

Tidmarsh with Sulham Parish Council

Minutes of an ordinary meeting of Tidmarsh with Sulham Parish Council, on Wednesday 17th September, 2014 in the village hall.

Present:

Councillor Mike Broun
Councillor Steve Webb
Councillor John Haggarty
Councillor Jon Chishick
Councillor Jon Pearson

In attendance:

Sarah Bosley (clerk)

31. Accepted apologies

Councillor Colin Pawson

32. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Haggarty declared an interest in Item 5

33. Minutes from the previous meeting

The minutes from the meeting held on July 16th, were agreed as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

34. Matters arising from the minutes

Item 19 – The results of Theale Green School this summer were above the national average. The head teacher has left and been replaced by the former assistant head at Bradfield College.

35. Planning

Planning decisions:

Application number	Location	Description	Decision
14/01464/HOUSE	Knabs Lodge, Mill Lane, Tidmarsh	Construction of detached double garage with storage and utility in the loft	Approved
13/02698/FULC	Green Gables, Tidmarsh Lane	Construction of 4 light industrial units and extinguishment of plant hire operations	Refused

Planning applications:

Application number	Location	Description	Decision
14/01760/COND 1	Moor Copse, Mill Lane, Tidmarsh	Approval of details reserved in 12/01732/FULMAJ	No objections

The parish council has also submitted a letter to WBC as part of the Housing Site Allocation Development Plan Document Preferred Options Consultation and it is attached at the end of these minutes.

36. District councillor's report

District councillor Metcalfe reported:

- * A Costa coffee has been unanimously approved for Pangbourne.
- * Elections are looming.
- * Strategic Housing Allocation: The Planning Policy Group will be looking at the consultation results and drawing up the plan for the 750 houses needed. Concerns are that if there is no agreement then West Berkshire will become a free for all in terms of building. The final document will be voted on in November.
- * Pangbourne bridge reopened on Friday, after the date was brought forward slightly.
- * No decision has yet been made on the public toilets in Pangbourne.

37. Highways and footpaths

WBC has been filling in the potholes along Sulham Lane and Mill Lane has also been marked out for works.

Footpaths from Tidmarsh to Pangbourne have all been chopped back too. The speed activated sign has now been cut back, but the chevrons at the end of the village are covered by foliage. Clerk to alert WBC.

The sign for Sulham was also knocked down by a strimmer recently. Clerk to report.

WBC has proposed to increase the area covered by the 30mph limit in Tidmarsh. Proposed by cllr Broun and seconded by cllr Pearson. It was resolved to reply to Andrew Garratt and note that the PC would support the plans but that it needs to be at the very start of the double bend. The speed limit also needs to be enforced throughout the village. The speed activated sign always needs to be visible.

38. Environmental Matters, including footpaths

A report by George Davidson was read out by the clerk. It read:

“An initial meeting took place with the EA, Kay Lacey, Stephen Billyeald, Clive and BBWOT at the beginning of August to review various aspects related to maintenance of the Pang through BBWOT – discussions have started about whether certain stretches of the riverbank can be strengthened and if

so by what natural means e.g. willow etc. No firm outcome at this stage but agreement from all parties to progress the discussions and work with the EA.

A meeting with the EA, Kay Lacey, Clive and myself plus the new owners of Tidmarsh Mill is scheduled for this coming Monday to review and agree operation / maintenance of the sluice including a discussion about how best to prevent silt build up. The positive news is that the new owners of the Mill are very keen to be involved which will help greatly.

A subgroup has been set up with a specific aim of looking at data available to try and model events and hopefully lead to earlier information on possible events being shared. We have Clive representing us on this group.

We have also submitted, in conjunction with Pangbourne a full summary of events that happened earlier this year – this was collated by Kay, Stephen and myself and has input directly to the WBC report.

Kay and I also attended a 3 hour walk led by Reading Geological Society into what led to the events of 2007 – nothing new emerged apart from better understanding the history of the area before and the water course of the Kennet etc.

Finally I have walked all stretches of the Pang and Sulham Brook and have highlighted to the EA areas where I believe action needs to be taken by Riparian Owners to maintain river banks / normal flow – I will be discussing next steps with them and WBC on Monday at our meeting.”

Cllr Pawson has been approached by a resident to ask the parish council to consider installing water and electricity on the Millennium Green. Proposed by cllr Broun and seconded by cllr Pearson. It was resolved that although it was good to get an idea of costs, it seems too much money, mainly due to the standing charges, to pursue it further at this stage. The council is always willing to look at alternatives when the need arises.

Greg Leeke will go ahead with the annual cutting of the hedges around the green.

At the MG AGM Brian Murby suggested treating the wood – picnic tables, play equipment, benches etc. The costs would be around £160+materials. Need to decided whether to use water or spirit based solutions. Clerk to contact ROSPA for advice.

Clerk to look at metal storage units for the Millennium Green.

The wildflower meadow will need cutting soon. Cllr Haggarty will discuss with cllr Pawson and Brian Murby to find the best way forward.

39. Pangbourne and District Neighbourhood Action Group

The next meeting is on October 7th.

40. AWE Liaison Group

Cllr Chishick attended a meeting this morning. The Pangbourne pipeline was discussed and the EA are pushing AWE to do something about it. It is a very low risk so the MoD is not required to make AWE remove it. AWE claims it is in its long term plan (2026-2032) but costs are prohibitive so it is a low priority. AWE will start discussions with landowners in October and November.

41. Financial matters

Receipts put forward for payment were proposed by cllr Broun and seconded by cllr Webb.

Payments made:

Payee	Description	Amount
Zurich Insurance	Reissued cheque (316)	£265.22
Information Commissioner	Reissued cheque (317)	£35
Tidmarsh Parish Magazine	Reissued cheque (318)	£750
Mazars	External audit (319)	£120
Sarah Bosley	Salary and allowance for September (320)	£236
Sarah Bosley	Salary, allowance and mileage for October (321)	£250.40

It was resolved that the above invoices be approved for payment.

The clerk reported that the annual return had come back and there were no comments from the external auditors.

42. Clerk's Report

The clerk showed councillors a flyer from WBC regarding the West Berkshire Community Champion awards.

43. Close of meeting

Chairman closed the meeting at 10pm. The next meeting is on 19th November, 2014.

Date

Signed

Response from Tidmarsh Parish Council to the DPD Consultation

SHLAA 2013: Eastern Area – Eastern Urban Area (Calcot, Tilehurst and Purley on Thames)

Heading: **Housing Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options**
Eastern Area – Eastern Urban Area (Calcot, Purley and Tilehurst)

Site Ref: **EUA003 & EUA008 Stonehams farm**
EUA031 Land to the East of Sulham Hill
EUA033 Land to the east of Long Lane and south of Blackthorn Close

Objection points:

General – Countryside Issues (All EUA003&008, EUA031, EUA033)

The eastern edge of Tilehurst is highly valued for tranquillity which is one of the most valued features of the countryside. Any new development which expands the urban edge into the countryside would intrude in terms of noise or visual intrusion, would have direct impacts on health, wellbeing and quality of life. The important asset that is the countryside around Tilehurst would be irrevocably damaged and be less attractive for residents and visitors.

The proposed developments will breach the existing settlement boundary, increase exposure of the urban edge and contribute to urban sprawl which is recognised as being a major contributor to climate change.

There is significant opposition to these proposals amongst fellow residents. The application for development at Turnhams Farm / Pincents Lane was opposed and taken to appeal at the highest level where the Secretary of State agreed that development on that site would not be suitable for a number of reasons including transport, landscape and closure of the strategic gap between Reading and Theale. These reasons are similar for these sites.

The fields either lie within or are adjacent to the North Wessex Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The fields contribute to the setting of the AONB and the rural aspect of the urban edge. It is an intrinsic part of the landscape character of the area and any development would have a detrimental impact on the character of AONB .

Sustainability Issues (All EUA003 &008, EUA031, EUA033)

Providing more housing on greenfield sites at the urban fringe will not contribute sustainably to the existing community and will be an additional burden to existing infrastructure and services which are already under pressure.

Development of the sites will have significant environmental, economic and social impacts.

The developments would be unsustainable, as the new dwellings would not be close to local centres which provide community facilities such as shops, post offices, libraries, leisure centres etc. which would result in an over-reliance on car journeys and there is already pressure on other services as doctors surgeries and schools are oversubscribed in the area.

Services and Amenity Impacts (All EUA003 &008, EUA031, EUA033)

As is the case for the existing community, new residents will depend on many local services being provided by Reading Borough Council and not by West Berkshire.

There is poor access to services by existing residents. Local centres (Tilehurst Triangle / Overdown Road) are over 2/3km away. Local doctor surgeries are over-subscribed. There is two local bus service (no.16 & 33) to Reading town centre but these are circa 1km away. Other bus services from School Road, Tilehurst are approximately 2km away. Tilehurst train station is approximately 2.5km away.

There is already an over-reliance on car journeys to nearby services by existing residents.

There are no cycle paths in the immediate vicinity of the site and none provided within the West Berkshire area.

Further regarding site EUA031, the Cornwell Centre and recreation ground are well used for church and other local groups. The park is well visited by families, walkers and children of all ages who consider it safe and secure. There will be increased pressure on this resource as well as concerns in relation of over-looking and child safeguarding, as well as loss of a currently tranquil local space. The introduction of new residents to the immediate boundary of the recreation ground could result in conflict between users and residents in relation to noise or hours of access.

Topography, Scale and Visual Impacts

EUA008 This site is an arable field to the west of Long Lane. The upper slopes have strong links with the wider landscape and it forms an important part of the open plateau of the AONB. Any development on this site carries a high risk of being visually prominent in views from the AONB and the open countryside and would need extensive mitigation to maintain the characteristics of the AONB

EUA031 The site is prominent in terms of topography as it is situated on rising elevated ground which is visible from a wide surrounding area. It lies approximately 1-3m above Chapel Hill and Clements Mead roads and on the rise of the hill from Sulham. The eastern edge of site is a grass bund which slopes down steeply to Clements Mead road and is planted with scrub and a small line of fir trees. New development of 2-3 storey homes (or more) would be very prominent because of its higher position topographically and would be highly intrusive in the landscape.

EUA033 This site is one of the last remaining 18th century irregular fields on the plateau edge and an area of wooded pasture which is a key characteristic of AONB in this area. Any development of this site would have an impact on the open undulating topography, the adjacent woodland and tree cover without extensive mitigation, together with the loss of a good local asset as the field is regularly used for grazing purposes. The site is prominent in terms of topography as it is situated on rising elevated ground which is visible from a wide surrounding area.

(All EUA003 &008, EUA031, EUA033)

New development on the fields would result in the direct loss of views and recreational facilities by residents and visitors who use the area for leisure activities such as walking and relaxing. There would be a major loss of sky views and, in some cases, new buildings on the field would cause overshadowing and result in loss of daylight to existing residents e.g. on Clements Mead and Home

Croft. Further, new development of 2-3 storey homes (or more) would be very prominent for all sites because of their higher positions topographically and would be highly intrusive in the landscape.

Ecological and Biodiversity

The fields and their edges provide important habitat for a range of species, including birds (woodpeckers), bats, small mammals, invertebrates and reptiles. The loss of the fields from new development would result in the destruction of these habitats.

Deers often use the fields not only to graze but also as a wildlife corridor and a link between the open land and the ancient woodland, badgers are present on site EUA033 and foxes are commonly seen on or around the fields.

Additional development will increase pressure on existing wildlife sites, such as the nearby ancient woodlands and Cornwell Copse, in relation to disturbance, trampling, litter, fly-tipping and damage.

Flooding and Drainage

New development would contribute to areas that already suffer from localised flooding as the majority of sites have been identified as surface water flood risk areas with EUA033 also identified as a groundwater emergence zone. Surface water runoff would increase as a result of an increase in the impermeable area, which would flow out of the sites on to Long Lane (EUA003&008), Clements Mead (EUA031) and Chapel Hill and in respect of EUA033 the existing resident's gardens to the proposed development. Water seepages from all fields are common and contribute to dangerous driving conditions during winter months when it becomes excessively icy. The fields are often waterlogged during periods of persistent and /or heavy rain and boggy even during dry periods. Further the proposed access to the EUA003 and EUA033 sites are often flooded especially during the winter months from the run off, both from the fields and ancient woods, which causes major traffic problems. This section of Long Lane is often closed during the flooding.

Light Pollution (All EUA003 &008, EUA031, EUA033)

The developments proposed form part of a natural area that is intrinsically dark. Light pollution and sky glow are very low and as a consequence residents and visitors enjoy fantastic views of the night sky. New developments would lead to a direct increase in sky glow and glare which would reduce night sky visibility in the surrounding area and ecological impacts on nearby habitats.

Further local air quality would decrease and noise pollution would increase as a direct result of additional car journeys.

Employment and Economics

EUA031

Hall Farm Equestrian Centre is a significant and popular amenity for the local community offering employment and training opportunities. The centre is of particular importance as a sporting amenity for girls and disabled riders who are otherwise under-represented by sport facilities in the area. The loss of the field, which is specifically used for national events, show jumping and for disabled riders, would reduce the amenity and attractiveness of the stables which would directly affect visitor

numbers. Events would not be held or capacity at events would be reduced, and this, plus the loss of amenity would mean that people would lose interest in attending. Accreditations with riding clubs would be undermined and potentially lost. The viability of the business would be directly affected.

EUA033

Development of the field would lead to a loss of a good local asset as it is regularly used for grazing purposes by the Hall Farm Equestrian Centre and as a sporting amenity for riders who use the field for practice runs during national events held at the Equestrian Centre.

EUA003

Loss of Farm will lead to loss of employment.

Traffic, Access and Safety (All EUA003 &008, EUA031, EUA033)

The developments will contribute to traffic congestion in the area and affect road safety.

There could be parking overspill onto roads outside the development areas, e.g. Long Lane and Clements Mead, which would affect the safety of road users, particularly children, dog walkers, ramblers and visitors to the area who cross the surrounding road networks to access the local schools, fields and ancient woods.

The access to each of the sites would also cause traffic issues as follows:

EUA003, EUA008 & EUA033 The proposed access will be via Long Lane and when approaching the sites from Sulham Hill this section of Long Lane is very narrow in places (single track in parts) Any increase in traffic would lead to issues of safety without extensive mitigation, which given that the Lane is buffered by Protected trees and Ancient woodland, would not be appropriate. Further, an increase in traffic gaining access to Sulham Hill would lead to a worsening of queuing at a junction were visibility is extremely poor and a further road safety hazard.

Significant improvements in the highway network to enable access to sites EUA003 &EUA033 would change the character of the rural lane which forms part of Long Lane and to gain access to the sites significant levels of vegetation would need to be removed, including the cutting down of ancient trees. This would also significantly change the character and topography of this section of Long Lane.

Regarding EUA031, the access will be at the corner of Clements Mead and Home Croft. Visibility from Home Croft onto Clements Mead is often obscured by parked cars. Access from Clements Mead onto Chapel Hill, and from the other access through the estate, both experience some queuing at morning peak times and additional cars would worsen this situation.

Further, surrounding roads carry a large weight of traffic in relation to commuters to Reading and the M4, local schools, trips to local services, and commuters from surrounding villages travelling through the area on back roads to Reading or the M4 (e.g. via Tidmarsh through Sulham) and any further increase would cause major traffic/pollution issues to this area.

Crime and Security

The area has a low rate of crime (23.68 crimes per 1000 residents). An increase in population and density may increase crime rates to reflect those in surrounding areas, where anti-social behaviour rates are higher.

11 Sep '14