

Minutes

Meeting of : Northern Area Committee
Meeting held in : Antrobus House, Amesbury
Date : Thursday 31 July 2008
Commencing at : 4.30 pm

Present:

Councillor M A Hewitt – Chairman
Councillor D W Brown – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: J Broom, M Lee, C G Mills, J C Noeken, J F Smale, F Westmoreland, I C West and G Wright

Parish Councillors: G Burt (Bulford), R Fisher (Amesbury), S Stubbs (Newton Toney)

Apologies: Councillors S L Dennis, I M Mitchell, J R G Spencer, K C Wren and Parish Councillor P Fisher

Officers: A Madge (Development Control), G Newell (Legal and Property Services), Kelly Fry (Community Initiatives), P Trenell (Democratic Services), Phillip Tilley (Wiltshire County Council Highways), Natalie Gordon (Highways Agency).

182. Public Questions/Statement Time:

Mrs A Uglow submitted a public question in advance of the meeting. This was circulated with the schedule of additional correspondence and is attached along with a response as appendix 1.

183. Councillor Questions/Statement Time:

Councillor Wright informed the committee that since the last meeting a solution had been achieved with regard to grass cutting on the Avondown Estate in Durrington. He was hopeful that the grass would be cut within the coming weeks. He thanked officers for their help with the matter.

Councillor Brown passed on the appreciation of Ken Illsley for the card sent to him by the Northern Area Committee during his recent illness.

Councillor Westmoreland asked a question regarding Conservation Areas in the Northern Area (attached as appendix 2). The committee requested that a representative of the Forward Planning and Transportation Unit attend their next meeting to answer questions on the issue.

Councillor West requested that the committee review the elements of the Regional Spatial Strategy relating to transport at their next meeting.



Awarded in:
Housing Services
Waste and Recycling Services



184. Minutes:

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2008 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

185. Declarations of Interest:

Councillor Noeken referred to an e-mail from the applicant for planning application S/2008/0717 included in the schedule of additional correspondence. The e-mail claimed that by participating in a meeting of Amesbury Town Council on 1st July four members of the Northern Area Committee had prejudiced their involvement in this application. Councillor Noeken explained that he declared a prejudicial interest at the Amesbury Town Council meeting and did not engage in discussion regarding the planning application for the former Texaco garage site. He also declined to take any further part in later discussions as soon as he became aware that they involved the site. He came to the meeting of the Northern Area Committee with an open mind and therefore did not declare an interest.

Councillors Westmorland and Brown explained that they were in the same position as Councilor Noeken. They also came to the meeting of the Northern Area Committee with an open mind and therefore did not declare an interest.

Councillors Wright and Lee declared personal interests in agenda item 10 (Durrington Public Place Order) as they had been closely involved in the project. They remained in the meeting, spoke and voted on the matter.

186. Chairman's Announcements:

There were none.

187. Planning Application S/2008/0717 - Construction of 22 flats (affordable housing) for Raglan Housing Association at former Texaco garage site, Amesbury, Salisbury, SP4 7DY for John Coleman:

This report was deferred from the Northern Area Committee meeting held on the 3 July 2008.

Mr T Hughes, a local resident, spoke in opposition to the development.

Mr N Cronk of Raglan Housing Association and Mr J Coleman, the agent, spoke in favour.

Following the receipt of these statements, the Committee considered the previously circulated report of the Head of Development Services, together with additional correspondence circulated at the meeting.

Resolved: that the above application be refused for the following reasons:

1) The proposed development by reason of the restricted and cramped nature of the external layout of the site contains inadequate useable external amenity space, particularly for residents of the two bedroom flats which could reasonably be expected to house families with children, as such the proposal would fail to provide a satisfactory level of private amenity space for the future occupiers of the flats and as a result would be contrary to saved policy G2 of the Salisbury District Local Plan, and would not provide the high quality new housing promoted by the Government in Planning Policy Statements 1 and 3.

2) The development by reason of its cramped and confined internal layout and lack of natural light along the internal corridors would lead to poor living conditions for future occupiers of the flats and as a result would be contrary to saved policy G2 of the Salisbury District Local Plan and would not provide the high quality new housing promoted by the Government in Planning Policy Statements 1 and 3.

3) The proposed residential development is considered by the Local Planning Authority to be contrary to Policy R2 of the adopted Salisbury District Local Plan because appropriate provision towards public recreational open space has not been made.

INFORMATIVE: R2

It should be noted that reason 3 given above relating to Policy R2 of the adopted Local Plan could be overcome if all the relevant parties can agree with a Section 106 Agreement, in accordance with the standard requirement of public recreational open space.

Councillor Westmoreland expressed his dissent at the above decision.

188. Stonehenge Management Plan:

The Committee received a presentation from Dr Christopher Young (Head of World Heritage and International Policy) and Peter Carson (Stonehenge Director) of English Heritage regarding the public consultation on the Stonehenge World Heritage Site Management Plan and options for the visitor centre. Dr Young and Mr Carson answered members' questions.

189. Primary Care Centres Update:

Councillor Hewitt informed the committee that he would ask Jo Howes (Community Engagement Manager, Wiltshire Primary Care Trust) to attend the August meeting of the Northern Area Committee to give a full update.

190. Designated Public Place Order – Durrington:

The committee considered the previously circulated report and a presentation from the Community Safety Projects Officer. She informed members that public consultation had been conducted in line with the Criminal Justice and Licensing Act 2001 and the Wiltshire Compact between May and July 2008. No objections to the scheme had been received.

Resolved: that the Northern Area Committee support the project and refer the matter to the Planning and Regulatory Panel with a recommendation for approval.

191. Community Update:

Parish Councillor Stubbs informed the committee that he had sent a further letter to Post Office Ltd regarding the closure of Newton Toney Post Office (attached as appendix 3). He had received a courtesy reply acknowledging receipt and expected a full reply soon.

Councillor Noeken updated the committee on plans for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles to operate out of Boscombe Down under the 'Watchkeeper' scheme. The Ministry of Defence was running a public consultation until 29 September 2008 which included a drop-in session at Salisbury Guildhall between 2pm and 6pm on Saturday 30 August.

Councillor Westmoreland inquired as to who was excavating the Car Park in Amesbury Town Centre and who had granted them permission. Adam Madge undertook to look into the matter and report back to members.

Councillor Hewitt reminded members of a series of meeting dates regarding the Local Development Framework (LDF). Including exhibitions at the Guildhall on 1 September and 7 October, and at Antrobus House on 4 September, all from 12:30 to 7:00 pm. Councillor Noeken expressed his dissatisfaction that an LDF meeting had been scheduled for August 5th at the Guildhall. He felt it inappropriate that such an important and high-profile issue was being dealt with during a month when many councillors and members of the public are likely to be on holiday.

Councillor Broom requested an update on the Community Board Steering Group. Councillor Hewitt said that more information would be available soon and that he would update members at that point.

*The meeting closed at: 7:37 pm
Members of the public present: 24*

Public Question – Northern Area Committee – 25th July 2008

Question Submitted 22 July 2008:

Re: Planning application S/2008/0241 Hazelhead, Robin Hill Lane, Durrington.

As you are aware the retrospective planning permission for a brick gable end and parapet wall on the northern elevation of a conservatory at the property Hazelhead was refused at the June committee meeting. Subsequently the refusal order was signed on the 12th June 2008.

In view of the fact that nothing has changed externally we would like to know what follow up action has been taken or is scheduled to be taken to resolve the matter.

It would be helpful to know what processes are involved and the also the timescale.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Anne Uglow

On behalf of the residents 31-35 Cygnet Drive

Response from Stephen Hawkins (Principal Planning Officer, Enforcement):

“Officers are continuing to investigate this matter following the refusal of planning permission. In the first instance, Officers are endeavouring to negotiate compliance, however if the negotiations fail to agree a voluntary remedying of the breach, then formal enforcement action is likely to follow. This approach is in accordance with national planning guidance on enforcement and the enforcement team's scheme of priorities. The likely timescale for resolution is also dependent to some extent on whether the applicants appeal against the refusal of planning permission. Enforcement Team Officers will endeavour to keep interested neighbours updated at key stages in the process.”

QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NORTHERN AREA COMMITTEE

As you are aware, Amesbury is struggling to secure its sensible development and we need every tool at our disposal to counter poor and inappropriate design.

I am interested in and am reasonably familiar with SDC's policies - or at least I thought I was, until I read last meetings reports.

The report on the Texaco site -and the information is repeated today (page 11) -refers to a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. It rang a sort of bell, but I had to look quite hard to find on the web.

When I found it I had to ask myself, "Why don't I know about this?"

As I say, it rang a bell, but after examining the last 3 years agendas and minutes for this committee I could find no trace of it. I then started checking Amesbury Town Council minutes and then I found it. Back in July last year a conservation officer gave a short presentation to ATC and directed town councillors to the web site should they wish to read and/or comment on it. So that's where the bell was.

At the beginning of this month I took two days off work to attend and give evidence at a planning appeal. Again, the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was quoted.

So far nine of these plans have been published on the web, and of particular use to us must be those for Amesbury (May 2007) and Durrington (February 2008). ('The other plans are for Broad Chalke, Dinton, Downton, Hindon, Steeple Langford, Tisbury and Wylke.)

These are important documents.

Why have they never been brought to the area committees?

Why are we reduced to fighting inappropriate development without the support of expert opinion?

Sue Huggins
Programme Director
Network Change Programme Office
5th Floor
Post Office LTD
80 Old Street
London
EC1V 9NN

Mallards
Newton Toney
Salisbury
SP4 0HF

24th July 2008

Dear Sue Huggins

Post Office Services in Newton Toney

I know you are aware of situation of the Post Office in our village. Letters from Wiltshire County Council, which you personally replied to, District Councillor Mike Hewitt chairman of Northern Area Committee, and Robert Key MP our member of parliament, have all sent letters to Tim Nickolls regarding the closure of our village Post Office. I also wrote to Tim Nickolls, copy enclosed, and the reply I have received including an email quite frankly is treating us with complete contempt.

The reply to Cllr Mike Hewitt NAC chairman completely avoids the truth and does not tell the facts.

The truth is that the Post Office is totally responsible for the closure of our post office. No reply acknowledges that the person hosting the outreach service had not signed the addendum to contract, the final part of the contract, which would have committed that person to twelve months outreach service. However our existing Post Master had been given final notice. I repeat, the fact that you had in place a Core sub postmaster who in no way indicated the she was going to proceed. Indeed I was aware that the problem clause in the contract was concerning her and her solicitor. She had indicated this fact quite clearly to Ian Priest, Post Office Field Officer and had asked to see him to discuss the matter. It took nearly four weeks for Ian Priest to contact her after many messages mentioning her concern had been left on his phone. She personally told me that she had by then lost all confidence in providing this service and after eventually meeting with him decided it was too much of a risk. I repeat at no time did she say she was willing to sign the final part of the contract. Had the Post Office waited until the contract had been signed, not just the initial intent to proceed, before issuing our Post Master her final notice our post would still be open.

The situation we are left with because of the incompetence of the Post Office is that that our post office is now closed. We have had it made clear to us by an executive of the National Federation of Post Offices that the Post Office is in breach of its Statutory Obligation to keep or Post Office open until such time as an Outreach service has been provided. We were also advised not to accept an interim service, as this is an insecure service as at any time this provider can give a weeks notice. Therefore we expect you to find and train a permanent Post Master, which was the service we had in our village until your organisations incompetent handling of the change over.

It is my hope that you will have the courtesy in your reply to recognise the true facts and not adopt the autocratic attitude we experienced so far and to put in place a structure that will provide our village once again with a Post Office.

Yours sincerely

Stan Stubbs
Newton Toney Parish Council and Bourne Valley Alliance Of Parish Councils Chairman

Copies to: Robert Key MP
District Cllr Mike Hewitt NAC
Deputy Leader WCC John Thomson