

Parish Council of Coleford

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In line with government guidance and recommended social distancing and self-isolation rules for those who are vulnerable, it was agreed that this meeting would be conducted as a virtual meeting using Zoom video technology.

Minutes of the Parish Council Virtual Meeting held on Wednesday the 27th May 2020

Present

CLlr Ham (Chairman presiding) Cllrs Allen, Banks, Barrett, Conn, Evans, Hanney, Townsend, Pearce and Turner.

There was a member of the public present and the Clerk Vickie Watts taking the minutes

1 Apologies for Absence (acceptance of any reasons offered)

CLlr Drescher sent apologies which were accepted by the Chair.

2 Declaration of Interest and Dispensations granted since last meeting

There were none.

3 Re-consultation on Gladman application 2019/2345/OTS - Application for Outline Planning Permission with some matters reserved for the erection of up to 63 dwellings (Revised Proposed Site Access Plan Received 14th May 2020), Land Off Anchor Road, Lipyeate Cross To Luckington Cross, Coleford, Frome, Somerset.

CLlr Townsend explained that the deadline for responses had been changed from the 1st June, to the 6th June, to the 12th June and has now been extended to the 16th June.

When the re-consultation was issued there were 3 new items added to the planning application documentation, namely:

- Gladman report dated 24th April
- Highways dated 15th May
- Revised site plan showing new access dated 18th May

But in the last week the following documents have also been uploaded to the planning portal:

- SCC Highways Authority re-consultation response uploaded on 27th May
- Mining response to re-consultation dated 26th May uploaded on 27th May
- Planning policy response dated 10th December 2019 uploaded 26th May

It is apparent from the re-consultation response that Somerset County Council Highways department believe that the anticipated number of road traffic accidents resulting from the increase in local traffic from the proposed development would not be deemed significant enough to be severe. Records show that there have been no accidents reported in this area. CLlr Townsend suggested that the Parish Council may want to do more to highlight the concerns relating to collisions that have not be reported. Lack of site visits by SCC staff due to Covid 19 needed to be challenged.

AT

The concerns over the visibility splay at the entrance to the site seem to have been addressed, however it is clear that the developer would need to remove the full length of the hedge to achieve the vehicle and pedestrian access, plus visibility splays. This would increase visual impact of development and “suburbanise” the area between Highbury and Lipyeate. It was noted that within the hedge there is a 30ft mature elm tree which should be preserved.

A member of the public said that there are only approx. 100 mature elms in the whole of the country and investigative work should be completed to establish if this tree is a resistant version of the elm. It was agreed that the professional advice should be sought. Cllr Townsend will approach the CPRE to ask for advice. Cllr Townsend has already applied for an emergency Tree Preservation Order (TPO) however the response from MDC was that a response would be received within the next month. It is hoped that this would be expedited with further discussion.

AT

It was questioned whether the visibility from Brewery Lane was sufficient at 50m splay. It could be investigated further but again there is no accident history.

Cllr Banks joined the meeting 19.25hrs

It is obvious that Rush Lane, owned by the local farmer, is essential to the developer to allow pedestrian access. SCC Highways and others have questioned whether it can accommodate both the required 2 metre footpath and a roadway. Councillor Townsend offered to check the width.

AT

The Planning Policy consultancy response was dated the 9th December but was only uploaded to the planning portal on the 27th May, which raised the question of why the delay? It was also noted that despite the Travel Plan Audit being uploaded to the planning portal it is not accessible. What was audited and when can we see it?

The MDC planning policy response notes that the emerging Local Plan clearly states that development should not extend beyond the development line, which is encouraging and should go against the Gladman application. The Policy response also points out that the applicants have submitted no evidence that the proposal would be built within 5 years and contribute to the 5 year housing land supply. It was asked whether Gladman would be able to prove that they could deliver the build within the 5 year plan if they were to rely on that as a reason for approval. The policy response also raises other concerns, for example the visible and linear extension into open countryside, effectively linking Highbury and Lipyeate.

The Coal Authority have also responded to the re-consultation by stating that they have no further comments since their initial response which highlighted that they would expect a condition on any planning permission requiring comprehensive bore hole investigations to be completed to establish that the site is safe for development, because there was evidence of nine coal. If any were located then stabilisation work would need to be completed to the required standard. The potential expense of this was noted, but would be a matter for the developer.

The Clerk had circulated an email from a resident which highlighted his concerns about the development and included his letter of objection lodged with MDC planning department.

No comments have been submitted from Wessex Water.

It was proposed by Cllr Townsend and seconded by Cllr Pearce that:

- A quote should be sought from Nigel Salmon in respect of them providing further representation on behalf of the Parish Council.
- Cllrs Townsend, Ham, Conn and the Clerk will draft a further letter based on the issues raised by the new documents and the Parish Council discussion as described above and circulate to all Councillors for consideration before submitting to the Planning department.

AT

AT/PH
AC/VW

Vote: 10 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstained

4 **Planning updates**

Cllr Ham confirmed that he had attended the Mendip District Council virtual meeting for The Eagle Inn Community Asset application. Parties will be notified of the decision in the next few days.

5 **Consider and approve section 1 of the Audit - Annual Governance statement**

The Clerk had circulated section 1 of the Annual Governance statement for consideration prior to the meeting. The Clerk then read out the questions within Section 1 of the Annual Governance statement 2019/20 with Councillors answering yes to all questions. It was agreed that the Chair should sign the section at the earliest opportunity.

Vote: 10 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstained

6 **Consider and approve section 2 of Audit - Accounting statements**

The Clerk then read out Section 2 the Accounting statements for 2019/20 which had been completed using the figures for the previous financial year ending 2019 and year ending 2020. All Councillors present acknowledged that the page was completed correctly and agreed that the Chair and the Clerk should sign off the section at the earliest opportunity.

The Clerk to ensure that the audit paperwork is submitted by the deadline and displayed on the notice boards and website to allow the electors an opportunity to examine the accounts.

Vote: 10 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstained

7 **Matters of Urgency – at the Chairman’s Discretion**

7.1 Cllr Townsend said that he believed that the press were being approached about the Gladman application and asked whether the Parish Council wished to be involved. After discussion it was proposed that the Parish Council would not comment and it was stated that if any Councillors wished to speak with the press that they must do so as individuals rather than on behalf of the Parish Council.

7.2 Cllr Ham confirmed that a list of potential projects had been compiled in preparation for any meeting with Gladman’s representatives. It was agreed that if a meeting was held to discuss section 106 funding then Cllrs Ham and Townsend would establish what was on offer before discussing specific projects.

Public Forum

PF 1 Residents had asked when the grass would be cut around the village. Cllr Ham confirmed that Mendip District Council would be resuming grass cutting soon. However some areas of grass were being left long as it was better for the environment and for wildlife.

PF 2 Cllr Ham confirmed that the garden waste bins had only been emptied once this year and there had been issues around late payments resulting from the Covid 19 lockdown. It is hoped that the normal level of service would resume over the next few weeks. It has been confirmed that a discount will be offered next year to this year’s subscribers to compensate for the lack of service during 2020.

PF 3 A member of the public said that in light of vulnerable people being identified during the Covid 19 lockdown, would it be possible to hold onto the data for future reference to ensure that they are kept safe if needed. The Clerk confirmed that to hold such information would be a breach of GDPR and therefore not possible.

8 **Date of Next Meetings:**

Wed 10th June 2020 Parish Council meeting

The meeting concluded at 20.30hrs