

COLDWALTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 19th OCTOBER 2017 7.30PM AT THE SANDHAM VILLAGE HALL, COLDWALTHAM

Those Present: Cllr G Nelson Chairman
Cllr S Hewer Vice Chairman
Cllr T Burr
Cllr J Evans
Cllr A Lilley
Cllr A Hewitt

Mrs LD Sherlock-Fuidge Clerk

Parishioners Various see the attendance list.

There were four sites referred to during the meeting, to identify each they are as follows:

Site 1 – the site proposed in the SDNPA and located adjacent to Brookview.

Site 2 – part of a split site at Waltham Farm, this portion is on the northern side of the A29 accessed from Kings Lane,

Site 3 - the other part at Waltham Farm on the southern side of the A29 adjacent to the junction of Old London Road.

Site 4 – a site on the north side of the A29 adjacent to The Granary.

Site 2 & 3 have been put forward as one site by the landowner but appear on maps as two separate sites.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

GN welcomed everyone to the meeting, this is obviously a big issue for the parish, this is not a planning application, the document for discussion is the SDNP Pre-Submission document. Please listen to each other as everyone is welcome to respond directly to SDNPA with comments and the Parish Council would encourage people to do so as this better reflects everyone's views.

We are here to listen and learn from each other, as no-one has a complete answer, members of the public were asked to keep comments clear and to the point.

Cllr Burr, councillor and lead on planning items for the Coldwaltham Parish Council, elected to SDNPA as one of two Parish Members on the SDNPA. Speaking for the Parish Council he summarised the process so far:

SDNP was first designated in 2010, and started functioning as a Park Authority in 2011. As a planning authority the SDNP needs to formulate its own Local Plan for the next 15 years, initially taking on the Local Plans from the area's District Councils. This is the part of that process tonight. The Document doesn't exist to promote development, the proposed sites in the whole National Park is considerably lower than the assessed need for the whole area.

In the first version of the SDNPA Local Plan, in 2015, most development was centred in major settlements; Lewes, Petersfield Midhurst, what would be described as towns. In Coldwaltham, the initial proposal was for about 20 houses at the bottom end of the field, the PC thought that this seemed a good thing, as this was proposed over 15 years. As the process went on, the policy shifted to a more dispersed development. In March, this year, the proposal changed to 30-40 houses, with the site for this development having moved round to the whole of the top end of the field. Within days the PC had met with the SDNPA planning officer. This has since been adjusted down to 25-30 houses, and the area allocated for as suitable for development reduced too.

Last month the SDNPA started this Public Consultation, which ends on 21st November, this is a pre-submission document, that is to say; before being submitted to the Secretary of State, when it will be considered, before going before the planning inspectorate.

During this time, two new sites have been brought forward by the respective landowners. It is hoped that this gives a choice of sites for any potential development.

Chris Hilton, a resident of London Road, and the chairman of the Sandham Hall. I have been given many questions which I hope are answered tonight.

- To what extent is the figure of 30 homes set in stone?

Jim Glover of the Coldwaltham Meadow Conservation Group (CMCG) – noted that in March 2017 the number of homes had originally been 40 homes, but since then the area has been reduced by 50% the number of homes has also been reduced by 25%.

Cllr Burr added that the SDNPA has no real alternative to make some provision for development in Coldwaltham.

Chris Hilton,

- How big in acreage in terms of each site?

Jim Glover – noted the alternative sites, offer the same amount of land for development, since then the SDNPA has reduced the Coldwaltham allocation to 2 hectares.

Chris Hilton,

- How easy can the site be accessed?
- How much of the overall acreage will be allocated to affordable housing?

SDNP have a policy that developments of 10 homes or more should include 50% affordable homes.

- Is the site to include properties for 1st time buyers

Oliver Moore, a twenty-five-year resident at Woodstock, which lies on the southern boundary of Site 2, were shocked that the site was being considered for housing, as over previous years there has been 2 applications, both were refused on the grounds that the proposal would have an adverse impact on the rural character of the area, and would detract from the amenities of nearby residential occupiers of the South Downs National Park and Coldwaltham Conservation Area. It was also outside the boundaries of the village. He also noted that the site is in close proximity to the site of the Roman Road which runs northwards just outside the boundary of the proposed site.

He further noted that the findings of the Planning Authority for these two applications are as valid in 2017 as in 2009 or 2011, and should not be overturned because of concerns regarding other sites, he has sympathy with resident's concerns, but these should not impinge on the character of the village not destroy the wildlife; nightingales, bats and owls.

Kerry Geoghegan asked What is meant by "Affordable Housing", noting that a three-bedroom house costing £400K, the resident gets a mortgage for £200K and a rental for the balance, when the resident comes to sell, they must give back 50% of the value.

Kelvin Underwood resident in Church Lane noted that the SDNP has a duty of care to protect the environment and not to build on green fields sites. Commenting that the SDNP mission Statement indicates that it should conserve and enhance the landscapes, the special qualities of the National Park and communities small and large within it.

If the SDNP do not do this, what is the point to the park? It beggars belief that the area should be destroyed, by development at Site 2. With the Historic Environment, the site being a medieval landscape, and the area is full of bats, which are a protected species, and being outside the settlement boundary.

Andrew Wallace commented on behalf of themselves and their neighbours. He appreciates that the SDNP need to provide future homes, but considered 5 days very short notice. Cllr Nelson advised that the details for Sites 2 & 3 were only received by the PC in a letter dated 6th October.

Mr Wallace continued that the document received from the CMCG is flawed, as the document is weighted such that it would only achieve their own objective.

Regarding Site 2, he commented that the position of the site is much higher than the road, so the roofs of any buildings would be higher and clearly more visible when entering the village from the north. The site, which has been designated a Fieldscape Assart, relating to its being a medieval field system around which the village grew in a horseshoe shape. The area now supports a lot of wildlife including several protected species such as bats and barn owls.

He raised concerns that as previous applications had been refused for this site, on the grounds that the proposal would have an adverse impact on the rural character of the area and would appear prominent in the street scene. Why should it be different now? The diagram shows the access to be via Kings Lane, would this lane be able to take this increase in traffic.

Regarding Site 1, he commented that it has much to recommend it, being a continuation of existing homes, the potential for open space for residents, and a better position for a retail unit, however, he appreciates that the meadow is unique.

He concluded that Site 2 should be discounted, and should development be required then Site 1 provides the best option.

William Hayden noted that Site 4 was described as a brown field site, however he can't remember anything being on this site, it had been used as an asparagus's field. He commented that the suggestion that Site 3 would have a village shop included as part of the proposal as a sweetener, was not really a viable option. He also highlighted with regards to Site 1, that he appreciated the meadows are a lovely, however a change in farming practice by the landowner and the meadow would be gone.

Christine Skinner (CMCG) highlighted that the Waltham Brooks a protected site, as is the Arun Valley, both have international protection, the SDNP recognise this in their own document. The meadow is a significant site for wildlife, not only being a flower rich hay meadow, when the river area floods the small animals migrate up into it clear of the water.

Tom Fox, commented that he hasn't heard about anything the people expected to live in the proposed houses. He estimated that 30 homes would generate at least 100 people, given the current population (advised as about 910 electorate), that would be an outrageous increase, He asked where would they work? Not locally as there is little employment available in the village.

Sally Cleaver noted that Site 4 this only one field over from a known site of a Roman Station, often there are many metal detectorists looking of for artefacts. She also raised concerns regarding the access to the A29 which would be very close to the bridge.

Roger Lucas, commented regarding the consultation process, the SDNPA are required to allocate land to provide a certain number of homes across the whole park. It appears that Site 1 seems to have been popped into the plan to provide a number of homes, so put a site in here at the meadow site. Proposing an Open Access Land as part of the scheme still destroys the totality of the meadow. The proposal of providing Open Space has not been thought out; who will maintain it, and the village shop will be a joke.

Sarah Lucas highlighted that issue of traffic with regards to Site 1, has anyone thought about the where it is going to access the A29, via Brook Lane, which we know would be dangerous as it is already a difficult junction, or directly onto the A29 equally difficult.

The development at Silverdale remains, the 8 homes remain unbuilt, although the developer and Network Rail are close to resolving the issue, however, we understand that building would recommence before the end of the year. From the first mention of this proposal the development has taken 10 years, and is still not completed.

Chris Skinner highlighted that the development at Silverdale, was as a result of a Housing Assessment of housing need and that the 8 homes would meet this need.

It was asked why the Parish had not made a Neighbourhood Development Plan, Cllr Nelson advised that although this issue had been considered it had not been progressed: we do have a village plan, on the website.

Richard Potter asked with regards to the field at Site 1, is it a meadow, because it is one, or because the Barlavington Estates have been paid to make it so? It is thought that the Barlavington Estate is in receipt of Higher Level Stewardship payments and to change the status of the field, Barlavington Estate would need to contact the Government to make changes.

Francesca Underwood commented that with these additional sites, which have been put forward since the consultation started, would residents be given another 12 weeks in which to comment.

Jenifer Woolgar advised that she is more interested in Site 3, as it is adjacent to their property, the access to the A29 would need to be moved further along.

Tim James commented with regard to the access to Sites 3 & 2, one of the beauties of the Coldwaltham is as you approach the village, it is great to be greeted with the view of the paddocks. He continued regarding the Settlement boundary, Site 1 on the meadow had been outside of the settlement boundary, but since the SDNPA have decided to build there, the boundary was then redrawn to accommodate it.

Sally Cleaver continued that as you come over the railway bridge approaching the village the roofs of the properties at Site 3 would be very visible. On the issue of the settlement boundary both Sites 2 & 4 are quite detached from the village, and if the boundary is being changed to include Site 1, should the boundary be further changed to accommodate these two sites, this would make the settlement area very much larger and include even more areas, with the potential for even more development.

Terry Spellman highlighted that site 4 would be in the Hardham, the local plan would be for the village of Coldwaltham, which includes the other two hamlets.

Roger Lucas asked if the village wants one larger development, i.e. an estate as it appears, or would it prefer to see a number of smaller developments.

Terry Spellman asked what is the next step?

Cllr Burr confirmed that the consultation runs to 21st Nov, the SDNP will need to digest the comments received, the document can still be changed, then will be submitted to the Secretary of State. This is then passed on to an examiner, the Planning Inspectorate, if it is confirmed then it would become law. As with district Local Plans it would be reviewed at 5-year intervals. There is a summary of this on the SDNP website.

Jim Glover agreed with Cllr Burr, on how the allocation was made in the first place. When the current proposal was first advised in March, he had attended the meeting or the SDNPA, at which the SDNPA agreed that the proposal had changed, and although the Parish Council had written to the SDNP this was not taken into consideration at this meeting. The SDNPA will pass on to the Planning

Inspectorate all comments made by residents however they will only take note of comments, which have soundness and legality.

Cllr Nelson encouraged all members of the public to send their comments to the SDNPA, though their website or comments can be written. He suggested that residents here tonight had raised many valid points which should be communicated to the SDNPA.

Jenifer Woolgar, advised that the Link is only distributed to around 600 people by subscription, run by the parochial church council and covers Bury as well as Coldwaltham.

Another resident asked, had other landowners in the other hamlets been approached, by the Parish Council, Cllr Nelson advised this was not the case: it wasn't the role of the Parish Council to approach landowners for land for potential development, SDNPA had worked on this plan for the last three years.

Cllr Burr noted that the SDNPA is a new authority, and had started the process by take over the previous SHLAAs from the previous local authorities. This Local Plan will take on a more usual form by having a live way of receiving land in the future.

Cllr Nelson thanked everyone for attending tonight and the high quality of comments, analysis and politeness at the meeting.

Meeting closed: 8:50PM