

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF
SWALLOWFIELD PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY 31ST JANUARY 2017 IN
THE ROSE ROOM, SWALLOWFIELD PARISH HALL,
SWALLOWFIELD STREET, SWALLOWFIELD AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllr. J. Anderson (Chairman) Cllr. R. Norris Cllr. J. Sant
Cllr. P. Sampson Cllr. J. Wheelwright

In attendance: Liz Halson, Clerk

Members of the public: 0

445 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr. G. Collender, Cllr. W. Dance, Cllr. M. McDonald, Cllr. C. Morrissey

446 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

447 QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None

448 CURRENT APPLICATIONS

448.1 16/03398/FUL - Land at Odiham Road, Riseley, Reading, Berkshire

Change of use of land to Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) with associated landscaping scheme (including informal open space, semi-natural greenspace, circular walk, tree planting, hedge planting and shrub planting, benches and fencing), vehicular access works, cycle and car parking and interpretation boards.

Cllr. Anderson explained that he had received a copy of the response which Heckfield Parish Council had submitted. The SANG will not be needed unless the proposed development goes ahead so the decision should be delayed until such time that the development application is considered or a condition applied to ensure that it only goes ahead if the development is approved. It will ruin unspoilt countryside. It is understood that another site, closer to Riseley in the area between the Wellington Country Park entrance, the Odiham Road and the Devil's Highway to the north, was considered. Cllr. Anderson explained that this site would be more appropriate as it was more sustainable and accessible on foot or cycle by the residents of the new development and existing residents of Riseley and Heckfield.

It was **PROPOSED** and seconded that the council submits comments as in the draft submitted, see pages 2017/283 - 284. All in favour. ¹

¹ Clerk

449 ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE

Cllr. Sampson explained that he had received a letter from the Chair of Finchampstead Parish Council asking for Swallowfield Parish Council's support with its nomination to list the Queens Oak pub as an 'Asset of Community Value'. The pub is very popular with residents and provides a meeting point for local groups and for hosting local events and activities. It is an important feature in the history of the Parish and attracts visitors from outside the Parish given its lovely rural setting and its proximity to footpaths and bridleways.

It was **PROPOSED** and seconded that the council supports this application. All in favour. ²

² PS

295.1 16/03398/FUL - Land at Odiham Road, Riseley, Reading, Berkshire

Proposed response: Swallowfield Parish Council **STRONGLY OBJECTS** to this proposal which is associated with application reference 16/02989/OUT. There is little to be gained from the proposed SANG more than 1.5km from the proposed site in a particularly inaccessible location and in unadulterated open countryside.

The Parish Council is strongly opposed to the development the impact of which this proposed SANG is intended to mitigate and there should be no reason to grant permission for the SANG if the associated development is to be refused as planning policy indicates that it should. Certainly any permission should be tied to the associated development so that the SANG site cannot otherwise be used in connection with some future development proposal.

It is understood that another site for the SANG was considered at an earlier stage and in the Council's opinion one that would be far more suitable. This alternative utilised land closer to Riseley in the area between the Wellington Country Park entrance, the Odiham Road and the Devil' Highway to the north. Such a location would be far more sustainable and accessible on foot or cycle for residents of the development, Riseley and indeed Heckfield. If the current SANG proposal is refused, this might result in a more appropriate proposal such as the one outlined.

Poor Sustainability Credentials

The SANG proposal is located on a narrow single track road, with poor access arrangements. The transport analysis suggests that the road is theoretically suitable from a highways viewpoint but in practice it is not good practice to be encouraging additional pedestrian and cycle traffic to be sharing such a narrow lane with vehicles. Furthermore, the distance of the site from the proposed housing development and local population means that there will inevitably be additional vehicular movements to access the space.

The simple fact is that the SANG is sufficiently far from the local population that a round trip on foot would be more than many people such as those who are less agile and those with young children would be willing to manage or consider safe and so it is inevitable that people will use their cars to access it. Others might not use it at all.

The works to create the SANG are both unsuitable and unsustainable, and will not balance the environmental cost which would need to include improving the country access roads, upgrading the local infrastructure to create cycle ways, adding signage creating urbanisation of the countryside, additional works to create the car park, etc.

As a result, the SANG would have a detrimental effect on the open countryside and be underutilised as a local amenity.

Conclusion

In summary, this proposed SANG is remote and isolated in open unspoilt countryside: it will be difficult to access, underutilised and access provision will have an unwarranted urbanising effect. There is the prospect that a more suitable location might be brought forward if this site is rejected for the reasons indicated.

However, Swallowfield Parish Council is strongly opposed to the development this SANG is intended to mitigate and consequently sees no need for the SANG.

Therefore, the Council urges Hart District Council to **REFUSE** this application.