing supply he thought the application should be rejected. Cllr Wilkinson proposed objection on the grounds of Land Supply, sewage, flooding and access. Agreed. [Appendix 1].

31.6.2. 0592/18 High Oaks, Pigs Green, Westland Green. Demolition of existing house and outbuildings to be replaced by 1no detached dwelling and garage. Considered

by Cllr Wright and Cllr Wardrop. Cllr Wardrop Proposed there be no objection. Agreed.

- 31.6.3.** 0657/18 Bury Green Farmhouse, Bury Green. Change of use of land to residential garden. Considered by Cllr Wilkinson, Cllr Hoodless and Cllr Wright. Cllr Wilkinson could not understand the need for an application just to create extra garden. Cllr Lloyd-Williams said she had been invited to view the site. The owners wanted to erect a summer house and cultivate the land as garden – possibly with a wildlife area open to the community. The seller of the land retains interest if it is later sold for housing. Cllr Wilkinson proposed there be no objection. Agreed.
- 31.6.4.** 0726/18 2B The Grove, Bury Green. Insertion of rear dormer window and 2 no. front rooflights. Considered by Cllr Wilkinson, Cllr Wright and Cllr Hoodless. Cllr Wilkinson proposed there be no objection. Agreed.
- 31.7. Planning decisions received from EHC.**
- 31.7.1.** 0183/18 Headmaster’s House, Hadham Hall. Extension to garage and addition of pitched roof. 1no rooflight to bathroom on first floor. Granted.
- 31.7.2.** 0403/18 Acremore, Acremore Street. Outline application for the erection of 1 no. detached dwelling with all matters reserved except access. Refused.
- 31.8. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 5th June 2018.**
- 31.9. The Chair closed the meeting to the Public and the Press at 8:24 p.m.**

Appendix 1

Re. 3/18/0540/FUL Erection of 8 dwellings, change of use of land to school playing fields and associated works

The Council considered this application at its meeting on Tuesday 1st May 2018. The Council agreed to object to the development on the grounds of Land Supply flooding and dangerous access.

Mr Bill Bampton attended a number of Council meetings and spoke briefly to the Council at the public part of the meeting. Mr Bampton’s presence was not advertised and only about a dozen members of the public were present. It is difficult to see this as consulting the community.

The District housing supply has been calculated as 6.2% for the next five years. As The Ash, Little Hadham is a Category 2 village under the latest District Plan, only limited infill of up to five houses is permitted. There is no pressure for the extra housing. If the developers feel there is no market for the large houses for which they have consent, then they could build five smaller homes rather than eight.

Homes at The Ashe and Ford have been subjected to flooding on a number of occasions in the last few years. This has been caused when there has been a rise in the river level as well as by surface runoff from saturated ground during heavy rain. The extra homes on the flood plain will increase the rate of surface runoff, putting homes at The Ash and The Ford downstream at increased risk of flooding. The Council was unconvinced by the developer’s assertion that flood prevention measures they plan to construct, would reduce rather than increase the flood risk. Increasing the number of homes can only increase runoff. [See report from Cllr Pearson]

The planned bypass for Little Hadham includes flood prevention measures. However, the plans are not finalised and it will be a number of years before the bypass is in place. The

Council asks that no new houses be built on the flood plain before the flood prevention measures have been constructed and shown to be effective.

The village is served by a sewer that runs south through the village. This sewer should be sufficient for the current population and for the new homes. However, heavy rain causes raw sewage to surcharge onto the road and into homes several times each year. This is assumed to be because a number of homes have unlawfully connected their rain water drains to the sewer. This situation has existed for many years and new homes on this site can only make matters worse. The solution to the problem may lie with Thames Water rather than the developers but the Council believes that no new homes should be connected to the sewer until the problem has been resolved. Building more homes can only make the situation worse.

The Council understands that residents in the existing homes on the site have real concerns about the surcharging sewers and runoff flooding.

The Ashcroft Farm site is served by the narrow Ashcroft Lane. This crosses the pavement to join the very busy A120 where traffic queues for the traffic lights. The developers plan to widen the lane and add a pavement but there will still be very limited visibility along the pavement that is used by children passing to and from the village school – particularly east of the lane. Drivers will not be able to see children on the path in front of the garage until their vehicles have extended well onto the pavement because of the 2m high fence. There has already been a collision between a child on a scooter and a vehicle. The plans showing the design of the road splay for the entrance to the lane requested by Herts Highways do not appear to have been supplied.

Because of the queuing traffic, vehicles frequently wait on the pavement which is then completely blocked. This forces pedestrians, including many children, on to the road in order to get by. The traffic from eight extra homes can only exacerbate the problem.

Vehicles leaving the lane intending to turn right towards Bishop's Stortford, have to cross the traffic queuing for the traffic lights. The queuing traffic seriously restricts the view from the lane of traffic on the other side of the road traveling to Stortford and of motor bikes coming down the hill outside of the queuing traffic. There have been numerous near misses and some collisions. Increasing the number of homes will increase the number of vehicle movements.

The Council is concerned about the future of the school. It appreciates that the extra land being offered by the developers will provide greatly improved outdoor facilities, as well as allowing the school to increase its intake. However, the Council must also consider the security of its residents. The prospect of an increased risk of flooding fills many with deep concern.

As one of the key community assets of the Parish, improvements to the school are an important consideration. However, concerns of the flood risk in this instance outweigh these gains.

Yours sincerely

B M Evans – Parish Clerk

Appendix Report on flooding – Cllr Graham Pearson.

The Parish Council agreed a resolution that there would be no building on the flood plain, nor on land adjacent to the flood plain until such time as the Flood Alleviation Scheme from the

A120 By Pass is built and proven to cope with the increasingly high rainfall levels that are occurring and are predicted by the Environment Agency to become worse.

The Applicant within their Statement of Community Involvement states that they have had two meetings with the Parish Council where they have presented alternative proposals and held question and answer sessions with the public present. This is incorrect and implies that the Parish Council already support the Applicant.

It should be clarified that no formal meetings have been held between the Parish Council and the Applicant. The Applicant attended twice to speak prior to the meetings though it was not an agenda item. Although there were some members of the public present the presentation was not widely advertised so that a fair representation of views could not be given.

The site is within Flood Zone 2. Following the Flood of Feb 2013 one of the residents who had been flooded several times said that they had been adversely affected by the drainage from the current Ashcroft development. They advised that “we observed the river rise and start to flow along the new trench towards the new houses, and so along the side of our boundary fence up to the sub-station where it pooled into the front garden of Ashcroft Farm and thence to the street. In other words, not draining the Ashcroft Farm development into the river, but the other way around...”

This photo is of the River Ash now full and the ditch starting to back up towards Ashcroft Farm.



This is supported by similar drainage problems in the Parish that occur once the River Ash is full, the ditches that drain into it back up and surcharge across other land causing flooding. Adding more drainage to this will only make matters worse for the 93 homes at risk of flooding.

This photo is of the current exit to Ashcroft Farm with the flooding to be seen to the left of the photo.



Other residents of the current Ashcroft Development raised concerns that water was seen to be running across the fields where the new development is proposed, and that they experienced water runoff near to their door, and problems with the sewer surcharging due to the water runoff getting into the system.

This sewer surcharging had been a constant issue throughout the Parish each time there is a high rainfall. Little Hadham Parish has in the last 8 months been given 26 severe weather warnings, an average of 3 a month, the last being 27/8th Aug. Each weather warning was of potential sufficient rainfall to cause flooding issues. Although on these occasions the majority of the rainfall passed to other nearby towns that experienced flooding, any planning must take account of the threat of water run off to homes already at risk of flooding. It is of note that for an average of 9 months of the year, the groundwater in Little Hadham is high. This results in the rainfall immediately turning to water runoff as it cannot soak into the ground. Sustainable drainage systems have little effect as they are already at capacity.

Homes at risk of flooding are having problems getting insurance cover. Although Flood Re has now started it does not provide cover for any new properties built after 2009. Houses that cannot get flood cover cannot be bought using a mortgage making it difficult for homes to be sold. As these homes are in Zone 2 of the flood risk would they be able to get insurance cover?

The application mentions 'cut and cover' drainage. Concerns are raised that where an open ditch is replaced with a pipe then covered with earth, this reduces the capacity of water able to flow through that stretch of ground. When water levels are high, which is often, cut and cover drainage cannot flow as quickly and backs up in the same way as open ditches when they cannot empty into the full River. What will happen to the water runoff that this backing up would cause? Have any checks been made to ascertain if this water runoff would flow through the school grounds and cause problems for the buildings?

There are also concerns over the traffic and access to the development. There have been several accidents by the existing exit to Ashcroft Lane, and the road is not of sufficient width for the safe passage of two vehicles and pedestrians.

I therefore object to this application.