

THUNDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the THUNDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL EXTRAORDINARY MEETING held via Zoom on MONDAY, 27th JULY 2020 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Cllr Steve Bosson, Cllr Deryck Dipper, Cllr Brita-May Hawes, Cllr Kim Saban, Cllr Natasha Smyth, Cllr Joyce Spackman, Cllr Martin Spackman, Cllr Brian Taylor, Jacqueline Veater

From Osprey Homes: Bob Parker, Henry Lamprecht, Simon Hoskins, Paul Seeby

Public: 12 parishioners

Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

ACTION

20.104 Apologies for absence: None (all councillors present)

20.105 Declarations of Interest and dispensations

1. Noted: that Cllr Steve Bosson, being a trustee, has a non-pecuniary interest in High Cross Village Hall, and a dispensation for all planning matters relating to North Drive and The Glebe Field; that Cllr Brita-May Hawes and Cllr Kim Saban (as of 3rd Dec PC Meeting) have dispensations for all planning matters relating to North Drive and The Glebe Field; that Cllr Deryck Dipper has a dispensation for all planning matters related to Thundridge Hill, incl Ware North development.

No other interests were declared.

2. Written requests for dispensations for declarable pecuniary interests: None.

3. Consideration of requests for dispensations: None.

20.106 Introduction by Parish Council Chair

Cllr Steve Bosson welcomed everyone and was delighted to see so many attending. Following the Osprey Homes presentation attendees would be invited to give their thoughts and opinions of the proposed development, which is the objective of the meeting. He asked that these be emailed to the Parish Clerk asap after the meeting. The comments would then be used by the Parish Council in deciding its position in representing the village going forward.

20.107 Presentation of development proposals by Osprey Homes

Mr Bob Parker thanked the Parish Council for arranging the meeting and for giving them an opportunity to get their message across for their new scheme. He said they would take on board comments made at the meeting. He said EHC are fairly supportive and, being directed by them to the Parish Council, Osprey Homes now want to move forward.

Mr Parker and his team then introduced their development plan via a comprehensive video and power point presentation. The overall theme was that the development represented traditional design with different building materials that maintained the semi-rural character of the 2/3/4 bed properties within the context of High Cross village.

The central green space would be donated to the Parish Council with restrictive covenants. It was hoped the plan would be seen as a good idea.

The presentation was taken from, and is all available for viewing on, their website www.high-cross.co.uk.

High Cross residents would also be receiving leafletted information from the developer.

Following the presentation, the meeting was opened to public comments

The following points and questions were raised:

Q 1(a): To what extent do the trees on the south side of the field represent the boundary?

Q 1(b): What corrective work to them would be undertaken before handing over to the

Council?

Q 2 Tree maintenance costs could be high – could that burden be handed to the home owners?

Response 1: Any necessary tree work will be undertaken before handing over.

Response 2: Osprey Homes will consider how that would work with home owners believing they are supporting a public space.

Q: (a) Will the tall trees in the NE corner of the site be retained? (b) How will maintenance of the drainage ditch be maintained – in the gardens or not?

Response: (a) NE corner trees will be retained. (b) An attenuation basin will be constructed in the SE corner. It will be planted with wild flowers etc to provide a natural habitat.

Q: Confirm that SE corner plots 8 and 9 will be semi-detached properties? Response: Yes.

Q: Other trees backing on to new gardens – who will be responsible? Response: Current house owners.

Q: Will there be street lighting? Response: Yes, bit low-key, preferably solar powered. The new home owners service charge will cover lighting to the drive and footway. OSPREY HOMES want to work with the PC on workable maintenance solutions.

Q: What will be the road width? Response: Double-width for vehicular passing and for service and emergency vehicles. The engineers have looked at visibility splays etc to avoid accidental collisions.

Q: Who will be responsible for maintenance of the hedge on the south side? Response: The land owner – ie, the parish council.

Q: Who will own the culvert (in the past it has been said it belongs to EHC) and what flooding measures will be in place? Response: Ownership will be checked out. Water from the attenuation basin will not egress faster than the present flow.

Q: Re the ownership of the two greenspaces, what would be in place to prevent building on them? Response: Restrictive covenants.

Q: If not owned by the Parish Council, who would own the greens? Response: The management company. *(Clerk's note: a full and clear answer was not given to this question).*

Q: If you initially apply for, and are granted, outline planning permission, you could subsequently significantly change the specification on an amended full application. What safeguards are you offering against that possibility? Response: If we are working together (OSPREY HOMES and TPC), we could skip the outline process and go straight to a full planning application.

Q1: Could we expect to see a children's play area in the green space, and if so, would prospective buyers be put off if there was a play area nearby? Response: We do not believe buyers would not be put off. We could look at some interesting fixed items for children.

Q2; It's useful to know if that's a possibility. Response: Swings and slides are expensive to maintain – consideration should be given to what would be appropriate.

Comment: But will residents be happy to pay for properties with nearby green spaces for children?

Q: On North Drive there are issues in wet weather caused by lots of water flowing down the road and into the church car park. Response: We will look into that.

Q: How will you prevent the parking of cars and commercial vehicles in the church car park? Response: Not sure how to prevent that – it could possibly be looked at with the Diocese.

Comment: "White van man" type vehicles cause difficulties. Response: Height restriction measures could be considered out of a Section 106 agreement. Comment: Height restriction could prevent legitimate service vehicles etc high-cross.co.uk turning in the car park.

Q: It is not unknown for planning to be granted for, say, three bed properties, only to be amended to 4 or 5 bed after approval by creating additional accommodation in the loft space. That inevitably raises the prospect of the need for more parking spaces than planned. Will your house designs allow for that conversion possibility? Response: No.

Q: The church car park is used as a drop-off point for school children. Locals walking to school use the track to the car park which means walking along a road that is busy at school times. Could a path be created from the SE corner of the plot to the car park to avoid walking along the road? Response: That sounds logical. The problem would be getting across the culvert, but that could be explored.

Q: Paths are sometimes used by other vehicles. Could planters or similar be used to deter that? Response: A solution could be considered.

Q: Would such a path across the green space be a right of way? Response: Yes.

Q: What would stop anyone fencing in the open space by church car park? Response: None recorded.

Comment: We wouldn't want a "not proper" play area – it would be better to just have an open space, possibly with benches etc.

Q: It would be better to go straight to a full planning application rather than outline first. Are there any thoughts on reconsidering the bulk of property number 4 because of its impact near the church? Response: We could look at that.

Q: Re land ownership, if restrictive covenants are included, who would enforce them? Response: The management company would enforce covenants on the green spaces. The Parish Council could enforce if it owned the land.

Parish Council Chair Steve Bosson to Robert Parker: Bob, you said we would not find Osprey Homes to be like other developers. Thank you for your time tonight, for listening, and for your explanations.

To members of the public present: Please email your comments to the Parish Clerk. They will help form the basis of the Parish Council's response to the development proposals by representing parishioners' views.

Henry Lamprecht (Osprey Homes): A newsletter will contain all contact details and refer you to the website high-cross.co.uk. The Newsletter will go out to all local residents in the next week or so.

20.108 Urgent matters not listed on the agenda: None

20.109 Date of next Council Meeting.

Full Council: 15th September. Format as dictated by prevailing coronavirus emergency legislation and regulations.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.56pm

Signed.....Dated.....

APPENDIX TO MINUTES

Notes from the discussion with Osprey Homes on 14/09/2020 along with pre-meeting response to topic list sent in the morning of 14/09/2020

Pre-meeting responses from Osprey (*in bold italic*):

- Drainage of 'Church Road' (video available)
Our drainage engineers have confirmed that it should be possible to pick up additional surface water drainage from this roadway but we would need approval from the land owner.
- Review of the major North Drive issue areas (photos available)
We suggest that we meet up to survey the affected areas and produce a specification of the works we will carry out.
- Impact of development street lighting on neighbouring houses
We will use low level lighting bollards.
- Detailed ownership of the South East corner of the field / the drainage ditch and the implications thereof.
The drainage ditch in the top right hand corner of the site will be re-formed to provide a dedicated channel for the water, currently there is no formation and hence causes the flooding of this area. Not aware of any issues to the SE corner that would affect construction.
- Installing a pedestrian access on SE corner
This route is a clear desire line for pedestrians wishing to access the Church and the School in order to achieve this we will have to construct a bridge across the culver for which we will need approval from the Drainage Authority . with this approval we will construct this additional route.
- Construction parking on North Drive, 'Church Road' or in the Village Hall Car Park... (potential to use part of their car park - if essential - in working hours in return for improving that road - leaving room for school drop off / pickup).
Construction parking will be on-site.
- Strictly No Construction Parking village hall car park
Noted.
- Wheel washing from first vehicle on site
Noted.
- Agreements on out of hours working
We will work in accordance with the permitted working hours contained within any Planning Permission.
- Removal of development rights (additional storey)
Permitted development rights are usually dealt with within any Planning Permission.
- Potential to pipe part of the ditch
By reforming and re-cutting the drainage ditch this will not be necessary.
- Parish Council land ownership options review (to feed into next PC meeting including Review maintenance of hedges and boundaries).
No comment.
- Adjustment of garage location Northern most house
We have adjusted plot 4 layout so that the low garage is nearest to the boundary with the Rectory.

Meeting discussions:

- **Drainage of 'Church Road' impacting onto North Drive (video available)**
Video of water flow down Church Road was shown. A copy will be sent to OSPREY.

They agreed that they can resolve this by placing some drainage across the road, possibly at multiple points. They wanted to know who owned the road, we stated that it was not registered. They asked if we could assist with discussions with those who have a right to pass over it (the local residents) and we agreed that we should be able to help with that.

- **Impact of development street lighting on neighbouring houses**

They assured us that the low level lights they would install would not cause the level of light pollution that we described as emanating from the Canterbury Park estate.

- **Detailed ownership of the South East corner of the field / the drainage ditch and the implications thereof**

They confirmed that the entire ditch area was within 'their' boundary and would be maintained by the management company. In fact, the boundary edge along North Drive was in fact North Drive. Although elements were proposed to be transferred to the PC, the entire ditch area and its immediate surrounds would be retained by the development company and both the new and the existing ditch would be maintained and trimmed once or twice per year.

- **Installing a pedestrian access on SE corner**

They are in agreement to do this. We floated that a section of pipe would potentially be easier to maintain than a bridge. They will consider that. We informed that the area in the corner very readily turned into a bog following rain.

- **Throughout build parking must be 100% on site or...**

They believe that they have a lot of space on site and as a consequence on site parking will not be an issue. They would start by establishing hard standing areas.

- **Signage for church car park and village hall car park**

- **Wheel washing from first vehicle on site**

This would not be a problem.

- **Agreements on out of hours working**

It is their intention to only work permitted hours including Saturdays. If they had a pressing need to exceed permitted hours, they would proactively contact the PC.

- **Review of the major North Drive issue areas (including concreting the drainage areas that are supposed to drain water from North Drive, but doesn't) (photos available)**

Photos were shown indicating the major areas of concern. They will minimally fix the pot holes, but we explained that the issues were as a direct result of flooding caused by the drainage zones into the ditch blocking up. They need to be concreted. In addition, the camber should be restored on the impacted part of the road. They will look into this and get their appropriate engineers to visit and meet with us and they would then formulate ideas.

- **Removal of development rights (additional storey)**

EHDC would have to arrange this.

- **Review maintenance of hedges and boundaries**

If the PC accept the ownership, they would be responsible for very few trees. Just the ones on the rectory boundary in the North West corner. All trees would be assessed and issues remedied before transfer. The other boundaries will be under the management company.

- **Potential to pipe the ditch at least through the back gardens and potentially into the header.**

We expressed concern that the ditch within the ownership of multiple houses would not work as experience tells us that they will allow block off the ditches resulting in flooding. We propose a 900mm pipe through that area.

- **Discussion on Parish Council land ownership including the 'contribution to' approach.**

We discussed multiple approaches...

- 1 *We take ownership of the green space fully and maintain it from then on. We highlighted that this would require a precept increase across multiple villages to support this area in High Cross, might not be popular.*

- 2 *We do not assume ownership of the green space in which case the green space would be 'private' and maintained by the management company. Not the greatest option from their perspective as it would put higher costs onto the residents. Area would then be essentially private, but there is a possibility that a right of way could be installed diagonally across the middle as a route to the school.*
- 3 *A compromise could be possible. One option that they will consider is the payment of a sum of money representing a few years maintenance costs.*

It was discussed that OSPREY have submitted revised plans to EHDC on 5 August and they are awaiting a response. The person they are dealing with is Eilis Edmonds? OSPREY claim that they received feedback from 51 local residents on the scheme and that only one was negative.

The council has not met to discuss and formulate a position relating to the proposed development.