

RATTLESDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the full Council held on 25 April 2017 at 8.00pm in Rattlesden Village Hall

Approved 23.05.17 (minute 2017/020 refers)

Present: Cllr Kerry Burn (Chairman), Cllr Peter Brooke, Cllr Dan Jewers, Cllr Russell Morley, Cllr Julie Rayner and Cllr Ted Wright.

In Attendance: County and District Cllr Penny Otton;
78 members of the public;
Four representatives from Hartog Hutton Ltd; and
Parish Clerk: Doug Reed.

2017/011 Apologies for Absence

Accepted from Cllr Goodchild given that she had declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in agenda item 3 (minute 2017/013) which would have precluded her involvement in the meeting.

2017/012 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Goodchild had (prior to the meeting) declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in agenda item 3 (minute 2017/013) as her partner was directly involved in the housing development at Roman Rise/Mitchery Lane.

2017/013 The meeting was adjourned for a briefing from Hartog Hutton Ltd and for public comment and questions:

013.1 Hartog Hutton Ltd - Briefing: Representatives from the company leading on the proposed housing development at Roman Rise/Mitchery Lane spoke to explain the proposals for 22 dwellings and the provision of an area of public open space. The meeting was informed that 14 open market properties were intended together with eight affordable homes. The open market homes would include a mix of semi-detached and terraced low-cost starter dwellings together with some larger, four-bedroomed family homes. The public open space, encompassing some four acres, would include landscaped schemes and, potentially, be available to the Parish Council should it wish to take ownership.

013.2 Public Discussion: Residents took the opportunity to voice a range of concerns about the proposals, with such concerns tending to be reinforced by others present. Hartog Hutton Ltd had noted that issues relating to drainage, traffic and highways had been pre-eminent at the public consultation event held at the end of March. These were, again, the focus of many comments. It was emphasised that the area within which the site was located had a history of serious problems with surface water, flooding, sewerage and drainage. Residents reported that the existing drainage system was unable to cope with the current situation and that it was considered unfit for purpose. It was, therefore, maintained that there was no capacity for dealing with the implications from further dwellings. Company representatives acknowledged the issues and said that a specialist had been commissioned which would be made fully available as part of any planning application. Major difficulties with highways and traffic arose repeatedly, with residents noting that the existing infrastructure was

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already inadequate and that the extra cars and vehicular movements occasioned by the development would impact negatively not only upon the immediate location but also would have a detrimental impact on the surrounding and adjoining network. Concerns about safety, not least that of children and parents walking to and attending the School, were highlighted and it was pointed out that the location suffered, currently, from the lack of a footpath. Although light pollution was brought up, it was said that street lights were not part of the proposal. The potential for further pressure on Woolpit Heath Centre was mentioned; questions raised about what constituted 'affordable' homes and whether or not these were genuinely within reach of local people seeking to buy a house for the first time; and questions also raised about the mix of dwellings given that, for example, no bungalows were included. The company responded by emphasising that the plans were only indicative at the present stage and that constructive suggestions could be incorporated in any formal application. Should the development go ahead then residents wanted to ensure that the process was sympathetic to the needs of the village, e.g. that vehicles did not obstruct highways, health and safety matters were paramount, and that there was a strict observance of permitted working hours which were said to be, typically, 8.00am-5.00pm. It was suggested by the company that the build would take in the region of 18 months from the point of any planning application being granted. Cllr Otton spoke to reinforce the planning process which was likely to be followed. This backed-up and echoed the explanation provided by the Chairman at the start of the meeting. The Chairman also confirmed, in response to queries, that neither the Parish Council nor any individual councillor has yet determined a view on the proposals. This was because judgement, legally, had to be reserved until any formal application was forthcoming. To offer any comments in advance could be seen to favour either those for or against, and could also be construed as a signal that an individual councillor has predetermined the matter. The Chairman thanked those attending and ended by confirming that should the proposals lead to a formal application, then at that point the Council would make an informed decision based upon the comments from this meeting and from any further resident views at the appropriate time.

Meeting resumed:

2017/010 Next Meeting

It was noted that the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Tuesday 23 May at 6.45pm in Rattlesden Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.06pm.