

Bunbury Parish Council

MINUTES

of the meeting held at The Jubilee Pavilion, Bunbury, on
Wednesday 14th December 2022 at 7.20pm

Present: Councillors: Linda Barton, Pamela Brookfield (Chair), Peter Gorman, and Andrew Thomson.

In attendance: Maximilian Clay - Clerk to the Council
Thirteen members of the public

Dec22-1. Apologies for Absence

Cllrs Anderson, Melia, Parker and Thomas had submitted apologies and the Council resolved to approve the reasons for them.

Dec22-2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensation considerations

There were no declarations of interest.

Dec22-3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Council resolved that the minutes of the meetings held on the 9th November 2022 were a true record and that the Chair be authorised to sign them as such.

Dec22-4. Cheshire East Ward Councillor Report

District Cllr Pochin did not attend.

Dec22-5. Public Forum

A member of the public spoke to register concern about the removal of hedging at Brantwood. It was noted that the original planning permission had imposed a requirement to protect the hedging and that the Enforcement team at the Planning Authority had been notified.

Numerous members of the public spoke against the planning proposal at Parkside (Item 7.a.i below). A wide variety of issues was raised including:

- ◆ The proposals go against both the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan
- ◆ Lack of proper information in the application and no evidence to support assertions made, especially in relation to the argument that the site is an exception site;
- ◆ The proposals represent overdevelopment;
- ◆ The proposal site is outside the development envelope;
- ◆ The application is speculative in nature and follows recent refusals, including on appeal;
- ◆ Narrowness of lane and partial absence of footpaths and the consequent danger to pedestrians that would be likely to arise with both greater pedestrian and vehicle use.
- ◆ The negative impact of constant development in the village, on lanes and to property through vibration of heavy traffic and works.

No members of the public spoke in favour of the development and the Council was urged to object.

Dec22-6. Members' Reports & Items for Future Agendas

a. The following matters were reported:

- ◆ Warm Places Initiative - The Nag's Head pub, in conjunction with the church and others is launching a Warm Places initiative. Posters will be placed around the village and once these are available the information will be posted on the village website.
- ◆ Police Commissioner Meeting - Cllrs Brookfield and Thomson had attended a meeting with the Police Commissioner and Cllr Brookfield had submitted a question in advance concerning the police station in Nantwich and the lack of apparent presence of police in the town. The Commissioner replied that the police station in Nantwich had not closed but did have limited hours; he did not address the point about police presence.

A superintendent who was present and who has responsibility for PCSOs reported that these, often young, officers are increasingly having to deal with members of the public who have mental health problems. In response to this, Cllr Brookfield had asked her about training for officers in relation to dealing with such matters and the response was that inexperienced or junior officers are accompanied by more senior officers on calls to deal with such matters and there is always a thorough debrief; Cllr Brookfield had not felt that this addressed the question.

The Commissioner reported that funds re-couped through the Proceeds of Crime process were being used to make grants of up to £10,000 for specific projects and Cllr Brookfield suggested that an application be made for speed reduction measures in the village - this will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

Finally, Cllr Brookfield reported that the main benefit of the Cluster Meetings that had stopped happening was that speeding information was shared by the police but that because of changes in the way that such data were being collected, the information was no longer available. In the light of this Cluster Meeting had ceased to have much value. It was noted, however, that the motorbike mounted police had been a regular presence in the vicinity of the village.

- ◆ Pothole/ Flooding in front of Village Hall - Cllr Barton reported that she had used Fix My Street to report the flooding and potholes in front of the noticeboards but that the report had been closed with no action taken. Cllr Barton would try again and use photographs with a point of reference for scale, in the hope that this would then be addressed.
- ◆ Tarporley Hospital - Cllr Barton reported that the works are very behind schedule and it has not yet been decided what services will be provided but wanted to keep the issue alive. A trustee had planned to come to speak to the September meeting of the Council but the meeting did not take place because of national mourning for the late Queen. It was suggested that it would be helpful to invite one of the trustees to a meeting once there was more progress to discuss.
- ◆ Footpath 16 (At end of Sheep Field, between the new development and St Boniface) - Cllr Gorman reported that this path had now become cambered in an unfortunate way which can make it difficult to navigate. It was noted that there was little that could be done other than to request the owner or leasee to undertake remedial works.
- ◆ Access to Parish Online - Cllr Gorman reported that access had been gained to the site and that this would enable progress to be made on finalising images for Neighbourhood Plan.
- ◆ Neighbourhood Plan - Cllr Thomson reported that the draft Plan had been sent to Cheshire East Council (CEC) for environmental assessment and that it was anticipated that it would be returned early in the new year. The Draft Plan would then go out to consultation. It was noted that the funds designated for Neighbourhood Plan work were somewhat depleted and so it was resolved to apply for further funds from CEC.
- ◆ Play Area Repairs - The zip wire has been repaired and other repairs will take place in early January. There will be an additional amount to pay, of £350, for the provision of a replacement post but this falls within the overall allocation that the Council has already approved.

b. Future Agenda Items

- ◆ Grant application for anti speeding measures.
- ◆ Re-design/ re-print of footpaths map and distribution of the existing print run.

Dec22-7. Planning

a. Responses to Application Consultations:

i. 22/4203N - Parkside, Bunbury Lane, Bunbury:

Outline permission for demolition of one dwelling and erection of up to 25 First Home dwellings, access off Bunbury Lane and all other matters reserved.

In view of the small number of Councillors present it was proposed that dispensations be granted for Cllrs Gorman and Thomson to participate in the discussion and to vote, on the

understanding that they were open to reconsidering their previously stated positions in the light of the debate.

There was general agreement that Highways' response to the consultation did not reflect the situation accurately and it was felt that a site visit should have informed the response; this would have shown that the lane is extremely narrow, that the volume of traffic is high for a small village lane and that the provision for separating pedestrians from vehicular traffic is very patchy. It was felt that this would be exacerbated by further construction traffic for which there is a lack of capacity. It was noted that within the last three years, two developments, each of 15 houses, have been built off Bunbury Lane and that there is a permission for a third development of 15 houses which has yet to commence. It was agreed that the applicant has not taken into account the impact of these developments, either in terms of the very considerable disturbance and disruption to local residents in the short term, and in terms of the significant cumulative impact of the levels of traffic generated on the narrow village roads in the longer term.

It was also noted that:

- ◆ Two applications for residential development on this site have been refused and the most recent application was dismissed at appeal, earlier this year. In rejecting the appeal the Inspector stated that the appeal site was unsuitable for new housing and that the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area would have been unacceptable. Apart from the fact that the number of houses now being proposed is larger, nothing has changed;
- ◆ The application as submitted conflicts with the Cheshire East Local Plan and the made Bunbury Neighbourhood Plan policies for the area, and there can therefore be no presumption in favour of consent, notwithstanding the reference to 'First Homes' in the applicant's submission. (This is because both the Local and Neighbourhood plans are already in place and so do not need to reflect the First Home policy requirements set out in changes to planning policy announced in June 2021);
- ◆ There is no supporting information submitted with the application and no evidence to justify the various speculative assertions that are made within it. The application seeks to rely on the application site being a rural exception site but Local Plan Policy SC6 states that applications for housing on a rural exception site should meet all eight of the criteria set out in this policy if it is to be considered as an exception. The applicant has failed to address even one of the criteria, including the scale of the development proposed, the requirement for a site option appraisal and the requirement for a housing needs survey;
- ◆ The applicant has not addressed the amenity of the adjoining dwellings and the impact the proposed development will have upon them; and
- ◆ The applicant has not addressed the two oak trees on the site which are covered by TPOs.
- ◆ Much of the information provided by the applicant is incorrect, for example
 - There is very little employment in the village;
 - There is only one bus service a day and its timings (10:50am to Nantwich returning at 13:30) make it unsuitable for most workers;
 - The pavement and road outside the application site are very narrow and the access proposals, contrary to what the Highways Officer has stated in his consultation response, can be very hazardous particularly as there is only one footway, on the application side of the road, which is very narrow;
 - There are surface flooding issues in the vicinity of the site, on Bunbury Lane;

The Council also noted that the neighbouring parish council and well over 100 residents of Bunbury had objected to the application along similar lines to those set out above.

The Council resolved to object to the application and to urge the Planning Authority to refuse permission.

b. Updates to Applications Considered previously:

There were no updates available.

Dec22-8. Communications

The Clerk had submitted a report about the website, with a proposal to split the existing website into two sites - one focused on the Council and containing all the statutory information and notices that are required and the other focused on village life and the events and facilities that are unconnected with the Council. The Council site would be run by the Clerk and the Village Life site run by a volunteer, Joy Pendleton, with support from contributors across the village. The two sites would cross-relate where that would be helpful.

There would be a small annual cost to running the two elements separately (+£48 per year, discounted to £24 in the first year) but this would be more than offset by the saving of £600 to be made from the previously agreed changes to running the website. Mark Ireland Jones had kindly agreed to undertake the small amount of technical, behind-the-scenes updating work at no cost.

It was resolved to split the existing website into two distinct sites; one for the parish council and one for general matters of interest to the village, in line with the above discussion.

Various ideas for improving communications were also discussed, including a periodic newsletter, written in a light journalistic style, potentially involving residents (and subject to consultation and discussion) possibly tying in with The Link. It was agreed to discuss these ideas and the wider issue of communication further at the next meeting.

Dec22-9. Minerals and Waste Plan Consultation

A report by Cllr Thomson had been circulated in advance of the meeting and he highlighted that the single most important issue to consider arose from the possibility of fracking, the implications of which were not considered by the consultation report. Based on the experience of another area in the North West where fracking had taken place the implications include traffic, noise pollution, light pollution and ground pollution as well as vibration and risk from spillages. It was resolved that Cllr Thomson would draft a response.

Dec22-10. Correspondence and Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported the following items of correspondence:

From residents of Bunbury Lane regarding the lack of gritting - this had been reported to CEC via Fix My Street and some gritting had taken place.

From CEC, informing the Council that they will be clearing gullies in the village in December and January - there would be some very brief closures to facilitate this.

From residents of The Highlands expressing concern about inconsiderate parking associated with school drop off and pick up times and when there trips or special events. The consequence is that both pedestrian and vehicular access is blocked, as is access to people's driveways. In discussion it was recognised that there was a great deal of inconsiderate and inappropriate parking in The Highlands and other nearby roads. It was resolved that, in the first place, the Clerk would write to the Head of the school asking her to ask parents to park considerately and specifically not to park on pavements or in front of drives, as well as to encourage them to walk if at all possible.

Dec22-11. Footpath Extension

A paper from Cllr Gorman had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting and a map was tabled. This pointed out that Footpath 31 leads to a dead end but had historically continued to link up with FP 13. The landowner has now agreed to discuss with the tenant farmers the extension of the footpath to close the loop with FP 13 and Cheshire East Public Rights of Way Team (PROW) would bear the bulk of the cost, although their budget is very limited.

Cllr Gorman proposed that the Parish Council support the idea and contribute towards the cost. After brief discussion, the Council resolved to support the extension of the path and to contribute £500 towards the cost of works.

It was noted that this was something of a historic moment as footpaths are very rarely established or reinstated. It was agreed that Cllr Gorman would contact The Ramblers as it was felt that a celebration could be appropriate.

Dec22-12. Events

Christmas Eve - It was confirmed that everything was in hand and that publicity would be posted up and distributed shortly. Councillors offered to help with set-up and to act as traffic stewards and bucket shakers. Timings will be 5.30pm for volunteers to gather at the tree and the singing will start at 6.30pm

Dec22-13. Finance & Governance

a. Receipts and Payments

The schedule of receipts and payments was received and it was resolved to approve the payments.

Dec22-14. Councillor Vacancies

A revised notice would be placed on the noticeboard and it was noted that a member of the public had expressed interest at the end of the Public Forum.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm

Signed as a true record by authority of the Council

Chair

Date