

HERNE & BROOMFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the of Herne & Broomfield Parish Council Planning & Highways Committee held at Herne Mill, Wootton Room, on Thursday 5th November 2015 at 7.30pm for the purpose of transacting the following business.

Present: Cllr Blatherwick, Cllr Mitchell, Cllr Moore, Cllr Taylor, Cllr Sargent and Cllr Harvey and Cllr O'Donnell

- 1) Apologies for absence. None
- 2) To receive declarations of interest on items on the agenda. Cllr Sargent Strode Farm.
- 3) The minutes of the planning meeting held on 24th September 2015, were agreed as a correct and accurate record.
- 4) Matters arising. None

Public Adjournment. Residents wishing to speak need to confirm they are registered electors in this parish, by giving their name and addresses.

Planning Applications discussed

CA/15/02139	23 Albion Lane	Single storey rear ext	06/11/15
This application was approved.			
CA/15/02210	1 Bogshole Lane	Demolition of existing garage and rear ext and erection two storey ext	13/11/15
Although not objecting members were concerned about the massing and the proximity to 123A Margate Road.			
CA/15/02173	52 School Lane	Demolish existing double garage and replace with new double garage with pitch roof	13/11/15
Members questioned the use of this garage as it has cavity walls and rear windows, it could be used as accommodation.			
CA/15/02193	6 Ridgeway Walk	Works to Poplar trees	13/11/15
This application was approved.			
CA/15/01317	Strode Farm	Amendments	06/11/15
Members agreed to object to this application. We understand that this IS a full application for the changes and widening of Bullockstone Road and the installation of traffic lights, where there is currently a roundabout at the entrance to Herne Village, but there are no detailed drawings. It is also openly acknowledged that highways design and highways works are a precise discipline where the consultant will be able to accurately assess the impact of any development on trees as they will need to establish road levels, road construction etc. To be quite so fuzzy and imprecise suggests that they are either trying to conceal the truth or that this somewhat woolly language has been offered as a pacifier and is not bedded in reality or deliverability. It is the view of the Parish Council that the Applicant needs to be held to account and must deliver meaningful, precise drawings which demonstrate the impact of a new roadway on the existing vegetation and to provide more detail, in particular road widths, whether or not there will be a pavement, how the banks will be dealt with, the character of street			

lighting etc all of which will have a significant impact on the surrounding area and could potentially change the character of this road forever.

With regard to the installation of traffic lights at the junction with A291, these will urbanise the area. When the roundabout was installed space was left for a 7.3mtr wide road, which should be adequate to take the additional traffic. The HGV traffic etc is very unlikely to use the estate road through the development, and will continue to travel through Herne Village

Bullockstone Road.

If the drawings are read correctly, part of the proposal reflects a significant alteration to the existing hedgerow together with the potential loss of a number of trees which are indicated on URB001-02A under the heading of “retained where possible” suggesting that excavation can happen underneath the tree roots “to be managed on site.” In addition, there is the planting of new hedgerow.

The proposed drawings raise a number of issues. The first is, that this part of Bullockstone Road has clear characteristics of a rural lane, in stark contrast to the more open character of Bullockstone Road to the north where it adjoins the Thanet Way and where the road character has been scarred by alterations to the highway.

This character is formed in part by the existing bank, hedgerow and tree canopies all of which give it a very particular feel which is an important component of rural infrastructure, of which this road is clearly part. It is also good for wildlife.

The proposal seeks to significantly alter this sense of containment and rural feel. One has to seriously question whether the term “trees to be retained where possible. Excavation around tree roots to be managed on site” is a statement that holds any meaningful significance when one considers that under normal circumstances construction is avoided within root protection areas. In a number of cases the trees sit on a rising bank all of which suggests that the trees to the west of Bullockstone Road are potentially vulnerable and could easily be lost, which will dramatically change the character of this lane as with the loss of the trees will come the open aspect to the west with the view eventually contained by a new hedgerow, which in the early stages will be feathered and unsubstantial, the conclusion being that the character of this road will not be enhanced or fortified in any way but will actually be lost forever.

There are also issues as to the ownership of some of the land in the proposals, which the parish council has been given to understand is not within the control of the applicant.

It is not unreasonable to state that the Parish does not have arboricultural expertise but one knows from bitter experience that any works adjacent to trees, particularly highways works which require construction depths and this scheme is not proposing a “no dig” strategy. Consequently the impact of the new road construction will have a detrimental effect on the trees and in turn the sense of rural character. Any build-up of construction either under or over root areas will potentially suffocate the trees unbalancing them on one side, the result of which is that a mature tree avenue will be lost and I believe the terminology on the drawings “retained where possible” clearly acknowledges this point through a somewhat half-hearted and non-committal statement.

In addition to this the oaks scheduled for removal currently have TPO’s on them, this is not mentioned in the application.

It is our belief that the proposal is once again sadly lacking in detail. This IS a full application and it will have a significant impact on the local character; surely the Applicant must be pressed to deliver detail? It is simply not acceptable for an Applicant to suggest that the trees may be lost.

The junction with Bullockstone Road and Canterbury Road has not been covered in any

detail, this is already an accident blackspot, therefore any alterations to the junction have to be right, residents living in that area are very concerned about this.

Added to this, one must be concerned with regard to the impact of the road adjacent to a Grade II listed building and a locally listed building. Granted the relationship of the road will not alter in principle but the traffic generation will increase significantly, which will bring with it noise, pollution, vibration and the potential for long term structural damage. The Applicant has been silent on these points but from experience the Council clearly acknowledges these potential problems and if it was to transpire that the Council did not hold the Applicant to account for the impact of their work then the Council, by dint of ignoring their responsibility, will, one imagines, be exposed to future claims, which one would suspect is a dangerous position for the Council to enter into.

The issues of flooding on the Strode Farm site itself are of great concern and from the drawings provided it will be necessary for lagoons to be placed all over the site, leaving virtually no open space for recreation such as play areas and kick about areas of a reasonable size. Southern Water has stated that the drainage system in the area is inadequate. These plans also directly oppose the Environment Agency advice. Is the inadequacy of the foul sewer at the pumping station or the sewage treatment works? The change of use of the lagoon to allotments will increase the flooding issues and mean that the area will only be suitable to grow rice!

We know from past experience that lack of space for children to play in, on a site of this size, causes real issues with anti-social behavior. It is no good installing additional equipment in Cherry Orchard as the equipment needs to be on the development itself.

With regard to the demolition of the existing properties, the location of which is not shown on the drawings, the parish council strongly objects to the bungalow within the conservation area being demolished, they do not consider, looking at the plans that this is necessary and it could be retained.

It is also considered that the proposed height of the new dwellings is excessive, 2.5 & 3 storey dwellings proposed behind the existing bungalows, is just not acceptable.

There is no school provision or community facilities on the site.

There are concerns about the number of access points from the new estate onto Lower Herne Road and the increase in traffic using what is an extremely narrow section of road.

In conclusion, it is the Parish Council's view that the proposal provides very little additional information to mitigate the impact of the scheme and seeks to soften the blow of development through a nicely rendered drawing, preferring instead to disguise the true impact through the absence of meaningful, tangible detailed information. Bearing in mind these road alignments will be based on traffic studies, the absence of such detail is unacceptable in our view and is clearly being concealed. Geometric details for the road design need to be shown.

Consequently, the Parish Council would like to raise their objection to this proposal and would like the opportunity to review the position once a more comprehensive and detailed application has been submitted, on which a meaningful response can be prepared.

We understand from the response from KCC, that they have requested a primary school on the site, the parish council welcomes this, due to the fact that all the schools in the area are over capacity.

As yet there has not been a response from KCC Highways, as, we understand, the officer dealing with this application is on sick leave. We would like to know what the Highways views are on these proposals and who will be responsible for delivering the alterations etc to both Bullockstone Road and any alterations on the roundabout.

CA/15/02254	14 Dove Close	Replace windows & doors	20/11/15
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This is a conservation area and the properties were designed to reflect this. The UPVC windows proposed are heavy looking and members considered that it would be an erosion of the character of the area.

Therefore members objected to this application.

CA/15/01799	Land Huntsman & Horn	Amended plans	09/11/15
Members approved this application.			
CA/15/02176	23 Strode Park Rd	Replace rear lounge window with doors and construction of wooden balcony with stairs	13/11/15
Members approved this application.			
CA/15/0222	8 Barley Close	Erection of fencing	13/11/15
Members did not like this application as visually it is detrimental to the streetscene, it is oppressive and very close to the edge of the carriageway. This is also a retrospective application.			
CA/15/02243	25 Gorse Lane	Removal of existing rear conservatory and erection of two storey side ext and single 1.5 storey rear ext with associated alterations	27/11/15
Members approved this application.			

Correspondence received. Appeal lodged 91 Mill Lane, demolition of existing bungalow and erection of two dwellings.

Applications Approved by CCC: CA/15/01859 25 Pigeon Lane Proposed single-storey rear extension, replacement windows and replacement dormer to front elevation.

CCC planning applications refused: None.

To discuss any Highways Issues. The clerk gave a report on the Highways meeting she had attended earlier in the day.

The start of the meeting dealt with the financial restraints £1M has been saved by losing staff.

Kent will be split into 3 sections whereas it is currently two.

They are looking at changing delivery with a clearer idea of outcomes looking at an effective highway service making journeys easy and safe. They want to look at educating young people to be safer on the roads. There will be a consultation asking residents what they consider to be important.

Clive Pearman Deputy Cabinet member for Environment & Transport told attendees that they could only increase the council tax by 1.99% or they would have to have a referendum which would cost thousands of pounds. There is currently a consultation on the budget, people were urged to respond.

He said that Highways contracts would be squeezed, their aim was for a safe and efficient road network.

Parish Caretaker scheme was discussed it was explained that setting this up was time consuming and the pc's need to have people to spend time on doing this and also accessing the funding for it.

A list of suitable jobs would need to be put together, there would not be any working on the carriageway. The post would need to be advertised and KALC have information on their website to help with setting up. Equipment would need to be purchased, a van, trailer, mowers etc and there is insurance vehicle tax etc. The salary paid by the parishes that have set this up is £9.25ph.

This is an ideal opportunity to work with PCSO and wardens.

Stage 2 would include monitoring and monthly meetings with delegated powers and the quality and flexibility of the work. The employed person could clean road signs cut back vegetation etc. It is also an opportunity to work with vulnerable people in the community who can't cut back trees, hedges etc.

The villages that have done this did increase their precept by £3pa.

Lighting

This was the next thing discussed. The cost of lighting is £6.4Mpa. 1,200 lights have been turned off completely with 60,000 on part night setting, this has saved £1M. All KCC lights will be

changed to LED, they are looking at a 15 year maintenance service, and a central management system.

The CMS will allow them to remotely manage the lighting and change operation times as required, rather than sending a crew out. There are 118,000 LED to do which will take 38 months. Residential areas will take 14 months, Main routes 15 months and town centres 9 months. Parishes will be notified when they are coming to an area.

This system will allow automatic reporting of faults and will have an energy and maintenance saving, they will have remote control of the lights allowing dimming. The cost of this will be about £40M. KCC could not afford the cost of this and have therefore made an agreement with Salix for a £20M interest free loan. KCC will work with parishes and Districts to convert their lights. Everyone was urged to complete the Lighting Survey that is underway. The result of this will then go to committee in January.

Terry from KALC gave a short talk on the work of KALC and especially some specific issues such as illegal HGV parking, Op Stack, Devolution etc. Terry reported that NALC had confirmed that if referendum principles are applied to parishes it would only be the much larger councils.

The final talks were on Major Projects in the pipeline, of which the A2 slip was mentioned along with the Sturry Link Road, which has its challenges, Network Rail and a river. No mention of the Herne Link Road. Some funding has been secured they will be trying to access £120M from Single Local Growth Fund for approved capital projects. They are looking at around £220M for the approved schemes.

The next issue was resurfacing. Various surveys are carried out, mechanical surveys, this tests skid resistance on all A & B roads and most C. Scanner looks at the general condition on all AB&C and locally important unclassified. There are also visual inspections by inspectors and stewards on unclassified roads. Monthly inspections are made on main roads and 6 monthly on minor roads.

Feedback from parishes on local needs is important as is input from residents and the stewards.

This information helps to put together a resurfacing programme.

They need to be cost effective and get value for money, have the right technique at the right time.

They spoke about costs Surface dressing £4 sq mtr, Micro surfacing £8 sq mtr, Machine £25-£35 sq mtr, Reconstruction £150+ sq mtr.

This year they have resurface 550 miles of road. Priority for the future is maintaining the overall condition. Cuts in funding are going to be very challenging. New contracts will be put in place.

The last issue was road works.

Utilities etc need a permit, these and the Lane rental scheme, has ensured that 98% of work has finished on time. This has meant less roadworks affecting the rush hour traffic. SGN have a Core & Vac this was likened to keyhole surgery. They recently dealt with gas leaks using this system, it was done over two nights instead of one week with traffic lights required. Following work by utilities, this is inspected during and after the work has been completed, the work is guaranteed for 2 years. If the work needs repairing within the 2 years, the 2 year period starts again.

There was a session just before the break on each table. Parishes were asked if they would increase the precept to do the work KCC can no longer carry out; cleaning road signs, cutting back vegetation etc. Views were mixed. It was stated that the joint caretaker scheme was not suitable for the majority of parish councils as they were so diverse, so partnership working is not always the answer. The clerk told the story of the litter pickers and complained about the red tape involved with doing anything. She also said we had a Caretaker that we employed and also volunteers who litter picked and cut back vegetation.

Meeting Closed 10.20pm