

LITTLE BOLLINGTON PARISH MEETING

**Minutes of Meeting held by Zoom Conference call on
Wednesday 18 November 2020**

1. PRESENT & APOLOGIES

Present:

<u>LBPM Officers</u>	Mike Reed (Clerk)
<u>Speakers</u>	John Leech (Meadowcroft Farm); Simon Lancashire (Design24)
<u>Officials</u>	Kate Parkinson (Ward Councillor); Rev Phillip Robinson (Parish Church);
<u>Lymm Road</u>	None
<u>Park Lane</u>	Joy Cooper; Denis O'Neill
<u>Spode Green Lane</u>	Giselle & Mike Rusted; Rosemary & Joe Bowden; Ve Whitworth; Allan & Kath Milne; Stef Mozley? Amanda Logan
<u>Reddy Lane</u>	Angela Stone; Steve Dobson; Graham Carney & Chloe Flint; Ghaffour Uddin
<u>Stamford Road</u>	None
<u>Park View</u>	Thomas Britton & Anna McNamara
<u>High Field</u>	Sarah Huxley
<u>Other Areas</u>	Gillian Broadbent; Wendy Moore; Nigel Hennerley; Julia Booth; Recardo Patrick?

Apologies: Thom Betts (Novo Property Group; Stuart Robinson (National Trust);
Andy & Gail Blackburn; Brian & Gel Hurd

2. PROTOCOL FOR THE MEETING

Giselle Rusted acted as Chair for the meeting, in the absence of Paul Amphlett. The Chair reminded the meeting of the protocol for the meeting which had been circulated with the agenda.

3. PLANNING APPLICATIONS 20/4020M MEADOWCROFT FARM

This is on land, referred to as Meadowcroft Farm, on the west side of Spode Green Lane. The application documents can be seen on the CEC Planning website.

Simon Lancashire, the design agent for the planning application described and explained the proposals and the background to the planning application. John Leech, who manages the land, added further comments.

The application seeks to achieve three objectives: to halt any planning enforcement action while the application is considered; to lawfully establish the status of the older buildings, obtain retrospective planning permission for the more recent buildings and to continue the grazing of horses; to maintain the viability of the farm, not only for the benefit of Caroline Leech, but also to safeguard this long established small scale agricultural holding as an important piece of the local green belt.

SL expressed hope that the Parish and neighbours can understand the intentions for the farm and surroundings. He and John are happy to provide further information and to meet with anyone who has concerns.

Some residents expressed concern about the illegal buildings installed on the land without planning permission. The applicant explained that the buildings were installed before he took over the farm and many were movable and do not require planning permission. He added that the trailers are not part of the planning application as they are road legal trailers. This was questioned by others.

Questions were raised as to whether building K (the electricity building) is illegal as it involves a concrete base and a permanent structure on green belt land. The application includes a proposal to replace the present GRP building with a more substantial blockwork structure with secure steel doors. This will be 2.7m high x 3.5m wide. This will be open to scrutiny by the CEC Northern Planning Board as it is not normally permitted to lay concrete over land in the green belt or to install a permanent structure.

The Ward Councillor reported that she had met the applicant on site and scrutinised the structures and containers. She will also meet with the Planning Officer for the application and the Planning Enforcement Officer and discuss any anomalies and inaccuracies. She will enquire what is involved in the proposed change to equestrian use. She is concerned to know whether this would open up the land for gymkhanas, showgrounds and other bigger things which would generate traffic.

The Clerk reported that he had received numerous complaints about the illegal buildings and the operations on the land over a long period of time. KP has received many emails, but can't respond to them all. She is also aware of some who are strongly in favour of the application and the continuing use of the land for grazing. She advised people to send in their individual comments to CEC. She assured the Parish Meeting that the proposals are being treated seriously. All comments should give proper reasons rather than simple opinions. She can offer impartial advice on doing this, but cannot advise what to write. She offered to speak to residents about the application but she must remain impartial. If a lot of comments are received by CEC, the application may be referred to the Northern Planning Board for decision.

KP advised that it is necessary for the council to obtain and publish the address for all comments submitted. This is a legal requirement to prevent individuals from submitting multiple comments. If people experienced harassment or inappropriate behaviour they should report this to the appropriate authorities.

It was noted that an amended application has been submitted. [It was confirmed after the meeting that this includes the schedule which was omitted on the CEC website and that the consultation period has been extended to 9 Dec.]

It was clear that the meeting could not agree a comment from LBPM at this meeting. The Clerk proposed to compile a summary of the comments received. He invited those in favour of the application to send in their comments as he had only heard from those opposed. If possible a further Parish Meeting may be called to agree a comment for submission to CEC.

4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS 20/4682M SITE COMPOUND EXTENSION OF TIME

The Clerk explained the background to the use of this land for a site compound and the current application. The land had first been used by Costain for the construction of the M56-M6 link road. At the end of that contract all buildings and hard-standings were removed and the site restored to open farmland. A further planning consent [18/3219M] was granted in September 2018 for use of the land as a site compound for the M56 Smart motorway project. This was subject to the condition that "the use permitted is temporary and will discontinue with all structures and hard-standings

removed and the site returned to agricultural use on or before 30 Sep 2021". The current application seeks to amend that condition to extend the end time for this permission from September 2021 to December 2025. The reason given was reported as "to enable continued appraisal of the continued development".

The meeting was reminded of previous proposals on this land for a logistics park as part of the Cheshire Gateway development. This proposed to change the status from Green Belt to land "safeguarded" for development. The proposals were scrutinised by the Planning Inspector in the review of the Cheshire East Local Plan which applies up to the year 2030. It was determined that the land will remain as green belt.

Concerns were expressed that the continuing paving over of the site and the use of the land for site compounds may set a precedent for the land losing its Green Belt status and being regarded as a brown field site. The proposed use of the land also opens the way for its use as a compound for the main HS2 project. There was also concern that the extension of time requested went well beyond the expected end date for the M56 works which is summer 2022.

As there was a consensus to oppose this application it was proposed that the Clerk prepare a draft comment on the planning application and circulate this for consideration by residents of the Parish. It was reported that High Legh Parish Council and Millington PC may also submit objections to this application.

5. PROPOSED M56 MOTORWAY SERVICE AREA

The Clerk outlined the proposals by Tatton Group in conjunction with the Westmorland Family to build a motorway service area on land alongside the M56 at Yarwood Heath Farm. This land was also part of the Cheshire Gateway proposals which were rejected following the Planning Inspector's report on the CEC Local Plan which determined that the land will remain as Green Belt to 2030.

The current proposals are at an early stage with wide consultation underway. A planning application is expected in spring 2021. The Westmorland Family own the services at Tebay (M6) and Gloucester (M5) and propose to create something of a similar high quality here. The justification by the developers is based on Highways England guidelines for services to be sited no more than 28 miles apart. Some believe this does not apply in this location.

The developers had made a presentation and consultation with three representatives of the community. It was clear that the development could bring benefits, including the creation of about 500 jobs. And there could be financial contributions to local communities and help for the Parish Meeting. But there are concerns that the services may draw people from the wider motorway network and from residential areas. This would generate additional traffic on the M56 and would draw more visitors into the area putting further strain on local parking and other facilities.

Some residents regard the development as not unwelcome and the land of low value, being surrounded by major roads; others oppose the proposals due to the loss of Green Belt land, the importance of protecting Green Belt, and the precedent set by allowing development on such land. A great deal of work has been done to create the Little Bollington Neighbourhood Plan to protect the area from inappropriate development. Some felt that the proposals may lead on to the revival of plans for a logistics park. A change to that form of land usage here would be a total transformation of the area.

There was also concern at the risk of harm to Rostherne Mere, which is an important SSSI, and the nearby outstanding topography and Green Belt. Ongoing developments and road traffic on the M56 & A556 put these under pressure. Testing by Natural England already shows that the Mere is already suffering adverse effects of pollution with land being forced out of use for grazing.

KP advised people to consider what the village wants and whether this development will be of benefit. It was proposed that the Clerk circulate residents to canvas their views on the proposals.

6. FUTURE MEETINGS

A further Parish Meeting will be required soon to decide the level of the Parish Precept for 2021-22. The decision depends on whether to recruit a new Parish Clerk on a proper professional salary. This would require the precept to be increased from the current level of £1,100 to approximately £2,200. The current precept equates to an average of about £15 per household. It was reported that Agden also have a very low precept whereas in Dunham Massey it is about £50 per household. The recruitment of a new clerk will be necessary when the current Clerk (on a nominal salary of £175) retires.

The meeting should also discuss further details of the future arrangements for administration of the Parish Meeting. One option is to pass the general administration to a new Clerk, and appoint a team of local people to take responsibility for leading the consideration of issues facing the village. Councillor Kate Parkinson pointed out that an alternative would be to convert from a Parish Meeting to a Parish Council. This requires the election of Councillors to lead and decide on local issues on behalf of the community. The Clerk will take advice from ChALC on these matters.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business and the meeting was closed.