

651
MINUTES of THE EXTRAORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING (PLANNING)
in PICKMERE VILLAGE HALL

7.00 p.m.
17th December 2019

1.1 Present AS (Chair), AB, PD, SF, HS, CT
Apologies SR
Public Nil

2. Declaration of Interests – HS declared a personal interest in the planning applications and other application to be discussed, in terms of her acquaintance with the applicants in both cases.

3. Planning applications received

3.1 Planning applications 19/5562M, 19/5563M and 19/5621M – Proposals for conversion and extension of farmhouse, and for the conversion of various barns to three dwellings at Pickmere Hall Farm, Hall Lane.

The key planning policy relating to these proposals was the location of the sites in the Green Belt. However, that apart, members remain concerned that none of these applications contain dimensions; the fact that the drawings are scaled is not helpful when drawings on CEC’s website are not reproduced at the correct scale.

Looking broadly at the set of proposals, they represent the loss of existing agricultural buildings (farmhouse and barns) to residential use unconnected with agriculture. This parish and other parishes have seen that this leads to the farmland attached to the buildings being farmed by other than the occupiers of the proposed dwellings, and then pressure being applied by the ‘new’ farmer to construct a new farmhouse in order that he can properly farm the land he has now taken on. This can obviously lead to a proliferation of new farmhouses in the Green Belt, to the detriment of its character and openness, where existing buildings should properly be used for this purpose.

The Parish Council would wish to prevent such a loss without a demonstration that the existing buildings are not a viable prospect for their current use.

In respect of the **Farmhouse proposals (19/5562M)**, members agreed the following:

That taken together, the proposed extensions to the dwelling and the proposed garage (which is a two-storey construction) substantially exceeds the 30% increase normally considered acceptable in Green Belt, in terms of the saved policies of the Macclesfield Local Plan and the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy. The proposals therefore conflict with local plan policy.

Should CEC be minded to approve the proposals despite this then members considered that restrictions should be placed on the approval to the effect that further extensions or additional buildings should not be constructed on the site without explicit planning permission, thus normal permitted development rights should be withdrawn.

Concern was also expressed that the large size and two storey nature of the proposed garage was such that it might in the future be converted in part or in whole to additional residential accommodation, either incidental to the use of the main dwellinghouse or separate from it. Accordingly members requested that a planning condition be imposed to prevent this.

In respect of the **barn ‘conversion’ proposals (19/5563M and 19/5621M)**, members had the following concerns in addition to those general observations made above:

Members doubted whether all of the buildings shown to be refurbished and ‘converted’ are capable of conversion without in fact being demolished and completely rebuilt, probably including the construction of new foundations. The proposals should be considered in that light against Green Belt and other planning policies.

There was considerable concern that the curtilages that appear to relate to the proposed new dwellings (including the farmhouse) are extremely large – taking in a whole agricultural field. Should permission be granted in this form, the situation would be created whereby the whole curtilage areas would almost inevitably become ‘suburbanised’ in appearance and further, the occupiers of the new dwellings could erect structures and buildings (dwelling extensions, sheds, gazebos, children’s climbing frames etc etc) that taken together would detract considerably from the character of the countryside and the openness of the Green Belt. Examples of how the character of the Green Belt is changed in this way can easily be seen elsewhere on Hall and Frog Lanes.

For this reason – to maintain the character and openness of the Green Belt – members considered that conditions should be attached to prevent normal permitted development rights being used, in relation to both dwelling extensions but also ancillary standalone buildings and other structures within the dwelling curtilages.

Members made the above comments and agreed that their comments should amount to objections to the various applications discussed if the restrictions referred to are not imposed by means of planning condition, or other method.

HS did not take part in the above discussion nor voted on the resolutions.

3.2 Application for Lawful Development Certificate, Springfield, Pickmere Lane

This application was not notified to the Clerk by CEC but was picked up through perusal of CEC weekly planning application lists after this Council agenda had been issued.

The application gave rise to significant concern as it suggested a potentially complex planning situation in relation to the dwelling subject of the application, and also the commercial site to which the use of the dwelling is related. Members were conscious of the potential future planning problem that might be created in this part of the parish arising from the site's apparent planning history. This reflects a general concern that changes of use of land and buildings can occur by default and thereby become established and therefore outside planning control.

Accordingly they resolved to write to the CEC's Portfolio holder for Planning to express this concern and to seek a discussion of the measures that might be possible to enable their concerns to be resolved both generally and in relation to this site in particular.

HS did not take part in the above discussion nor voted on the resolution.

The meeting closed at 8.03 p.m.

Clerk: Jack Steel

Next meeting: 14th January 2020