

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 25TH MARCH 2008 AT 7.25pm following the Interim Council meeting

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs. P. Desorgher
P. Hiron
G. Loftus
A. Mahi
H. Mordue (Mayor)
M. Smith
Mrs. P. Stevens
R. Stuchbury
M. Try
W. Whyte (Chairman)
Guest Mr. I. Hopcraft, AVDC Tree Officer

For the Town Clerk Mrs K.W. McElligott

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor T. Bloomfield.

5166 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. Loftus declared a personal interest in application 08/00254/APP;
Cllr. Whyte declared a personal interest in applications 08/00436/ALB and 08/00543/ALB;
Cllr. Mahi declared a prejudicial interest in Amended application 07/03500/APP.

5167 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Smith, and **AGREED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2008 to be placed before the Council for ratification on 14th April 2008 be accepted. There were no matters arising.

*Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Stevens, and **AGREED** to suspend Standing Orders and move agenda item 7 to be taken next for the convenience of Mr. Hopcraft.*

5168 (5140) PRESENTATION FROM MR. IAN. HOPCRAFT AND DISCUSSION ON TREE MATTERS

Mr. Hopcraft had provided an overview of the role of Tree Officers, the advice they may give and that which they do not, protected trees and works to trees close to buildings, and a detailed list of species suitable for planting in Buckingham. This had been circulated with the agenda.

He noted that trees outnumber people in this country by about 15:1 and in general the number of trees was increasing. In town centres the number of large trees is decreasing. The Tree Officer's remit was not always to protect but to mediate the interaction between trees and people; promote open spaces according to AVDC objectives; manage contract work and advise colleagues on tree issues.

He described the publications available from Government and AVDC on trees and hedges and the British Standards worked to.

In general the lower parts of Buckingham have a clay soil, the higher levels are based on Cornbrash (limestone) and the highest levels have a sandier soil. The list provided was divided into soil types, environmental conditions (shade/wet/wind/frost) and eventual height and noted other considerations such as autumn colour, blossom or if evergreen, and dealt with native species only. There are many introduced species which would also be suitable and a leaflet is available for this.

Mr. Hopcraft was asked about the replacement of aging trees especially in prominent situations like the skyline and Maids Moreton and Stowe Avenues, which often caused adverse public reaction. AVDC plans 5 to 10 years ahead, knowing that large trees will have to be felled eventually; the importance of symmetry was also recognised in avenue situations.

Concerns were also expressed that 'crown thinning' could turn out to be more damaging and extensive works: what controls were in place to prevent this?

Tree works were supposed to comply with BS3998, but it was impossible to specify the permitted work in detail; it was a matter of trust in the contractor. Once too much work had been carried out it was too late, but the contractor could be prosecuted or warned in very bad cases. Well-carried out crown thinning should be undetectable. Light pruning at the top of a tree drastically reduced its resistance to wind and the risk of its being blown over.

The list of approved contractors is available from the Arboricultural Association who inspected companies every three years and investigated complaints; they also checked whether contractors carried adequate insurance and indemnity cover, complied with Health & Safety regulations and the standards of work and customer care were good. AVDC also keep a list of contractors who must prove adequate insurance cover and provide two references, one from a public body such as another Council.

In answer to another question, he said that while beech trees may spread their range north and west due to global warming, and other species move into the south, this would be a very slow process, possibly over centuries.

Members also asked about tree applications on even very new estates; surely the buildings should be laid out respecting the existing trees and their eventual size?

Good (in general, larger) developers conducted their own surveys and worked with the Planning Department; smaller ones can be a problem, and may cause 'accidental' damage leading to the death and consequent removal of a tree. Trees at the edge of woodland areas such as Holloway Spinney needed to be managed carefully as felling a hazardous tree risked windthrow of those further in (edge trees develop strength from being buffeted by wind; inner trees do not). Here sycamores were being removed as not indigenous to encourage native wildlife; ashes with weak forks were being pruned back to minimise risks. On new estates, barrier protection was made a condition of work close to retained trees. If this was ignored or the trees suffered other damage the developer could be prosecuted and acquire

a criminal record. Ideally, but rarely, the Tree Officer was consulted before the layout of a new estate is considered.

The comments of the Town Council were valued independently of the Tree Officer's by the Case Officer (this committee often supports 'subject to the report of the arboriculturalist' due to lack of specialist knowledge). The Council could seek independent advice if necessary, but comments such as "attractive well-shaped tree" or "important in the landscape" provided an alternative response to the Tree Officer's expert report.

There was no policy on recommending root barriers to safeguard buildings close to trees; there was little research on the efficacy of such barriers and often they could not be installed at appropriate locations without doing more damage to the tree than the building footings would. On clay soils the considerable desiccation caused by trees could crack the structure and special measures needed to be incorporated into the design.

There being no further questions, Mr Hopcraft was thanked for attending. He provided the Committee with a map of protected trees in the town.

Mr. Hopcraft left the meeting.

*Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Stevens, and **AGREED** to reinstate Standing Orders.*

5169 ACTION LIST

The Action list had been circulated with the agenda. Further to the responses listed, a letter had been received that day from Howard Sharp & Partners acknowledging receipt of our letter (Min.5165) re the White Hart car park.

5170 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The following planning applications were received and discussed. –

08/00254/APP

OPPOSE

2 Catherine Court

Two storey and first floor front extension including insertion of two dormer windows, two storey side extension, single storey rear extension, raising roof to form additional accommodation in roofspace, new chimney, provision of basement and alterations to existing access

Members opposed on the grounds of overdevelopment of the site, effect on the street scene and possible effect on the drainage of the area.

08/00436/ALB

SUPPORT

20 Church Street

Restoration of open fireplace

08/00543/ALB

SUPPORT

20 Church Street

Replace pedestrian gate and garage door with electrically operated wooden gates

08/00515/APP

OPPOSE

Bourton Mill Farmhouse Garden
Two storey detached dwelling

Members expressed concern that no details were given of levels or the extent of the floodplain for a dwelling so close to the river, and asked that the Environment Agency's opinion be obtained. Access to the new dwelling was not shown, nor parking arrangements, and any restrictions put in place when the access to the existing dwelling (which is on a bend) was permitted might preclude additional traffic; the proposal was also regarded as 'back garden' development on the edge of the built-up area opposite parkland.

The following applications were considered together:

08/00520/ALB

SUPPORT

19 Castle Street

Remove stair to mezzanine floor and reinstate first floor

08/00527/ALB & 08/00668/APP

SUPPORT

19 Castle Street

Internal alterations to create No.4 self contained flats

08/00624/ALB

SUPPORT

19 Castle Street

Internal alterations to create first floor toilet

08/00567/APP

SUPPORT

11 Holton Road

Single storey rear extension

Members commended the quality of the application documents, particularly in view of the modest nature of the proposal.

08/00574/ATC [subsequently altered to ATP by officer]

OPPOSE

5 Bostock Court

Crown reduce by 20-25% of 2No. Sycamores

Members opposed because of the detrimental effect on the street scene.

08/00627/ATP

OPPOSE

5 Waglands Garden

Works to Oak and Yew tree

In such a recently occupied development buyers would be aware of the size and spread of the trees (and should have been advised by their solicitors that the trees were protected) and Members felt that such works were uncalled-for.

The following two applications were considered together:

08/00641/ALB & 08/00642/APP

SUPPORT

Stoneleigh House, 17 Castle Street

Single storey rear extension

Support was given subject to the Historic buildings Officer's recommendations.

08/00643/APP**OPPOSE**

Sports Pavilion, Stratford Road

Replace external cladding and alteration to flat roof to pitched roof to sports pavilion
*Members discussed the application at some length and called for a recorded vote:
 Proposed by Cllr Stevens, seconded by Cllr Smith, that the application be supported in principle but opposed because there were inadequate details of the materials to be used:*

For: Cllrs. Stevens, Smith, Hirons, Try, Mahi, Desorgher, Whyte

Against the motion (but for supporting the application without reservation): Cllrs. Mordue, Stuchbury, Loftus

The response would therefore be to support the alterations in principle but oppose because there were inadequate details of the materials to be used.

08/00644/APP**SUPPORT**

Kingston, Stowe Close

Single storey and two storey extension

The following applications were not received in time for the meeting

08/00719/APP

Villiers Hotel, 3 Castle Street

Conversion of retail unit to provide 3no. accessible bedrooms

08/00721/ALB

Villiers Hotel, 3 Castle Street Conversion and alterations to ground floor retail unit to provide 3no. accessible bedrooms

Cllr. Mahi left the meeting during the following item.

AMENDED PLANS**07/03500/APP****OPPOSE**

95 Burleigh Piece

Conversion of garage to residential use

Amendment shows revised boundary.

[Members opposed at the last meeting, pending further information].

Members reiterated their opposition, as they felt standard size parking bays should have been marked on the driveway to prove the reduced width was adequate.

The following minor amended plans were posted for Members' information only:

08/00179/APP 24 Page Hill Ave. Change of use from garage to dining room

Amendment shows existing parking to be extended to accommodate 2 cars in the front garden

08/00356/APP 124 Moreton Rd. Demolition of existing structure and erection of two

storey side extension and creation of additional access

Amendment shows 45° line drawn from nearest neighbour's window

With reference to application **07/03325/APP**, Gawcott Hill Works, Cllr. Stuchbury noted that no yellow notice had been posted to alert residents of the adjacent housing on Mount Pleasant overlooked by the proposed new dwellings. The Clerk would contact the Case Officer.

ACTION THE CLERK

5171 PLANNING CONTROL

The following planning decisions were received from Aylesbury Vale District Council;

APPROVED

07/03266/APP 2 Primrose Way	Single st. rear extension and garage conv.	Oppose
07/03279/AAD Old Town Hall	Erection of fixed signage	Support
07/03359/APP 10 Well Street	Single st. rear extension and int'l alterations	Support
07/03360/ALB 10 Well Street	Single st. rear extension and int'l alterations	Support
07/03450/ALB Old Town hall	Erection of fixed signage	Support
08/00039/APP Esso Station,bypass	Single st. rear ext'n to create accessible WC	Support
08/00054/ATP 20 Poplars Road	Fell one robinia	Support
08/00116/APP 16 Sandhurst Dr.	Erection of a porch	Support
08/00138/ATC Castle House	Works to trees	Oppose
08/00166/APP 7 Watlow Gdns.	Single st. side extension and conv. of garage	Support

REFUSED

08/00068/ATP 21 Beech Close	Works to No.1 Ash	Oppose
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5172 PLANNING - OTHER MATTERS

Cllr. Desorgher left the meeting during the next two items.

5172.1 To discuss and agree the draft Terms of Reference for the Tree Subcommittee and recommend acceptance by the Council
Draft Terms had been circulated with the agenda.

Proposed by Cllr. Stevens, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, and **RECOMMENDED** that the Terms of Reference as circulated be adopted by the Council.

5172.2 (5162.6) To receive an update on the Buckingham Plan

The Chairman noted that the Plan would be given publicity at the Annual Town Meeting on the 26th March, and was also mentioned in the rates leaflet to be delivered to all homes shortly.

The letter to various organisations had been drafted and awaited Chairman's comments.

The proposal had raised considerable interest at the recent meeting of the Buckingham Partnership, and the CEO of AVDC would be discussing it with appropriate officers.

It was agreed that the Plan would be promoted at the Music in the Market event on Sunday 25th May; a Road Closure Order was in place for High Street and Market Hill/Bull Ring leaving plenty space to set up the portable shelter. There was also an English Food Festival booked for the High Street that day and both events would draw a considerable number of people into the town centre, more than on a regular market day.

Before the public launch the subjects raised at the brainstorming session would be divided up for individual working groups to look at and make suggestions, to provide evidence of what the Plan could cover.

ACTION CHAIRMAN/CLERK

5172.3 (5162.5) To receive an update on the Aylesbury Vale Local Strategic Partnership

The Chairman reported that this was a useful forum, with valuable contacts; the list of members would be circulated [*appended to these minutes – Clerk*]. The next meeting would be in April, when a Chairman would be elected. He felt that currently there was a degree of confusion and the organisation would only work if there was a clarity of purpose.

The Chairman was thanked for taking the time to attend these meeting. Concern was expressed that the list of members was weighted towards the south of the area and the north was, as usual, under-represented. Cllr. Stuchbury suggested setting up an RDA for the north; Cllr. Smith pointed out that this was covered to some extent by the NBPPC. The Chairman said that as economic and development issues were included in the remit, not just planning, this was a matter for the Full Council rather than the Planning Committee.

Members felt that the Partnership should meet in different venues around the Vale, in Village Halls and the like.

Proposed by Cllr. Stevens, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, and **RECOMMENDED** that the suggestion be made that the Local Strategic Partnership meetings be held in various places outside Aylesbury, and to offer the use of the Council Chamber as one venue.

Cllr.Mordue left the meeting for a short while.

5172.4 BCC Waste & Minerals Consultation

5172.4.1 (5162.7) To receive a report on the 18th March event

Cllr. Mahi expressed disappointment at the lack of information at the event; sites at Gerrards Cross and Calvert were proposed, but there would be no decision until tenders were received from the owners. Should Gerrards Cross be selected, there were no details of the proposed transfer site at Osier Way.

Members discussed the pros and cons, including the use of rail transport to Calvert given the proposed upgrading of the Bletchley-Bicester line. If Calvert were to be the site chosen, the Osier Way transfer facility would not be needed.

5172.4.2 To select an Councillor to formulate a response to the latest documents (response date 25th April)

Cllr. Mahi offered to draft a response to the latest consultation with Cllr. Whyte, who had done the responses to previous stages, for presentation at the 21st April meeting. This would leave time for filing online before the due date.

ACTION CLLR. MAHI/CLLR.WHYTE

5172.5 (5162.9) Badgers Way link to bypass

The Clerk gave a verbal report: AVDC Engineers department would be installing a sign at the bypass end of the link road saying BADGERS WAY with an arrow.

5172.6 CPRE Fieldwork March 2008

This publication was available from the office.

5173 CORRESPONDENCE

5173.1 (5163.3) Badgers Estate drains and sewers

Mr. Grant CEO, AVDC, had written with a resume of the situation, the parts of Badgers which had, and had not, been adopted, and a list of options for the property owners affected. It is likely that the law will change in a couple of years, and Water Authorities be required to take responsibility for private sewers. The letter had been copied to Mr. Goodgame, who had visited the office to thank the Council for their help; he had said he would take matters onward himself, probably waiting for the change in the law. Members agreed that this was no longer a Council matter and no further action need be taken, beyond a letter of thanks to Mr. Grant.

ACTION THE CLERK

5173.2 (5156.2) Confirmation of the street names for the Moreton Road development

Confirmation, with map and list of postcodes, had been circulated with the agenda. This would be copied to Mrs. Whitehead, and the Rotary Club who had suggested Mr. Whitehead's name for commemoration in a street name.

ACTION THE CLERK

5174 NEWS RELEASES

Depending on press coverage of the Annual Town Meeting, the Mayor and Chairman would produce a release for the *Buckingham Advertiser*. It was suggested that this should be in the form of a letter, focussed to achieve the required type of response.

ACTION THE MAYOR/THE CHAIRMAN

The confirmation of the street naming would also be notified to the paper.

ACTION THE CLERK

5175 CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS

There were no Chairman's items.

Meeting closed at: 9.59pm

CHAIRMAN DATE