

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of Bures St Mary Parish Council held on Thursday 7th April 2022 at Bures Community Centre at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs J Aries, T Fairbairn, G Jackson, J McCrory, L. Norton, S Pentney, S Sills, T Saer, J Finch (ECC)
In the Chair: Cllr J Aries
Also Present: Mrs J Wright (Clerk), 5 members of BHPC, 36 members of the public

Cllr Jan Aries gave a warm welcome to all in attendance and introduced herself as Acting Chair for the meeting following the recent decision by Cllr Jackson to step down from her role as Chair to Bures St Mary Parish Council.

1/04/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllr L Alston (BSMPC) (work commitment), Cllr K McAndrew (BHPC) (personal commitment) Cllr C Ellis (BHPC) (personal commitment).
Apologies accepted by those present.
Apologies also received from Cllr M Barrett (BDC), Will Vote (Rose Builders).

2/04/22 REGISTER OF INTERESTS & DISPENSATION REQUESTS

To declare any 'Pecuniary' or 'Non Pecuniary' interests and dispensation requests.
No Register of Interests declared and no Dispensation requests put forward.

The Chair proceeded to outline to those present the semi-formal structure for this Extraordinary Meeting.

- a) Names have been taken on arrival of those wishing to speak in the public forum which will follow shortly.
- b) There is a 15-minute session for members of the public to put forward their views especially if they have not submitted these online or by letter.
- c) There is 3- minute allowance for each speaker. This can be extended but we need to be mindful that the meeting should be concluded within 2 hours if possible.
- d) Residents who have not initially elected to speak but reconsider can ask, if there is time to extend the public forum.
- e) Please give the Parish in which you reside prior to speaking. No names will be recorded in the minutes but you will be identified as a resident of BSM, BH, Assington, Alphamstone etc.
- f) To make the most effective use of the allocated time, if a previous speaker has covered all the points that you wished to raise, please try not to repeat what has already been said but state your agreement with all the points previously made. If you wish to add additional considerations, then please do so.
- g) Try not to interrupt someone when they are speaking.

The Public Forum will then conclude and thereafter a member of the public may only speak at the discretion of the Chair.

The BSM Parish Council members will then give careful consideration to what has been said and discuss the issues. They may not be able to formulate a full response at this meeting - that may well require drafting and re-drafting and be approved over the following 24-48 hours before its submission on Monday 11th April. But, by the end of this evening, members of both Parish Councils should have agreed to either support or to oppose the main elements of the application based on a provisional response.

3/04/22 PUBLIC FORUM – 15 minutes maximum public participation

3 minutes for individual contributions unless agreed by the Chairman

5 members of the public chose to speak on Item 4 (a) of the agenda.

One resident noted that although they had no issues to raise regarding the residential aspect of the application they were extremely concerned with the proposed site access designs. Concerns raised being – movement of the delivery lorries in and out of the site, increase in noise level, traffic queuing at the junction, parking loss and also asked ECC Highways to visit the site at peak times to fully understand these concerns.

One resident commented that they had no issues with the proposed development but acknowledged the concerns raised regarding parking. Comments raised – welcomed the electric charging points indicated on the plans, suggests asking the convenience store to offer 90 minute free parking for visitors to St Mary's Church, the likelihood of part-time jobs for local residents will be good for the area, there should be more smaller properties on the site and an increase in parking spaces.

One resident supported the application and the proposal for a convenience store which would offer jobs for the local area. Suggested SCC add a weight limit to the B1508 roadbridge.

Mr Aldous drew attention to the independent traffic survey commissioned by a group of individuals extremely concerned with safety issues in and around the junction to the site. The independent report suggested that the application should be refused on the grounds of safety for both pedestrians and motorists. It also suggested that the 2 proposed uncontrolled crossings did not meet SCC Highway guidelines. Mr Aldous stressed that any loss of parking would be extremely detrimental to the village. He had previously agreed that the independent report could be made available to both Parish Councils prior to the meeting and could now also be shared with others in the wider community.

One resident considered that the proposed Zone 2 dwellings as shown on the design would heavily impact on the surrounding dwellings.

At this point the Chair thanked all speakers for their contributions and asked Cllr Baker to give an overview of the verbal public comments she had received as some members of the public had expressed difficulty in accessing the planning portal. 39 residents aged between 19 years to 95 years had given a verbal comment. The majority welcomed the convenience store element of the proposals however some preferred to see only 1 – 3 bedroom dwellings on the site. Several residents welcomed the proposed uncontrolled crossing points as an improvement on the current layout. Majority did not want to see the site fall into disrepair and lay derelict.

4/04/22 PLANNING APPLICATION DC/22/00754 – Former Chambers Bus Depot, Church Square, Bures St Mary CO8 5AB

The Chair put forward the 4 main areas of concern for members to consider.

a) Highways - taking in parking, the proposed two crossings, repositioning of the bus stops, site access and the physical alteration to the layout of the junction.

b) Convenience store Zone 1.

c) Residential proposal Zone 2.

d) The frontage.

The Chair proceeded to outline to members valid Grounds for Objection making reference to the National Planning Policy Framework July 2021.

She also noted on a challenge in the form of an independent report from a qualified highway engineer to the SCC Highway Authority response on the application

This 29 page commissioned report highlighted a number of severe safety issues. Permission to circulate the report to all members of both parish councils has been given.

At the Bures Joint Annual Parish Meeting held on 31st March Cllr Finch had been asked to gain a response from Suffolk Highways to the application. He had shared residents thoughts from the parish meeting with Officers. The Senior Transport Planning Engineer subsequently submitted a response to BDC which found the proposals acceptable subject to a number of planning conditions and S106 contribution. Cllr Finch asked for a copy of the independent report compiled by Mr K.Berriman. He also confirmed that Highway Officers had visited the site.

Questions raised by members and residents to Cllr Finch:

- a) Recent government changes to road users – none of the 4 named users (motorists, pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders) have priority.
- b) Current primary school uncontrolled crossing is an example of risk to pedestrians and therefore the 2 proposed crossings increase further risk – Highways has looked at various styles of crossings for Bridge Street with the parish council over the years.
- c) Two very differing Highway reports for the junction therefore can the Officer meet on site with members to discuss the differing issues – Cllr Finch advised that this was not likely as the Officer has responded as a Consultee to a planning application. Cllr Finch offered to present the independent report to the Officer and suggested that it could be part of the parish council's response.
- d) Suggest 20mph speed limit for villages – there is a lengthy process to follow and the B1508 is a 'B' road.

Cllr Jackson explained that, following concerns regarding safety issues which were raised by residents at the APM, an independent critique of Ardent's Transport Assessment by a qualified consultant was requested. A concerned member of the public duly instructed Mr K. Berriman to carry out the report and this was funded entirely and independently by a group of residents.

To consider Highways element of application DC/22/00754

Cllr Jackson proposed to refuse on Highway safety grounds as indicated in the independent report. Cllr McCrory seconded the proposal. Vote taken – 8 in favour.

To consider Convenience Store Zone 1 of application DC/22/00754

Comments raised by members and the public:

Why is a retail store included in this application as the village now has improved retail provision? It was suggested that a residential-only site would be preferable as it would generate less traffic.

The Chair responded – under the BDC Local Plan there is an obligation on the developer to mix the site. The onus on the developer to include 'affordable housing' applies only to a site with 10 dwellings or more.

The Housing Needs Survey conducted for the Neighbourhood Plan (NHP) shows a need for smaller dwellings. Does the NHP show a need for further retail provision?

The Chair responded – the NHP is currently an ongoing process. However the village has an ageing population with changing needs. A convenience store may bring benefits.

Cllr Fairbairn left the meeting at this point.

The Chair asked members for a proposal to the Convenience Store Zone 1:

A suggestion was put forward to only object on highway safety grounds and to request a design revision.

The actual retail floor space was questioned. Chair to follow up on that.

Query on the need to change the junction layout if a residential site only.

It was recognised that a retail store could reduce the carbon footprint of the village.

Some consider the proposals will give the location an urban feel with the increase of signage.

Could there be fewer or smaller dwellings to free up space for parking?

Could the retail floor space be reduced to also free up space for parking?

Suggest asking SCC Highways for transparency on its response to the application.

Cllr Norton proposed the following:

To object on highway safety grounds and submit the independent report as supporting evidence.

To support a smaller retail unit which is more in keeping with the village and would allow an increase in parking space.

To support residential but consideration be given to smaller family homes for downsizing or starter. To submit the Housing Needs Survey as evidence of that need.

To request an increase in parking space.

Cllr Saer seconded the proposal.

Vote taken – 6 in favour. Agreed.

5/04/22 BRIEF INFORMATION & EXCHANGE

6/04/22 DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

AGM Thursday 19th May 2022 to be held at the Garrad Room, Bures Community Centre, Nayland Road at 7.30pm.

Future dates 2022: 21st July, 22nd September, 17th November

The meeting closed at 9.30pm and an Extraordinary Meeting of Bures Hamlet Parish Council immediately followed.

Signed:

Chair:

Date: