

ALTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting at the Coronation Hall, 7.30 pm, June 6, 2016

Present: Steve Hepworth (Chair), Peter Emery, Ben Owen, Robert Carpenter Turner, Alex Oliver, Polly Carson, Mike Golden.

066/16 Minutes: The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising not on the agenda: none.

067/16 Planning application 16/04718/FUL Fernbank, Honeystreet: Steve Hepworth recalled that a previous application had been rejected. He believed the latest proposal was far better but that did not mean there was not potential for improvement. Were the materials proposed in tune with the village? Would the design blend in over time? Was the scale in tune with its surroundings? Were important sightlines affected? Was there adequate parking? SH drew attention to policy HC25 of the former Kennet District Council, still in force, relating to replacement buildings in the countryside. That laid down that the new buildings should not be substantially larger than the old. He invited other PC members to comment, beginning with Robert Carpenter Turner and Alex Oliver representing Honeystreet.

RCT said the plans were an enormous improvement on the earlier effort but the new houses proposed were still too big, too prominent and out of keeping with the scale and character of the village. That was the view of every villager he had spoken with. He would oppose.

AO agreed. The feedback from residents showed the main concern was that the buildings would be overly large for the site and too prominent along the canal. As an architect, he was concerned about the materials and the roof forms, two of the elements that held Honeystreet together. Those aspects of the proposed buildings did not tie in, but the big issue was scale.

With one exception, all the other pc members voiced concern over the size of the buildings. However, they stressed that the proposed dwellings were a great improvement on the earlier application and given some modification were “almost there”. The village already had some big buildings and was, in the words of one member, “a complete mishmash of old and modern.” While the views of local residents should be taken into account, the Parish Council had to abide by planning regulations.

Members also pointed out that the site is large, and suggested the buildings would mellow and blend in over time. Even a slight reduction of 1.5 metres on some dimensions could make the difference.

SH invited comment from members of the public. One speaker pointed out that the existing annexe, about the size of a double-garage,

would become a four-bedroom house with three bathrooms, a utility room and other features. How was that a "replacement"? Speakers also voiced concern over the placing of the new buildings further west, and the threat that construction and the movement of materials down the one-track lane could create severe access problems for residents.

SH then invited each member of the PC to state whether they would support the application; support with conditions, as discussed; or oppose.

One member voted to register support. Three members voted to register support with conditions. Three members opposed. It was therefore agreed that "support with conditions" should be the view submitted to Wiltshire Council.

Any other business:

068/16 Browns Lane lighting: Ben Owen asked for an update. He stressed that the switch-off of the light, originally set for a trial period of a year, should not be allowed to rumble on. SH recalled that at the previous PC it had been agreed he would look at the proposed LED light in action and report back. He had not yet done that but the matter would be on the agenda for the next scheduled PC on July 14.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 8.20pm.

