

WOODMANCOTE PARISH COUNCIL
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OPEN MEETING
CALL FOR SITES INITIATIVE

Minutes of Meeting held in the Parish Hall on Tuesday 5th May 2015 at 7.00p.m.
(Members of the Public were invited to attend)

Mrs L Bannister – Clerk to the Council
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Present: Cllrs. D. Austin (Chairman), C. Broucke, A. Underwood, M. Grimes, P. Williams and members of Steering Group D. Linford, R. Lunn, L. Austin, M. Clark, C. Blazeby & P. Batchelor
L. Bannister (Clerk)

Others Present: 23 members of the public
Agents Chris Carey, Andrew Metcalfe and Tim Rodway

1. Introduction

Cllr. Austin thanked everyone for coming and explained that it is a requirement of the Neighbourhood Plan that site owners/agents are invited to present their site.

So far there has been a very good response to the call for sites advertisement – six sites have been put forward at the moment.

All members of the public were given a handout which included a map of the sites and a brief explanation of them.

Each site owner/agent will have 10 minutes to represent their site, and then the public will have 10 minutes to ask questions.

Woodmancote Parish Council do not promote any of these sites, the aim of this meeting was to fulfil the requirements of the plan.

2. Peacock Paddock

2.1. Introduction

H. Linfield (site owner) introduced the site. H. Linfield has been a resident for nearly 40 years, and built the house in 1976. In those days Swains was very small, but has since been developed considerably, and has recently been given consent to develop a further 30%.

The site being put forward is on a site close to Swains and so H. Linfield feels this is an opportunity for the Parish because of its proximity to Swains.

H. Linfield introducing Tim Rodway.

T. Rodway is a planning consultant based in Shoreham. He is assisting in promoting this site in the South West corner of the Parish. There is an existing house on the site which they are proposing to retain, although this is not definite and will depend on the needs of the Parish. The driveway to the development will be taken through on the west side of the current driveway to Peacock Paddock, and will lead to the back of the main house and parallel to Swains. T. Rodway showing this on a map. Swains have recently had permission for a 30% increase. This will assist in screening development, as will a dense tree screen which will largely be retained (apart from the driveway). T. Rodway has discussed this site with AirS to develop an understanding of the Parish needs, and believes this site fulfils these.

A mix of units is proposed, but the site is flexible to allow for the needs of the Parish.

The houses will be built with eco friendly features to reduce their carbon footprint. Views into the site are minimal. There is no impact on the South Downs National Park. The houses will be built in keeping with the local vernacular.

The site is currently an open field. There are no landscape features of any note. There should be very little constraint. T. Rodway has discussed the site with a drainage consultant, and the impression they are giving at the moment is favourable.

Regarding the social sustainability they think the site meets the criteria as they will provide a range of units for younger families and people looking to downsize.

They are in conversation with Swains about providing products for the residents. There are lots of facilities in close proximity – church, public footpath into Woodmancote and Henfield (so there is no reliance on cars). The site is approximately 1km from Henfield which has a vast range of facilities. It is close to bus stops, which links to neighbouring towns and villages.

Heating & hot water could be provided through various means. Rainwater will be to soakaways, and solar panels will provide electricity (which will reduce the reliance on the grid).

The site would provide an increase on local services.

Handouts were available to view different proposed site layouts.

2.2. Questions

Q Where will the entrance to the driveway be located?

A 20-30 metres west of the drive into Peacock Paddock. T. Rodway highlighting on the map the location.

Q This site was refused for development before because of accidents on the A281. Why would it be different this time?

A The initial discussions with highway consultants have confirmed that the access to the road has excellent visibility and scope for development. The increase in comings and goings from Swains will increase traffic anyway, and compared to that, the increase in traffic from this development will be slight.

Q Approximately how many units in total are being proposed?

A A range of 5-14.

Q It seems that because Swains are increasing their environmental impact, this is being done off the back off of that. Why are these sites being put forward when the historical needs of the Parish has come from windfall?

A The houses from the 'windfall' development tend to be larger and on large plots of land. These houses would be smaller.

Statement from member of the public If we start to put properties in the area, there is not sufficient infrastructure.

Q Could younger people afford to live in Woodmancote? Services are not here to satisfy them.

A Consultants have advised that there is a justification for smaller units, although T. Rodway accepted that the consultant did not explain where that information came from. Swains have been granted permission for a café, which would provide a service for younger parishioners.

Q What about doctor's surgeries and schools, and car parks, which already are at capacity.

A The site is close enough to Henfield so that they would take the majority of the overflow, and they don't see how this few units would have a big effect.

Cllr. Austin explaining that the sustainability appraisal will answer these questions.

Q Information on the internet suggests that the average value of properties on the Brighton Road is £800,000. Does the site owner/agent believe this is affordable for younger people?

A No, but this is not the expected price of these units.

Q Where will the young people be accommodated?

A H. Linfield is hoping the younger people interested in housing in Woodmancote are those that grew up in Woodmancote.

Cllr. Austin again impressing that all of these sites will be subject to the sustainability appraisal.

3. Land adjacent to A281 & Blackstone Lane

Cllr. Austin introducing Andrew Metcalfe, the agent for the landowner.

3.1. Introduction

A. Metcalfe handing out documents to members of the public to view. Giving out handouts.

A. Metcalfe is acting on behalf of the landowner Mr James. Stressing that they are not promoting any particular scheme, but are putting land forward for the Parish Council to do with what they propose (within limits).

The site is 4 acres and within the parish of Woodmancote. There are good transport links and bus stops adjacent to the land. The site is an area of grass and is not used much by the landowner.

A. Metcalfe has prepared a SWOT analysis of the site. This can be viewed on the handout, but the main points are:-

Strengths – sustainable development could be put on this site. It's on the road and close to bus stops. A very sustainable site. Part or all of site could be development. One of the options could see up to 48 houses. After a local needs assessment this may be viewed as necessary.

Weaknesses – a power line crosses the site, this might need to be buried or moved. Access onto Blackstone Lane is not suitable for development without road works. It is currently a locked gate.

Threat - of Mayfields or something similar, which was what prompted the landowner to put forward this site.

A number of concept plans have been prepared. They go through a range of options. That is the approach they are taking. They want WPC to tell them what the parish needs. The housing numbers are for a range of low-medium density. Low would reflect houses and size of plots in area. The last option is to have an element of community use in there.

The site is 4 acres but as much or as little as the plan needs could be allocated.

Once the sustainability survey has been done they'll have a better idea of what could be accommodated.

This is the logical place for development in the parish and is in line with the vision paper which the Neighbourhood Plan is working with.

3.2. Questions

Q Mr James has confirmed to a few members of the public that he would never build houses on this site – what has changed his mind?

A A. Metcalfe does not know the answer, but will ask him and send a copy of this to the Clerk for circulation.

Q Why was A. Metcalfe employed by Mr James?

A Because he is currently doing other work for him.

Q The proposed entrance onto the A281 would be opposite Bramlands Lane. Do they view that as an issue?

A There are various options for access, and is more than happy to take advice from the highways department. Perhaps a speed reduction would be beneficial? From A. Metcalfe's experience, he does not see an issue with the access.

Q What did the questionnaire show as the need of the Parish?

A Cllr. Austin saying we can only view the result of the questionnaire as a reaction as the housing figures will come from something else entirely. This is not a decision to be made by the Steering Group, it will ultimately be led by parishioners. Presumably what will be put forward will be best for the Parish.

Q Many of the houses in the area are of a historical nature, will they be happy to overlook modern builds?

A A tree buffer is planned.

Q Plans show Mr James will be buffered from the development, but not the residents of Woodmancote.

A Mr James has not had any input into these drawings, these plans are the outcome of somebody else's work. Although screening the development is aimed, ultimately housing cannot be hidden completely.

Q Why is Mr James doing this? He has said he did not want to build houses on that land, and he has told other people the same thing.

A A. Metcalfe is just doing what he has been asked to do and has not been a party to these conversations.

Q Footnotes to the planning practice guidance to be considered suggest that the site needs to be developed within 5 years, not 20 (which is the length of the plan).

A A. Metcalfe is not aware of this document.

Q Is Mr James planning to sell his property after development has taken place?

A A. Metcalfe does not know the answer to this.

A. Metcalfe thinks this is a viable proposition in his opinion, but accepts that he doesn't live in Woodmancote. This site was put forward on back of Mayfield Market Towns, to offer an alternative for HDC so that they are not pressured into a similar 'Mayfield' scheme to boost housing numbers for their plan.

Q HDC have refused Mayfield, so why are we discussing it?

A HDC has not fulfilled all of the requirements of their plan. They have said they need to provide 1500 houses from the parishes (750 from plans and 750 from windfall. Although they think they know where most of these will be located, they haven't yet got plans for all of this allocation.

Q Where would the pylon be moved?

A There are a number of options, one of which is to bury it.

Q Is the planning permission history of the site known to A. Metcalfe? This was refused in 2001 for two houses, and also refused after going to appeal.

A There is now a completely different planning framework in place which could affect the decision of HDC.

Cllr. Austin stressing that nothing has yet been specified about what is going to go on the site.

4. Stockmans, Blackstone Lane

Cllr. Austin introducing Chris Carey, the agent for the landowners.

4.1. Introduction

C. Carey is a surveyor and planning advisor. He has been instructed to promote all of their land for a single detached dwelling.

C. Carey showing the public a map of the site and photos, and explaining where the plot is proposed.

The house is Grade II listed, and is within a conservation area, which the site abuts but is outside of. It's currently used as a garden but is not a greenfield site.

This is not like the schemes which have just been presented, and would not adversely impact on the character of Blackstone. It can be serviced from all existing services. The site is on the edge of the settlement.

The landowners want to build a high quality development. It will most likely need listed building consent. They want it to be environmentally sustainable, with a low carbon footprint, using renewables, and complying with the National Planning Policy Framework. It won't be too big, around 1,000 square foot, so won't adversely affect the setting.

The site is adjacent to a large farm.

The site is reasonably well screened. In terms of what WPC want, not much has been circulated yet, so they have not had much to work with.

However, C. Carey quoted from the vision paper and thinks the proposal marries in with this.

The landowners are considering living in the property, but are undecided at the moment.

The plan for the house is consistent with current properties in Blackstone, but they accept it will need to be deliverable within constraints of the conservation area.

4.2. Questions

Q What is the situation with the listed building – is the site within the curtilage of the listed building?

A English Heritage would see whole site as a listed building, so they accept this would need to be taken into consideration.

Q Would this encourage others to put forward part of their own plots?

A It's hard to answer that, but if they haven't put forward their sites into the Neighbourhood Plan they may not have the weight behind it.

Q Where can they get copy of the vision paper?

A Cllr. Austin saying this will go on the website very shortly.

Statement by member of the public Can understand objections to local development. What isn't being explained is that 37,000 new homes are being allocated (by HDC). District Councils are under instruction from government to allocate these houses on small sites, and this will allow the volume builders to come in. If a few small sites are included this may not allow the volume builders.

C. Carey explaining the HDC plan will have to allow for 750 houses each year.

5. Land adjacent to Firlands

5.1. Introduction

The landowner could not attend this meeting so Cllr. Austin reading out information supplied by the landowner as follows:-

Could be Single Storey or cottage style units particularly suited to elderly downsizing or first time accommodation for young people. With an emphasis on economic running costs providing adequate parking for both residents and visitors. Patio style low maintenance garden areas with adjoining fields developed as wild flower meadows.

It would help to fulfil a need for elderly residents of the parish to capitalise and release their larger properties and to downsize whilst remaining in the parish. Also young people need an economic rental proposition as an alternative to moving out of the parish whilst saving for their first home. So in essence, a mixture of elderly and young people, hopefully maintaining a tranquil, reserved atmosphere with no negative impact on the existing nature of the parish.

Cllr. Austin explaining that this is a site of about 18 acres which is split into three sections.

The entire site is brownfield. There are redundant buildings which the proposal is geared to. There are no specifics about what is planned, and so this site can only be included in the plan as a recommendation for development.

5.2. Questions

Q What are the transport and access implications?

A The sustainability assessment will deal with this.

Q Are gardens proposed? The area is currently all concrete.

A Patios are suggested.

This site, like all the others, will be subject to all checks to see if it is suitable.

6. Woodhouse Farm

Cllr. Austin introducing Colin Broucke, the landowner of this site.

6.1. Introduction

The site is situated on the B2116 on a private drive. This goes through Park Farm and is just before Bilsborough. This is currently agricultural land which C. Broucke's family has worked on for many years.

It is proposed that two or three bedroom residential homes are built, and three holiday homes are developed (converted from barns which are currently there). He believes three medium value residential homes would sit comfortably on the site.

The holiday homes could positively affect the local employment as they will need cleaning and maintenance.

The residential homes will support local housing needs.

C. Broucke believes a change of use of the land from agriculture is now necessary to keep up with modern times.

6.2. Questions

Q How many units are proposed?

A 2-3, but this is up for debate.

Q Will the three bedroom houses be for sale or rent?

A Probably for sale.

Q The access drive is already busy, how would this development affect this?

A This would probably make no difference as there are already vans going in and out for business purposes.

7. Farm Hill

Cllr. Austin introducing Patrick Mitchell.

7.1. Introduction

P. Mitchell is a semi-retired 69 year old chartered quantity surveyor. He and his wife Hazel Mitchell bought Farm Hill nearly 26 years ago and moved into the property in March 1990.

They have two sons who no longer live at home, and they find the house too big for their current needs.

They have spent the last two years looking for a smaller property in the area to suit their retirement needs, but have been unsuccessful.

The proposal is to offer the field adjacent to Farm Hill as a suitable location. This was originally leased to them as a pony paddock, which they brought 23 years ago.

They would like to erect a single dwelling - house or bungalow with a double garage.

The site already has grassed access from a field gate to the A281 and this would need upgrading to highway standards. The access is on a straight section of the road with good sight lines in both directions.

All services are close by, with drainage being dealt with on site (rainwater to soakaways and foulwater to 'Klargester' or similar).

The build would be sympathetic to the Sussex 'style' and would be constructed to provide good insulation and low maintenance. It would also have solar panels to assist with hot water, heating and electricity.

This would provide a smaller unit which is much needed in Woodmancote, and they would be able to stay in the area with a more manageable property.

Plans would be prepared by a professional firm.

7.2. Questions

None were asked.

8. Conclusion

Everyone should read the vision paper. The comments from this evening are all minuted and will inform the Steering Group when they go forward to the next stage. Cllr. Austin thanking everyone for coming.

The Steering Group committee will now consider all information and look at potential sites and numbers of development required, and will largely be led by what the Parish has said.

AirS will then prepare a community evidence paper. The sites will all be sent to our statutory stakeholders for them to consider.

Then the pre submission plan will be prepared for comments.

Once the comments have been reviewed the plan will be sent to an independent examiner. If it is accepted it will go to everyone in the Parish for referendum. If 51% of responses are positive it will be adopted by HDC and the Neighbourhood Plan will be the first port of call for planning applications.

Q Is there ability to vote on separate sites?

A No. But, the sites included will be led by the reaction of the Parish.

Q Is it right that there will be plenty of opportunity for the public to comment on the sites that the Steering Group have decided to include in the plan?

A Yes, but at some point that will be drawn to a close because otherwise the process will go on for too long.

Q How many units have been allocated for the area?

A None have been mandated.

The meeting closed at 20.20.