

BUDLEIGH SALTERTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Town Council held online via Zoom on Monday 17 August 2020 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT

Cllr M C Hilliar (Town Mayor)
Cllr R D Sherriff (Deputy Town Mayor)
Cllr Mrs L D Evans
Cllr D J Hayward
Cllr A L Jones
Cllr Mrs M P Lewis
Cllr H L Riddell
Cllr G Turner

Clerk: Mrs J E Vanstone

Others Present: County Cllr Mrs C Channon, District Cllr A J Dent, District Cllr P M Jarvis, six members of the public and one representative of the press

20.029 Public Speaking Time

A resident spoke about application 20/1515/FUL. She hoped that as a town lying in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Budleigh Salterton Neighbourhood Plan (BSNP) would factor as relevant and significant in any planning proposal. Her house and that of the applicant and other houses in Stoneborough Lane were mentioned in Policy H2 of the BSNP which as Members would know was about maintaining local character and distinctiveness and described them as "1930s housing with modest gardens lying to the east of East Budleigh Road".

She said that Policy H3 of the BSNP stated that extensions should be sensitively designed to reflect the character of the area and that of its neighbours, and in particular should not result in over development and loss of amenity of neighbouring properties and reflect the existing grain, density and pattern of surrounding development.

She explained Policy D1 of the East Devon Local Plan (EDLP) reiterated the two policies as well as adding that building developments should ensure scale, density, height and material related well to their context and emphasised the importance of good levels of light.

She believed that no sensitivity had been given to any relationship between the proposed designs and the context in which they would sit or to the effect on the amenity of her and her family, the neighbours. The height, size and materials to be used meant the extensions would be oppressive and overbearing due to the elevated position from which they both take form and look totally out of character for the area. She felt they would overpower and dominate not only the original property but more importantly her home and garden, which was part of the semi-detached coupling.

The garden area would look over-developed and lack the current openness, light and space that the back of both properties currently enjoyed. All that would be visible would be two contemporary bolt-ons to a 1930s semi, which would also be seen from the road and would not complement the existing design or pattern of her property nor that of others in the Lane.

There would also be overshadowing of her garden, patio and house which would affect the amount of light getting into the house, darkening the kitchen, bathroom, hall, stairs and landing and increasing the need for artificial light indoors. It would reduce the amount of time they would be able spend outdoors due to the shadow that would be cast across their outside seating area. The addition of a rear dormer meant a further lack of privacy, as it would fully overlook their garden.

The Design & Access Statement and plans, which contained several anomalies, described the proposed development as “a subtle and modest single storey extension which is contemporary and clearly defined from the original house”. However, the scales given in the 3D drawings and plans appeared neither subtle nor modest. It was also not a true single storey extension as it started from an elevated position of 2m above ground level projecting from the first floor of the original house. The design and material used, which included timber cladding, slate tiles and gambon baskets, would amplify the sheer prominence of the structures and differ significantly in character from their attached property as well as conflicting with BSNP Policies H2 and H3 and EDLP Policy D1.

In conclusion, she felt the planning application did not maintain or reflect the local character neither of the area nor the neighbouring property and clearly disregarded key neighbourhood and local planning policies. More importantly for her family, it would have a detrimental impact on the enjoyment of their home and garden, their haven, which was especially significant in the unprecedented times of uncertainty and trying to adjust to life in the ‘new normal’.

Mr W McDermott, Chair of the Budleigh Community Workshop Trust, spoke about the Trust’s application for a Grant. He hoped all Members had had time to read the briefing notes which had been circulated prior to the Meeting.

He explained that he and his fellow Trustees had been working on the project for two and a half years and during that time had looked at other properties and had also considered a new build. Unfortunately, lockdown had halted everything.

The Trust realised that the former Fire Station would sell for more than the estimated £125000 and whilst they had already raised £180000, they felt that would probably not be enough.

He said this was a once in a lifetime opportunity to purchase a building for the community and he hoped that the Town Council would be able to help with a generous donation.

If they were successful, the property would be refurbished and funds had already been ring-fenced for that purpose.

Cllr H L Riddell asked Mr McDermott what the ongoing costs would be and where would any income be coming from. Mr McDermott advised that the running costs would be in the region of £10000 per annum. This would be raised via donations and fundraising events etc.

20.030 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr A F Chaplin (holiday).

20.031 Declarations of Interests in Items on the Agenda

The Town Mayor, Cllr M C Hilliar declared a personal interest in Min 20.037 – he had help set up the Trust’s Crowdfunding Page.

20.032 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held via Zoom on 27 July 2020 had been circulated prior to the Meeting. It was unanimously agreed they be signed as a true record at the next physical meeting.

20.033 Planning

Application No:	20/1560/FUL
Location:	10 Shortwood Close, EX9 6QW
Proposal:	Construction of two storey side/front extension including Juliet balcony
Letters Received:	None at the time the observations were made
Observations:	This Council supports the application – many other houses in this road have been extended.

Application No: 20/1463/FUL
Location: 24 Shortwood Close, EX9 6QW
Proposal: Construction of single storey side/front extension
Letters Received: None at the time the observations were made
Observations: This Council supports the application which is similar to other extensions in this road

Application No: 20/1393/FUL
Location: 2 Granary Lane, EX9 6JD
Proposal: Construction of single storey lead-to timber shed
Letters Received: None at the time the observations were made
Observations: This Council supports the application

Application No: 20/1605/PDP
Location: Land and buildings at Bushy House, Knowle Hill, EX9 7AL
Proposal: Prior approval for change of use of workshops (use class B1(c)) to a dwelling (use class C3)
Letters Received: One letter with comments at the time the observations were made
Observations: This Council supports the application

Application No: 20/1515/FUL
Location: 10 Stoneborough Lane, EX9 6HL
Proposal: Construction of first floor rear extension, rear dormer window, hip to gable extension and provision of cladding
Letters Received: Three letters of objection at the time the observations were made
Observations: This Council is unable to support the application for the following reasons:
1. Over-development of the site
2. The design is out of keeping with and does not enhance the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
The proposal is not in line with guidance set out in the Budleigh Salterton Neighbourhood Plan, Policies H2 and H3.

Application No: 20/1471/FUL
Location: 40 Moorhead, EX9 6PZ
Proposal: Construction of single storey rear extension and porch
Letters Received: None at the time the observations were made
Observations: This Council supports the application, which whilst a large development, is similar to others in the vicinity

Application No: 20/1687/FUL
Location: 3A West Hill Lane, EX9 6AA
Proposal: Construction of porch
Letters Received: None at the time the observations were made
Observations: This Council supports the application

20.034 East Devon District Council: Planning Decisions – Approvals

Application No: 20/12457/TCA
Location: 9 Westbourne Terrace, EX9 6BR
Proposal: T1 – Western Red Cedar: Fell.
Replant with Fastigate Liquidamber or Gingko

Two members of the public left the meeting

20.035 Reports

Chairman

The Town Mayor, Cllr M C Hilliar advised that all was quiet at the moment and he had nothing to report.

Town Clerk

Mrs J E Vanstone reported:

- Councillors would be required to complete a new Register of Interests following the Annual Meeting and she would be sending them out this week. She asked they be returned to her by 28 August.
- Work was progressing well with the foyer – the new floor had been completed and new flooring would be fitted in the bar and disabled toilet this week. Unfortunately, there was an issue with the with the doors which would have to be adapted to fit – this was because the new floor was higher than the old one, which had dropped over the years. The carpenter had been unable to re-use the sprung pin plates which hold the doors in place because they were damaged beyond repair. She would discuss the options with the Chairman of the Public Hall Committee, Cllr Mrs L D Evans. This would mean the flooring in the foyers and ladies cloakroom would not be fitted until there was agreement on the doors.
- She was hopeful that the Public Hall would be able to re-open on 11 September.

Council Representatives on Other Bodies

- Cllr A L Jones reported that Budleigh Salterton Nursing Association had purchased a walking aid for a resident and he reminded Members that if they knew of anyone who may need similar assistance to let him know.

County and District Councillors

County Cllr Mrs C Channon reported:

- Repairs to the pavement in High Street would take place in September – this work was to remedy the slabs outside the Co-op which needed attention. She hoped it would also include the installation of two bollards (between Sampsons Butchers and Hays Travel).
- The Double Yellow Lines agreed for the bottom end of Stoneborough Lane would not be installed until the beginning of November due to the COVID-19 backlog. Unfortunately, cars which were being badly parked in that area were preventing the collection of recycling and waste.
- She was very concerned about the excessive parking near The Hub in East Budleigh Road at weekends when the weather was very sunny. She hoped it was just a seasonal situation, but it was causing traffic queues.
- She felt it was vital that East Devon District Council be asked to re-open the toilets behind the Public Hall. She had had complaints that men, particularly workmen, had been spotted urinating in the rhododendron bushes on The Green. She said many children played on The Green.
- She was pleased the TIC was now open again between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Saturday. It was being staffed by volunteers although a few more were still needed. She said it had been quite busy because there were a good number of visitors around.
- There were just 5 cases of COVID-19 in Devon during the last week and no deaths. She was pleased that the increase in the number of visitors had not caused an increase in the spread of infection.
- The Library was now open but the hours had been reduced for the time being. Books would be quarantined for 72 hours on their return.

Cllr Mrs L D Evans asked if the promised repairs to West Hill would be undertaken before autumn/winter. Cllr Mrs Channon said there was a backlog due to COVID-19 but both she and the Clerk had been chasing this up with the Neighbourhood Highways Officer (NHO).

Cllr D J Hayward asked if it was possible to mark the areas, so they were visible at night as they were dangerous for motorcyclists.

Cllr A L Jones added that the issue was made worse by motorists driving around the potholes and causing a safety issue.

Cllr Mrs Channon agreed and reiterated that she would be chasing this up with the NHO.

District Cllr A J Dent reported that little was happening at East Devon District Council (EDDC) at present, however one item would be discussed by the Full Council which he felt needed highlighting – that of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP).

It was his understanding of GESP that it would produce co-ordinated plans for development in and around the whole of the Exeter area. To him this seemed a very sensible proposition as it would allow for the expansion and growth of Exeter itself alongside the housing growth needed in East Devon. His view was that the current planning system devolved to District Councils was restricted to mostly domestic and commercial development with no power to insist on additional infrastructure such as roads, schools and hospitals.

The District Council was now faced with fresh government requirements to increase the number of houses being currently built each year. For East Devon there was the need to create an environment where the main economic driver in the region (Exeter) had the ability to expand and Cranbrook partially met the housing requirement. Employment growth was being met through development at the West End of the District which included industrial and commercial development around the airport and Science Park.

He sympathised and, to some extent, agreed with the Otter Valley Association (and the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England) that the anticipated population growth within East Devon was lower than the numbers being imposed.

His concern was that if EDDC withdrew from GESP, the district would become more isolated and considerably more vulnerable to the amount of development required by government. By working together with other councils within the GESP catchment area he felt that EDDC would have a much better control over its destiny.

He said that relying on updates to the Local Plan might inevitably invite the introduction of Unitary Authorities, which was already under consideration at Whitehall. He truly disliked that concept as it would totally remove the influence of local councillors who knew and understood the needs of their local communities. He agreed that to date the GESP meetings had had little or no member input and felt that was a major weakness. The presentation made to councillors a few days previously was to propose a public consultation and not to impose a final solution. Despite the way in which GESP had been conducted to date he believed that EDDC should support the GESP in principle and that was how he intended to vote.

He felt it was a mistake to reject the whole concept until a public consultation had taken place which would include proper member involvement. At this stage it would be like throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

District Cllr P M Jarvis also reported that very little was happening at EDDC. The Full Council meeting on 20 August contained a lot of business with the agenda made up of 158 pages. He reiterated what Cllr Dent had reported and was pleased all three ward councillors were on the same page. He said if EDDC were to leave the table of discussion, then it would have no say whatsoever.

20.036 Finance Inspection

- (i) Payments for the month of August 2020 would be approved in September 2020.
- (ii) It was noted that the Chairman of the Finance Committee had carried out the internal finance inspection for July 2020.

20.037 Request for Grant Aid 2020/21: Budleigh Community Workshop Trust

- (i) Consideration was given to making a donation to the Trust to help fund the purchase of the former Fire Station.

Resolved: A donation will be made.

- (ii) Consideration was given to the amount of the donation. After a lengthy discussion it was

Resolved: A donation of £5000 will be made towards the purchase of the Fire Station, with an additional £25000 being pledged towards the cost of refurbishment if the purchase is successful.

The Chairman of the Finance Committee, Cllr D J Hayward will discuss with the Town Clerk how the budgets can be amended to fund these payments.

Three members of the public left the meeting

20.038 High Street Survey

- (i) The objectives of the proposed High Street survey were discussed and it was

Resolved: The objectives are "To get the views of residents and traders as to how the High Street can be made safe for all during the COVID-19 crisis and to find out if pavements are wide enough for users whilst they are social distancing. To encourage residents to shop local."

- (ii) The list of questions previously provided by councillors was received and considered. It was

Resolved: The Town Mayor, Cllr M C Hilliar and the Town Clerk were given authority to compile a list of approximately ten questions from the list of questions supplied. There should also be a request for contributors to include their postcode.

- (iii) It was agreed that these questions will be entered into Survey Monkey by the Town Clerk and once this work is completed, Councillors are to test the survey for any errors and to ensure the survey is functioning correctly.

- (iv) Once testing was completed, it was agreed that the survey will be made available to the public with an advisory notice published on the Council's website, noticeboard and in the Journal. A number of paper versions will also be available.

20.039 Councillor Vacancies

The current Councillor vacancies were discussed.

The Town Clerk advised that new guidance had been received from NALC regarding acceptance of applicants. It was

Resolved: The two vacancies should be advertised as soon as possible and if necessary, interviews will be conducted via Zoom.

20.040 Any Other Business at the Chairman's Discretion

No other business was raised.

20.041 Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next Meeting would be held on Monday 14 September 2020 at 7.00pm via Zoom.

The Clerk was also instructed to organise an informal Meeting of the Community Infrastructure Levy Committee as soon as possible.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 9.19pm.

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Chairman

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Date

Approved