

KIRTLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held in the Church of St Mary the Virgin on Monday 31st October at 5.30 p.m.

Present: Parish Councillors: Mrs K Chacksfield, Ms J Conway (Chair), Dr B Enser, D Grimshaw
Mrs R Powles (Clerk), Mr P Kurgo, Ms C Marsh (members KPC Planning Subcommittee)

In attendance: Parties to the application (to 6.25 p.m.): Mr J Collinge (Jake Collinge Planning Consultancy Ltd),
Mr J East, a member of the public, Mr D Moore (Manorwood Consultancy Ltd)

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| <p>1. Apologies</p> <p>None.</p> <p>2. Declarations of pecuniary interests / other conflicts of interest</p> <p>None.</p> <p>3. Members of the public</p> <p>Attendance as above.</p> <p>4. Planning application 22/03049/OUT</p> <p>Land West of Oxford Close and North of Corner Farm, Station Road, Kirtlington Manorwood Consultancy Ltd – Proposals for provision of eight single-storey and two-storey detached and semi-detached dwellings with access, parking and amenity space.</p> <p>Cllr Conway opened the meeting and requested that Manorwood first give a 15 minute presentation, to be followed by a 30 minute discussion between all parties; the Council would then consider the matter for a further period.</p> <p>All present introduced themselves.</p> <p>Mr Collinge outlined the proposal in the context of the site’s planning history, the current status of Kirtlington as a Category A village and the current Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan target of 17 new homes for Kirtlington, and stated that Cherwell District Council lacked a demonstrable 5-year housing supply. The weight of the M-CNP and other village constraints such as designated heritage assets should be considered and he suggested the site at Corner Farm was free of these constraints. As an outline application for access and layout the suggested build was illustrative but the proposals included single storey units and it was in the gift of Cherwell District Council to specify the housing mix. He suggested the location would be a natural extension to the built up edge of the village, also that there was a presumption that such extensions should face out to surrounding countryside and public planting at the edge of the development would provide landscape containment, and these location and landscape elements were set out in the Planning Statement.</p> <p>Cllr Conway opened the discussion to all present.</p> <p>Mr Collinge clarified that the definition of a Category A village was set out in Cherwell DC’s Local Plan as one having a certain level of sustainability; in this regard Councillors noted that the village shop had closed, the post office was closing and the current local bus service was due to cease, so the village might lose its category A status.</p> <p>The applicant was asked who would develop the site if the application was successful? Mr Moore advised that if planning permission were granted the development rights would be put to the open market and he and his clients would choose the developer. Mr East advised that inclusion of bungalows in the mix was intended to create a cycle which facilitated downsizing. He wished to remain in his current home and continue farming and only a small development would allow this; also as he rented the Ryefurlong field the proposed footprint of the development site had been restricted and stopped short of this boundary.</p> <p>Mr Moore was asked if the sale to the developer and the subsequent build-out could be covenanted (i.e. to ensure the current proposals were not altered or exceeded); Mr Moore confirmed this was always a possibility and as such would</p> | |

be a measure of protection for the landowner; however a change in circumstances such as the death of one of the parties might terminate the agreement, thus the long-term provisions of such an agreement could not be guaranteed.

Mr Kurgo suggested to the applicant that another approach might be considered, namely that the current application be withdrawn and the applicant work in conjunction with the Parish Council on proposals for a larger number of properties which could potentially include amenities which might satisfy the Council's wish for community benefit, for example affordable housing at the standard 40% quota and a village shop with appropriate customer parking provision and safe access from the highway.

Ms Marsh referred to recent policy briefings from Cherwell District Council with regard to the current review of the Cherwell Local Plan and the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood plan as background to considerations relevant to the Corner Farm site and Kirtlington's Category A status: confirmation of the details awaited decision by Cherwell DC's Executive Committee but it was probable that the District's existing 15 Category A villages would be reduced to 10 and while Kirtlington's future status was still uncertain this might mean that the remaining 10 Category A villages would each need to provide 50 new dwellings. There was no confirmation of the expected figures but Category A villages could be under pressure to expand. The question which therefore arose was whether such development would be directed by the parish or imposed by the District planning authority; in this regard it was noted also that the District site call of autumn 2021 included the whole of the Corner Farm land.

It was suggested to the applicant that a collaborative approach was preferable, however at present if the Parish Council were to reflect parish sentiment with regard to the current proposals it would have to object.

Mr Collinge indicated the suggestions could be discussed, however he and Mr Moore would first need to consult their clients.

Council members raised the following observations and questions:

That the layout of the access road in relation to the dwellings could be seen as obvious intent for further development; that the drainage could give rise to flooding of the footpath at the village boundary; whether the public footpath would be moved; the site was outside the M-CNP settlement area and this settlement area was unlikely to change; the access was at a dangerous corner on the A4095; that while bungalows were welcome there had been incremental small developments in the village in recent years none of which had provided affordable housing.

In response to these points Mr Moore and Mr Collinge advised that an alternative positioning of the access road would not be accepted by the LPA and a public road adjacent to gardens gave rise to potential safety issues; changing the route of a footpath would take a long time; soakaways for surface water would be provided to a depth of 2 ½ metres; the M-CNP policies allowed development outside the settlement area in certain circumstances; steps could be taken to reduce traffic speed such as a TRO; affordable housing was only viable with larger numbers.

Observations on grounds for objection to the application were put to the applicant as follows: that the current proposals provided no perceived benefit to the community and there was no affordable housing provision; of equal significance was there were no new factors to change the disbenefits cited in the Parish Council's objections to the two previous planning applications at this site. The eight dwellings would be open-market properties and therefore expensive. Bungalows could be beneficial but did not affect the fact that the properties were open-market; also, that while publicity for the proposals had been limited a common thread of comments submitted to date was that respondents feared the application would be a "Trojan horse" for further, larger scale, development here. A breach of the established western settlement boundary could open the floodgates into the remainder of the Corner Farm land and the Ryefurlong site to the north.

Councillors noted that the current application would not deliver what the village needed in terms of revitalisation but the suggestions put to the applicants (to consider withdrawal of the application and engagement with the Parish Council on an application for a larger number of properties with affordable housing provision) could offer a pro-active way forward to achieve something towards this goal. Councillors asked Mr East for his views of the suggestions, as they would impact his land materially; Mr East advised he considered that a larger number of dwellings here could make the site extremely difficult for farming so to agree to the suggestions would be a very big decision.

Mr Collinge and Mr Moore confirmed thought would be given to the suggestions but re-iterated they would first need to consult their clients. It was emphasised to the applicant that the Parish Council had limited time, to 11th November, to submit its formal response. Mr Collinge asked if the Council might consider a memorandum of understanding; Cllr Conway advised the Council would need to discuss this. Mr Moore advised he would indicate a response in a few days' time.

Mr Moore and all parties to the application left the meeting at 6.25 p.m.

Councillors and the Planning Subcommittee made the following points in relation to the application:

The effect of possible village re-categorisation from Category A to Category B: this was unknown at present and would depend on the perception of Cherwell DC's Planning Department, for example if it deemed the village capable or large enough to remain Category A or whether it became Category B in the light of its lost amenities.

The concept of engagement was noted by some as attractive and a shop at this site would benefit from passing trade. Councillors also noted however it must be assumed that the development rights would be sold and so there was unanimous expression of wariness of expansion of the proposals. There was unanimous agreement that a memorandum of understanding had no value as a mechanism to facilitate engagement or limit potential unwanted expansion as it was non-binding. In the absence of the publication of the Cherwell DC potential requirements for expansion of Category A villages it was not possible to say what Kirtlington's housing requirements would be.

All agreed there was no solution to the lack of a regular bus service and the purchasers of the new homes at this site would all travel by car.

Given the above disbenefits Councillors considered whether to resolve at this stage to submit an objection to the application; it was noted that unless the applicant indicated a change of approach before the meeting of 7th November a final decision to do so must be taken at that meeting, ahead of the response deadline of 11th November. **Resolved:** as time was short both for the drafting of a response and for the applicants to respond to the suggested change in approach, to ask for an extension to Cherwell DC's current response deadline of 11th November to 16th November earliest (the deadline set out on the Site Notice). This would facilitate the drafting of the Council's response and allow the applicants more time to indicate support for the suggestions and potentially withdraw the application.

5. Date of the next Parish Council meeting

As advised: Monday 7th November in the Hazel Room.

6. Other matters of information not elsewhere on the agenda (not for debate/decision) and items for future agendas

None.

7. Critical date(s)

Friday 11th November: deadline for Parish Council response to Application 22/03049/OUT

8. Other dates

None.

The meeting closed at 7 p.m.

Signed

Jean Conway

Chair

Date 07/11/2022