

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CHELFORD PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT CHELFORD VILLAGE SCHOOL ON 7<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2010**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Mrs K Gildon, A. Norbury, J. Leach, T. Boon, B. Tyre R. Roycroft and Mrs J. Sims (Clerk). Also Greg Williams (Stobarts) and Denise Emery.

**MINUTES:** The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> November 2009 circulated prior to the meeting were passed and signed by Cllr Gildon.

Cllr Gildon welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **MATTERS ARISING**

**Affordable Housing.** Cllr Gildon introduced Greg Williams and Denise Emery to the Council.

Denise Emery set out the proposals for the Stobart site. The object is to make a planning application for the site and on approval the site would be passed to a developer. The site is on the company books and couldn't be sold at a loss so a developer might find the provision of affordable housing a problem because of the cost. In addition it would require a number of reports and surveys costing in excess of £100,000 just to prepare the application.

The proposals for the site included:-

1. Residential properties - this would include affordable housing, which would be built on the section of the site which is in the green belt. The number of houses provided would be about 120 and these would include a variety of house sizes and the proposed 30-36 affordable houses. The original number of 70 affordable houses had been found not to be viable and it was agreed the scheme may not include just affordable housing for example it may include houses for joint ownership. Starter homes may also be an option.
2. Employment uses. This included office accommodation and light industrial units the mix of which has yet to be valued. This would have to include a provision for car parking.
3. Open spaces which could include facilities for the Village for example sports facilities or even a small community hall.

Denise Emery stated that there is a shortage of land for housing in the old Macclesfield Borough and that it was a good time to put in an application because of the future need for housing in the Cheshire East area.

Various points were raised regarding any plans:-

1. The need for starter homes as well as affordable housing.
2. Would there be two separate developers for the normal and affordable housing.
3. Forty houses for affordable housing were more than the Village needed and concern was expressed about who would have control over allocation especially on the allocation of houses to surrounding villages.
4. On the proposed number of affordable houses it was stated that less than 10 houses were needed for rental. These houses and those with mixed tenure would cover demand but there was still not enough demand for forty houses.

DE replied that there would be a mixture of housing and that one developer may do both. Any queries regarding the allocation of the affordable housing could be put to the Council or the relevant Housing Association.

Cllr Roycroft enquired what other facilities would be provided for example access to the site may be a problem and a crossing may be required for pedestrians.

DE replied that the existing entrance would be used. In reply to a query whether it would be feasible to use the other side of the flats she stated that it would be difficult with the position of the Farm Supplies site.

Cllr Leach asked if similar challenges had been met at previous sites.

DE replied that Highways Department would have to report but she felt that any problems were not insurmountable.

Cllr Norbury stated that the number of cars involved (120 houses x 2cars) would not be much different from the traffic into the Irlam's site during its heyday.

DE put forward the view that additional housing in the Village would be welcomed especially by the School and local shopkeepers. The depot is designated for employment and that although the original company was small and outgrew the site, the site still has a commercial value and if marketed would get some interest.

Cllr Leach expressed the view that the part of the plan devoted to small industrial units would provide employment opportunities for local people.

DE replied that there would be opportunities for not just local people and that with the proposed provision of 30-36 mixed affordable housing it was important that there was a Public Consultation so the Villagers were given the opportunity to give their views. It was important to get local support before the draft scheme could go to consultation.

Greg Williams said that they needed to go back to the parties concerned for further consultation, but felt it was important that the public were consulted as the parties would not want to spend money on drawing up plans only for the public not to like them. The provision of public open spaces could be considered, which could include sports facilities or other amenities.

Facilities suggested included the provision of an all weather sports pitch, a drop in centre or a hotel. It was felt to be important that community space and facilities were included in the concept.

Cllr Tyre stated that the Parish Council would support the provision of affordable houses and the development of the site.

DE replied that it was important that the scheme proposed could be sanctioned by the PC.

Cllr Gildon said that the public needed to know what was been proposed and that it should be raised at the Village Meeting. She then thanked Greg and Denise for attending the meeting.

Cllr Gildon then introduced Mr Howard Elliot, an independent planning consultant, who had been asked to report on the options available in the Village on behalf of the Parish Council. The proposal was to produce a report which could be adopted by the Council. It was

accepted that the final decision would be taken by Cheshire East who may not agree with the view of the Council and Village.

The agreed principles on how to approach the report were:-

1. The desire for housing in the Village – the mix to include affordable housing.
2. The utilisation of existing sites and the consideration of village boundaries.
3. The A537 was regarded as a major issue.
4. A proposed development should form a coherent structure with the main village.
5. The two main employment sites should be considered – the provision of industrial units.
6. Provision of community facilities.

Cllr Norbury stated that the problem of car parking should be considered as the Village is in desperate need of car parking facilities.

HE replied that as the Stobart site provides extended parking for the market a policy would need to be developed to replace it if the site was developed. If the Market relocated parking would not be an issue but it was also possible that Stobarts might retain some of the car parking facilities. Parking is currently an issue as the bulk of the provision is on one side of the road and the lack of a road crossing is a problem.

The site on the A537 opposite Mere Court on which Arcadia Estates proposed a development of 36 houses did not meet any of the Council's requirements. The proposal to build the houses in the middle of a green belt field made no attempt to incorporate it into the village boundary. The only advantage to the site was that as a green field site the houses could be built quickly.

Various comments were made regarding the position of Cheshire East on this proposal:-

1. It was difficult to gauge CE's position on this site.
2. It was felt that the main aim of CE was to build houses as it was below target for the provision of houses in the area.
3. Would CE need the Council's approval?
4. It was felt that the proposal would need to be supported by both the Council and the Residents.

HE replied that the Rural Housing Enabler will have an agenda which may not incorporate the views of the Council, but plans for development in the green belt are usually refused except for small housing schemes. He felt that the scheme was unsuitable and was not convinced that it was safe in highway terms as it was one of the worse places for a road crossing. He also felt that the term affordable housing needed to be defined as the 36 houses did not match the requirements expressed in the Village Survey. In all there was quite a list of planning reasons to oppose the plans.

Cllr Leach said that if the plans were passed it may be possible to appeal to the Government.

Cllr Gildon added that the developer may not want the problem of an appeal as they may just want a quick turnover.

HE agreed that Arcadia would probably hope that the fact that they could turn it round quickly would be a deciding factor. It Stobarts still proposed to build affordable housing this would provide a different mix of houses which would be preferable.

There are two obvious sites in Chelford for development these are Stobarts and the Market if they were both available:-

1. The Market site has fewer problems as it doesn't breach the greenbelt and is also a high traffic generator, which could be an advantage to the Village if it was used for housing. This site is also the larger of the two but would not be available quickly as the Market would have to find a suitable re-location site. As the Local Authority will be looking at the Strategic Housing Policy for the next 20 years it is important to keep the support for this site as it may be important in the future.
2. The Stobarts site contains a high element of greenbelt, which means that proposed uses would have to be appropriate on that element of the site, for example open spaces or affordable housing. Five bedroom houses would not be acceptable on that section of the site. The cost of preparing the site would be the much greater of the two and because of problems with the highway there would also be higher costs for highway works. However, this site could be available immediately. The use of this site would resolve the future use of that side of the Village and could result in the acquisition of some public facilities for the Residents. If this site was not used for housing planning permission for an alternative use could be applied for. The continuing threat of a waste processing facility on this site may be quite low but must still be considered an option.

Other sites considered included:-

1. The land behind Dixon Drive – this site was too small and also involves possible contamination issues.
2. The site on the other side of the railway line would have problems with pedestrian access to the Village.
3. Carter Lane has access problems.

All three sites were in the green belt and were outside the village perimeter.

Cllr Gildon thanked Mr Elliot for putting an excellent report together so quickly.

**Village Meeting.** It was agreed that the Village Meeting planned for the 12.1.10 should be cancelled because of the weather. This was re-arranged for the 26.1.10.

The Agenda would be as follows:-

1. Introduction
2. Presentation
3. Question time.

It was agreed that it was to the Councils advantage to be able to present a good professional report to the Villagers. A copy of the report can also be sent to Cheshire East.

It was also felt that both the Arcadia Estates and Stobart proposals would create strong opinions in the Village and that the meeting would give people a chance to express their views on both schemes. It was also agreed that any information should be put out on the Village Website before Stobarts could publish its own proposals.

**Parking in the Village.** This item was held over until the next meeting.

**Crown Land.** Cllr Michell could not attend the meeting so was unable to report on any correspondence with the Land Registry regarding the ownership of the tree belt.

**Notice Board by the Railway Embankment.** Ownership is still to be established.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

1. CE – Standards Committee Agenda - 23.11.09
2. CE – Inclusion on the Council's LDF Database
3. Cheshire Community Action – AGM Report
4. Boundary Committee – Electoral Review of CE Unitary Authority
5. CE – Training Sessions for Borough and Parish Councillors
6. Cheshire Police Authority – 'Have Your Say' Meetings
7. CE – Draft CE Local List SPD
8. The Cheshire Endowment

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

09/3391M Mere Hills Farm – Two storey rear extension. APPROVED

**ACCOUNTS PASSED FOR PAYMENT**

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| 1. E.On – Village lighting | 26.87 |
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**ANY OTHER BUSINESS - None**