



Middleton St George Parish Council

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Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 12th August, 2019 in the Parish Council Meeting Room

Present: Councillor Mrs. C. Gilsean (Chairman),
Councillor Mrs. M. Beadle,
Councillor Mrs. H. Bullock.
Councillor S. l'Anson,
Councillor S. Smith,
Alan Macnab, Clerk.

In Attendance: Ward Councillors Mrs. D. Jones and D. Laing and 29 residents.

The meeting started at 6.30 p.m.

1016. Chairman's Opening Address

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to consider the Planning Inspector's decision to approve the planning application for houses on land to the rear of High Stell, Middleton St. George, to discuss the implications of the decision and the further action which may be taken. Because of the short notice in arranging the meeting there was no time to arrange a more suitable venue. This was a Parish Council meeting, open to the public, rather than a public meeting. Three residents, and Ward Councillor Mrs. D. Jones, had indicated that they wished to address the meeting in the Public Participation Session. The Chairman indicated that, due to the nature of business of the meeting, the Public Participation session could be extended, but then when the meeting proper resumed, the Parish Council would consider and decide any action required. The Parish Councillors introduced themselves to the residents present. Three residents had indicated that they wished to address the meeting. The Parish Councillors introduced themselves to the residents present.

The Planning Inspector had approved the planning application based on one entrance to the site through The Greenway and Grendon Gardens for the first 50 houses to be built on the site and there would be a second entrance through High Stell when the remaining houses on the site were to be built.

The Chairman read out an email from the Planning Officer at Darlington Borough Council which gave details of the appeal.

1017. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from the Vice Chairman because he was attending another meeting, Councillor Blacklee because of work commitments, Councillor Foggett because of holiday commitments, Councillor McBride because he was attending another meeting and Councillor Ms. Wilkinson because of illness.

The Parish Council **agreed** to accept the apologies for absence which had been received.

1018. Declarations of Interests

Councillor Mrs. Beadle declared an interest as a resident of The Greenway.

Chairman's Signature..... **Date**.....

1019. Public Participation Session. Address by Residents to the Meeting

1019.1 Resident 1

Resident 1 made the following points:

- The construction traffic to and from the site would come past his house in Grendon Gardens which would result in major problems for residents and himself.
- He owned a 32 ton HGV and tipper wagon and he found it difficult to access and leave The Greenway and Grendon Gardens. Darlington Borough Council's Highways Engineer preferred access to the site was through High Stell. There must be two access points to the site but this was rejected by Darlington Borough Council. In addition, the developer did not own the second access point through High Stell.
- He had serious concerns about the increased traffic using the centre of the village during construction of the site especially trucks going to and coming from the site.
- His solicitor had confirmed that no development should take place in the field which was now being developed.
- The water company had stated that they could not make a connection to the field which will be used for the development. There was a drain in the field but it cannot be connected to drains in Grendon Gardens and the only way to do this was to dig up and remove a fence and demolish a house in Grendon Gardens. The drains in Grendon Gardens and The Greenway are connected to the drains in Middleton Lane. There were also telephone cables near to the drains under Grendon Gardens and The Greenway and it appeared that the location of the drains had not been taken into consideration when the planning application was approved.
- Phase 1 to 4 of the development will come out onto Grendon Gardens and that would be where the wheel washing facilities will be located.

1019.2 Resident 2

Resident 2 made the following points:

- As a resident the appeal decision would affect her and she felt badly let down by officers of Darlington Borough Council.
- Outline planning permission was granted by the Borough Council in July 2016 based on two access points. Before that one access was refused by the Borough Council.
- There was no reference to access in the documents supplied to the Planning Inspector by Darlington Borough Council;
- In their submissions to the Planning Inspector there was no objections made by the Environmental Health Officer to the access to the site but the access was sufficient and the Highways Officer had stated that it would be difficult to refuse the planning application
- The road through The Greenway and Grendon Gardens to the site was too narrow.

Chairman's Signature..... Date.....

- The phasing of the development had been approved by the Borough Council on the grounds that it was not harmful to health and safety.
- She expressed concern that the traffic survey which was carried out by the Parish Council was not submitted to the Planning Inspector.
- Officers of the Borough Council had originally proposed two access points, then one access point was proposed and then included two access points in amended plan but there was no reference to two access points in the decision notice.
- No second access could be obtained by the developer.
- She asked if there was any redress against Darlington Borough Council.

The Chairman responded that the traffic survey which the Parish Council had carried out related to the proposed Station Road development.

1019.3 Ward Councillor Mrs. D. Jones

Ward Councillor Mrs. Jones made the following points:

- She and her fellow Ward Councillors had fought against the development from day one.
- The Planning Applications Committee which met in the Dolphin Centre, Darlington had refused the planning application because there was only one access.
- The Planning Inspector approved one access point for the first 50 houses to be built and after that there would be a second access point. The Planning Inspector had awarded costs against the Borough Council.
- She will ask officers of the Borough Council on the 13th August for all the papers relating to the development including the officer's submission to the Planning Inspector and this will be sent to the Parish Council.
- A possible judicial review was considered in the village. A crowd fund had been set up by some residents some time ago, with a view to possibly raising funds for a judicial review. It may be a good idea to check what was happening with this. There was not a lot of time to go to a Judicial Review because a judicial review had to be submitted within six weeks of the original decision.

1019.4 Further Points made by Residents

It was suggested that a third party be approached to determine if there was a case for a judicial review or not.

1019.5 Resident 3

Resident 3 expressed concern about the safety of pedestrians using the roads leading to the development. The Borough Council had responded that the footpaths were satisfactory.

1019.6 Traffic and Parking in the centre of the village

The issue of the relief road from St. George's Gate to Neasham Road was raised. The Vice Chairman responded that the DBC Highways Department had said that the through traffic in the village did not justify the £10 million cost of a relief road, as there would be a minimum saving in journey times if a relief road

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were built compared with the traffic in the village at present. There were national methodologies for calculating traffic flows as well for assessing journey time saved, and Darlington Borough Council was found that because of the way traffic flowed in the village, and the minimal journey time saved, would not be justifiable.

There were two major car parking problems in The Square. The NDP will consider the parking sites in the village and report back to the Parish Council.

The meeting proper resumed, and the Parish Council considered all the issues

1020. Action Plan

The following action plan was **agreed**:

1. Ward Councillor Mrs. D. Jones will obtain all the papers submitted by the Borough Council to the Planning Inspector relating to the development which will be passed to the Parish Council.
2. The location and status of the residents' Crowdfunding for a previous judicial review would be identified.
3. The location of the Crowdfunding for a previous judicial review would be identified.
4. The Parish Council will enquire further with the Borough Council the issue of the drains which Resident 1 had mentioned.
5. The Parish Council would investigate the status of the planning application for the site to the south of the High Stell site, to see if there were any implications which may cause any additional problems
6. The Parish Council would seek to find out whether the Borough Council had any traffic mitigation proposals, so that these could be considered by the Parish Council and residents.

The Chairman reiterated that the Parish Council was fully in support of the residents and thanked them for their input.

The meeting ended at 8.15 p.m.

Chairman's Signature..... Date.....