



Minutes of the meeting of Great Horkesley Parish Council **held on Monday 17th January 2022**

Those present: Cllr Mick Mead, Chairman
Cllrs Arnold (acting clerk), Baker, Duckworth, Ewing
Taverner, Wescomb-Cross and Williams

1. The Chairman welcomed 8 village residents and Cllr Darius Laws (CBC) to the meeting.
2. **Apologies:** none – all members attended the meeting
3. **Declarations of interest:** No member declared an interest in respect of any item on the agenda.
4. **Minutes of the last meeting:** It was agreed that the circulated draft minutes of the meeting held on 13th December 2021 were an accurate record and should be adopted. The minutes were signed by the Chairman.
5. **Public open forum:** no resident wished to speak about any matter other than the planning application to be considered as item 6 on the meeting agenda.
6. **Planning**

a. Application 213363: Land to the east of Nayland Road, Great Horkesley

The Chairman set out the planning history of the site, which had been selected for development following the CBC “Search for sites” exercise at the start of the review of the Borough Local Plan. After a public consultation in the village hall, the landowner had submitted an outline application for 80 houses, the number stipulated in the new draft Local Plan. This application was also consulted upon, following which the Council had held a special meeting attended by many residents. It was agreed that the application broadly matched what had been set out during the consultation so the Council had decided to support it. Outline consent had been granted and the site marketed.

The Council was now being asked to consider an full application from Barratt David Wilson Homes (BDWH) that was not based on the outline consent, most obviously because it was for 100 houses rather than 80. He and the vice-chairman Cllr Arnold had met a team from BDWH in December and were shown the material which was to be circulated in the village and published online by way of consultation. Nothing they had said at the meeting was taken into account before the consultation commenced. They had urged that there be a public exhibition of the proposals, explaining that this was normal practice in the village, but their request had been turned down.

The chairman reported that during the day he had taken five calls from the developer expressing concern about what might be said at the meeting. He had responded that the developer was welcome to send representatives to speak at the meeting. Those present could see for themselves that the developer had chosen not to do so.

At the chairman's invitation the following points were made by members of the public:

- The need for extra crossings on the main road had been largely ignored
- There was too little space between the proposed dwellings because the number had been increased
- Fire service objections had not been acted upon
- Oil tanks would be too close to houses
- The mix of houses was not matched to village needs and all the affordable housing had been crammed into the northern end instead of being evenly distributed
- The proposed public open space should be used for some of the housing
- The use of air source heat pumps would create noise pollution for Ivy Lodge Road residents
- The close-packed arrangement of houses in the northeast corner of the development would mean that existing residents would have clear, close views of multiple back gardens.
- In the same area, the boundaries between existing and new development were not adequately landscaped nor fenced to keep out intruders.
- At the southern end of the development land that was intended to be part of the public open space had been incorporated to make large gardens even larger.

Members of the Council then made the following points which were agreed:

- That the uplift in the number of houses was to be accepted there would need to be a significantly increased benefit to the village; at present, the developer appears to be offering less than agreed in the outline consent.
- There was a need to ensure that the public open space was protected from housing development in perpetuity, preferably by transfer of ownership to the parish council
- Parking during construction must be confined to the development site.
- Wheel-washing should take place on the site and frequent sweeping of Nayland Road would be necessary
- There was no indication in the application of how local surgeries would cope with the increased population
- Separate garages were still indicated adjacent to the new Scout and Guide HQ whereas the requirement was for storage space equivalent to four garages to be provided within the main building.

Members of the Council then considered the personal objection which had been prepared and submitted by the vice-chairman Cllr Arnold ahead of the CBC deadline for comments on the application to be received. This document had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. It was noted that the document covered the objections raised by residents at the meeting and by members of the Council in debate. **It was unanimously agreed** to endorse the contents of the document.

Following further discussion, the Chairman moved that the Council should find that the Barratt David Wilson Homes application to develop land to the east of Nayland Road in Great Horkesley was flawed and unacceptable and should therefore be refused and that this decision should be notified to Colchester Borough Council. **This was unanimously agreed.**

It was further agreed that Cllr Arnold (as acting clerk) should incorporate all of matters raised and agreed during the course of members' discussion of the application into a single document to be approved by the Chairman and sent to CBC to support and explain the decision of the Council to object to the application.

The vice-chairman's personal objection and the document supporting and explaining the Council's decisions are appended to these minutes to provide a more detailed record of what was considered and agreed during the course of the meeting.

b. There were no other planning applications to be considered.

7. Financial matters

a. The Chairman reported that since the departure of the employed parish clerk, he and Cllr Arnold – appointed as acting clerk – had been meeting frequently to agree invoices which should be paid using the clerk's delegated powers and then to pay those invoices via online banking. There were thus two members involved in agreeing every payment. Bank statements covering the relevant period had been brought to the meeting for inspection by members.

It was agreed that the bank mandate should be changed so that Cllrs Mead, Arnold, Baker and Williams were the only signatories. A letter to Barclays Bank requesting this change had been prepared and was circulated to the four councillors for signature.

b. It was agreed that an invoice for £78 from Vine HR, who had provided specialist advice concerning a personnel matter, should be paid.

c. It was agreed that a resident who had shown an interest in adding details of other organisations to the GHPC website should be trained to maintain and extend it.

d. It was agreed to meet the cost of Cllrs Arnold and Baker being trained to use the Rialtus Alpha software on which the Council's accounts are kept.

e. It was agreed that Cllr Baker should be able to access and have full use of the Council's online banking.

f. Cllr Arnold reported that he had discussed with a member of the CBC Finance team the difficulties he and Cllr Baker had encountered in using the accounts system to estimate the GHPC budget and precept for 2022-23. As a result the submission deadline had been moved to 14th February.

8. Highways: There were no urgent highway matters to be considered.

9. Urgent reports from members: There were no urgent reports to be received.

10. Parish Clerk vacancy: The Chairman reported that whilst it would be appropriate to look for a locum to cover the clerk's duties, a look at the EALC website would confirm that there were many vacancies and very few locums available. **It was agreed** that a locum should be appointed if it was possible to find a suitable candidates.

Cllr Arnold reported that he had used his regular column in the village news to report the vacancy and had urged residents to consider applying for the job.

11. Future meetings:

a. **It was agreed** that there would be an extra meeting of the Council on 1st February to consider the 2022-23 budget and determine the precept.

b. The dates of the February, March and April meetings were noted: 21st February, 21st March and 11th April.

c. **It was agreed** that the Annual Parish Council Meeting would be brought forward to 9th May to enable the acting clerk to attend. It was also agreed that a revised date for the Annual Parish Meeting would be set once the relevant statutory restrictions had been checked.

12. Exclusion of the public: Members of the public attending the meeting had already left so the motion to exclude them was not moved.

13. Matters arising from the resignation of the parish clerk.

During discussion, members were advised of the progress which had been made towards

- assembling sufficient reliable information from the Council's accounts database to produce the 2022-23 budget;
- advising Barclays Bank of necessary changes;
- establishing the extent to which the Council's insurance would cover costs arising from the unexpected resignation;
- understanding the processes in which the Council might need to be engaged in the months ahead;
- ensuring that the operation of the village hall was unaffected.

The Council agreed that satisfactory progress had been made and thanked Cllrs Arnold, Baker and Mead for the extra work they had undertaken to achieve this.

Agreed by the Council to be an accurate record

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Cllr Mick Mead, Chairman

5th September 2022