



MELKSHAM WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Mrs Mary Jarvis BA Hons. (Local Policy)

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Monday, 17 September 2007

Ms Matthieson
Head of Legal Services
West Wiltshire District Council
Bradley Road,
TROWBRIDGE,
Wilts.
BA14 ORD

RECEIVED

18 SEP 2007

W.W.D.C

Dear Colleague,

RE: GEORGE WARD SCHOOL PLANNING APPLICATION (S)

I am writing formally on my Council's behalf to request a Special Dispensation so that the Council may discuss and vote on the forthcoming planning application 07/02806 for a development of 270 houses at the existing George Ward School site.

As you may be aware, Wiltshire County Council is seeking planning permission to:-

- b) Build a new secondary school on the Woolmore Farm site near Bowerhill
- b) Re-develop the existing school site for housing to help pay for (a)

The County Council has been awarded a Government Grant of approx £20 million in order to build the new school but it needs to find another £10 million in order to have sufficient funds – hence the sale of the existing site for housing.

As you may be aware, development of the existing George Ward School site is controversial because it means developing long-standing school playing fields which have been used by the adjacent community for many local community events. The land is also part of the rural buffer which separates the town of Melksham from the village of Shaw so there is much opposition. The site is worth about £9 - £10 million and the County Council has made it clear that unless permission is granted for 270 new homes the new school will not be built. It seems all County Members are under pressure to support the venture.

County Councillor Terry Chivers who is also a member of the Parish Council advised Parish Councillors at our last Meeting that if they had children (or grandchildren, cousins – any relatives etc) who were pupils at the school they needed to declare this interest – also if they were in any way connected via employment by

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WCC. He further advised that as he is a County Councillor, although he had an interest as a Member of the County Council, it was not a personal interest because he is not a member of the County Planning Committee, and therefore he can speak and vote on the application.

It seems, from this advice that well over 50% of our 13 Member Council have an interest. These are as follows:

Cllr. Sankey – because he has pupils at the existing school who will use the new site

Cllr. Chivers – non- personal interest as a member of County Council

Cllr. Mills – grandchild at the present school who will use the new site

Cllr. Brindle – lives adjacent to the new school site

Cllr. Gillings – member of George Ward School Broad of Governors

Cllr Wood – ex-teacher, who still does supply teaching and invigilating at George Ward School.

Cllr. Petty – his bus company occupies land adjacent to existing school site where he parks buses. He may have contracts with the County Council.

Cllr. Millard – works for Cllr Petty as bus driver

Cllr. Glover – Possible future grandchildren pupils at the new school. Employed at another County Council school

It seems, considering the controversy surrounding the development, that all the above interests could be deemed prejudicial by virtue of the fact that members of the public could perceive them to be significant. If the above councillors are excluded from either speaking or voting, this would leave only 4 councillors to discuss the application and vote. Our Council Quorum is 5 members.

Please may Melksham Without Parish Council therefore be given a Special Dispensation so that the application may be properly considered. A reply would be appreciated by 1st October, in time for the application to be considered at a Special Council Meeting on 4th October.

Thank you in anticipation of your help in these matters

Very best wishes

Yours sincerely,



Clerk