

ALCONBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 29th July 2008 in the Memorial Hall

Present:

Mr Senior (Chair), Mrs Aylott, Mr Brown, Mrs Dyer, Mr Hardy, Mrs Elphick, Mrs Watkin and Mr Watson. County Councillor Peter Brown and District Councillor Keith Baker. Mrs Lancey (Clerk). 9 members of the public. These included members from both Stukeley and Buckworth Parish Councils.

Public Forum

Mr Hodgson requested that the Parish Council should write to TSA, a company whose vehicles were constantly parked at the old Truckstop site. The future of the site was discussed, but Mr. Senior said that the Parish Council were unable to comment before any formal planning application had been received.

Complaints were made about parking in the Manor Lane/Field Close area. Clerk to contact PCSOs. The public were also urged to call the police when they became aware of any illegal parking.

Mrs Bacon complained about HGVs parking on the slip road and using it as a lay-by near Top Farm which caused severe visibility problems when leaving the entrance to her residence. Clerk to contact PCSOs and the public were again urged to contact the police with any complaints.

37. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Mrs Adams, Mrs Hathaway, Mrs Williams and County Councillor Laine Kadic.

38. Councillors' Declaration of Interest for items on the Agenda

None recorded.

39. To sign and approve minutes of previous meeting held on 24th June 2008. Proposed by Mrs Aylott and seconded by Mr Watson. Minutes duly approved and signed.

40. Committee Reports

(a) Planning Applications Received

0801867FUL Temporary use of existing buildings for employment (B1, B2 and B8), Alconbury Airfield

Mr Senior welcomed Ms. Louise Platt and Mr Andy Moffat of HDC, Planning Department who had joined the meeting to observe public opinion and to assist with any matters of clarification with this application. He also relaxed Standing Orders for this agenda item.

Mr Watson outlined the current situation on the airbase and then expressed the Parish Council's concerns about the renewal of this application. The general public were then invited to join the debate. Everyone expressed their concerns about the traffic impact, the visual impact (including light pollution), the noise and hours of operation on the site, the ecological impact of the application, and the lack of adherence to planning conditions by ADL and the lack of monitoring the site by HDC to ensure compliance with any conditions. After lengthy discussion representatives from HDC left the meeting and the Parish Council

consolidated it,Âs official response which is attached to these minutes. Clerk to respond accordingly.

Applications Determined by HDC

0800572FUL - Erection of 2 storey extension ,Âi land adjacent 1, Globe Lane ,Âi permission granted.

08016181LBC - Repairs to boundary wall, Manor Farm, Church Way ,Âi permission granted

(b) Clerk,Âs Infrastructure Report
Churchyard: Nothing to report.

Village Green: The footbridge at the ford end of the village was in need of painting. The Environment Agency should be asked whether a reed cut would be carried out this year.

General: Parish Council had been made aware of several recent burglaries in the village. Complaint received about poor lighting between Alconbury and Alconbury Weston and in Polecat Lane. With the extension to the ASSC nearing completion it was considered important to address the resulting problem of both speeding and lighting between the two villages. Clerk to action.

Hedge on the corner of Mill Road had been trimmed

Peter Rowlings had carried out pruning to trees on the green and along the Great North Road near the ASSC.

The interactive speed signs along the Great North Road still needed some adjustment. Clerk to action.

Street sign at the junction of Mill Road and High Street was in need of attention, along with other signs in the village. Clerk to action.

(c) Bramble End

Mr Watson reported that little progress had been made with the plans for enhancing the play area. The formation of a working party was discussed. It was agreed this, along with possible funding sources, should be an agenda item for October.

Clerk reported that notices concerning dog fouling and litter had been delivered to all households in the area and that PCSOs had been made aware. Stickers re. dog fouling had been obtained for the area. The provision of a further waste bin and emptying it would be looked into further.

41. The Post Office (Discussed with item 47 ,Âi PO Closures Meeting)

The Parish Council were pleased to report that the Alconbury Post Office was not included on the recent government list of 2,500 closures. However, Mrs Dyer reported from the recently attended Post Office Closures meeting, that should any one of those Post Offices on the closure list be able to make a good enough case to stay open, then another one must be closed in its place. Seven offices are due to close in the area, notably on the B660 from Catworth to Ramsey St. Marys. All but Great Stukeley would be given some outreach service. The only business owned by the Post Office is that of postal orders. All other transactions have to be bid for, and if the Post Office in general has not managed to become profitable by 2012, then another round of closures could apply.

42. Proposed Community Orchard

Letter received from the owner of the land on Mill Road expressing his general approval of

the idea of a community orchard. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to the owner informing him that the Parish Council wished to have the land in question valued.

43. Field Close ,Äi update from Clerk

Clerk was still pursuing the Highways Agency for the appropriate point of contact concerning the maintenance of this land.

44. Resources and Management Group - update from Mrs Watkin

Clerk confirmed that groups wishing to hold events on the village green should contact the Parish Council for permission. She also confirmed that she had obtained details of insurance policies held by the different organisations in the village such as Neighbourhood Watch and the ASSC.

At their recent meeting the group had discussed the role of the Chair and the level of commitment required in this position. The importance of the role of Vice Chair and its support for the Chair was also discussed. All those who had been in the position of Chair had unanimously agreed that one of the most difficult aspects of controlling meetings was the habit of Councillors talking amongst themselves, and this must not be allowed to continue. The meeting had accepted that Chairs were replaced by a personal approach from Councillors. It was decided that the election of Vice Chairs might be discussed further at a later date. It had also been agreed that the Parish Council had a good balance of Councillors, all of whom took part in discussion. The next meeting would cover the role of the Councillor as an individual.

45. The Clerk,Äôs Appraisal - update from Mrs Watkin

The appraisal had been carried out by Mrs Watkin and Mr Senior on 9th July 2008. The session had begun with the recognition of the quality of the work carried out by the Clerk on the Council,Äôs behalf. Outstanding tasks had been deadlined. The problem of Councillors not replying to e-mails had been highlighted. Clerk to ask for replies where appropriate e.g. the request for agenda items. It had been suggested that a mobile phone should be purchased instead of the Clerk using her domestic line. Mr. Senior to look into this. This would also have the advantage that during a time of absence the phone could be passed to a Councillor. It was appreciated that the Clerk was working more hours than she was currently paid for. This should be an agenda item for the August meeting.

46. Meeting on Speeding Issues - report from Mrs Aylott

Alconbury was the only Council to attend this meeting at the Stukeleys. The use of hand held speed guns by residents had been discussed, known as Speedwatch. This service has to be organised by the Neighbourhood Panel. One set of equipment would cost approx. £5000 and would be passed between participating villages. Details of vehicles travelling at 37 mph and above in a 30 mph limit would be fed back to the Police and logged and offenders would receive an advisory letter. No firm decision on the way forward had been reached.

47. Post Office Closures Meeting - See Agenda Item 41 above.

48. RAF Molesworth - report from Mrs Dyer

Representatives from the base had met with Highways to investigate the encouragement of personnel to use the service road and not go through the village, but Highways had replied that no money was available for better signage which they considered to be unnecessary. Meetings for newcomers on the base suggesting alternative routes had

resumed. The new entrance to RAF Alconbury was forecast for 2011 and would be just before the entrance to Little Stukeley travelling from Alconbury. There would be a long run in to stop traffic queuing on Ermine Street. It was anticipated that more personnel would be living in and around the area and it might be necessary to check whether local councils were receiving all resulting monies due to them from central government. Mrs Dyer had also mentioned the work being carried out by Cliff Carlson on the noticeboards in the village.

49. The Bi-monthly Newsletter

Suggestions for the next newsletter included the new noticeboards, recent burglaries with advice to residents, bad parking in the village, the desirability of keeping tidy gardens and an update on the opening of the major scheme at the ASSC. Suggestions for future improvements in the village might also be sought. Copy deadline 16th August with distribution date at the beginning of September.

50. Correspondence

Local Development Framework: Core Strategy: Submission – circulated to Planning Committee. No further comment to be made.

Road Closure Notification in event of flooding – notification how the Environment Agency provides information to Highways and Police in the event of flooding, and that the decision on whether to close a road will be made by Highways or the Police and is not within the remit of the Environment Agency.

CPALC Autumn Training Schedule and July Update – circulated to all.

Parish Charter for Huntingdonshire – as only a minority of towns and parishes were interested in this idea and because the devolution of service could lead to a fragmented and more expensive service for residents as a whole, a Charter would not be pursued.

Huntingdonshire Flood Forum – 15th October 2008. Mrs Elphick to attend. Questions to be discussed at August meeting.

Letter of thanks for donation from 1st Alconbury Brownies.

1st Alconbury Guides – it was agreed that representatives should attend the August meeting to discuss funding.

'Time Inspired' – it was agreed that representatives should attend the August meeting to give a short presentation.

Cambs. ACRE Conference on community-based solutions for rural services – 25th September 2008. Mrs Watkin to attend.

51. Responsible Finance Officer's Report

Cheques for signature:

Alconbury Cricket Club – donation (Section 137) - £500

Pipex Internet (July 08) - £14.99

Grafton Projects – Newsletter - £120.17

Demon – web hosting (May) - £11.75

Demon – web hosting (July) - £11.75

Alan Summerfield – grass cutting - £3172.50 (Please note there was an error on the agenda as the amount shown did not include VAT)

Global Tree Solutions – treework on Brookside - £346.63

Clerk's Salary July 2008 - £365.78

Petty Cash Top Up - £28.28

Payments were proposed by Mrs Watkin and seconded by Mrs Aylott

Cleared Balances: C/A £18,200.15. D/A £13,936.69 Y/G £1909.39.

52. Date of Next Meeting – 26th August 2008 in the Memorial Hall.

Comments of Alconbury Parish Council in respect of the proposed renewal of temporary permissions for B1, B2 and B8 uses at the site. Ref: 0801867FUL

1. TRAFFIC IMPACT:

1. The submitted Traffic Assessment concludes that the local road network can, in technical capacity terms, accommodate the traffic generated by the temporary uses. It is understood that the Highways Agency and Cambridgeshire County Council are likely to concur with this view but are also aware that Stukeley Parish Council has raised some concerns regarding the validity of the traffic data utilised in the assessment. However and notwithstanding the technical capacity it is the experience of the Parish Council that the temporary uses which have taken place for the past 3 years have proved detrimental to the amenity and convenience of village residents for the following reasons:

- Residents find it difficult to leave the village in the morning with lorries queuing at the Rusts Lane entrance to the base thereby blocking access to Huntingdon and the A14 for significant periods.

- HGVs heading for the site regularly get lost and manage to enter the village and the village green area. On realisation that they are in the wrong place this results in noise and disruption for residents as vehicles attempt to turn, manoeuvre and leave on small residential roads not designed to accommodate such vehicles.

- Linked to the above you will be aware that in the centre of the village is the heritage bridge which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument with a 2 tonne weight limit and only approximately 3 metres wide. Lost HGVs have attempted to use this bridge rather than attempt to turn in the road and have clipped the parapet walls.

- A significant volume of traffic accessing the site leaves the northbound A1 at the Alconbury junction and skirts the eastern side of the village before heading up Rusts Lane. Residents living on the eastern side of the village have concerns over air quality.

4. On 10 December 2003, the Secretary of State granted planning permission (your reference 97/1500) for the redevelopment of the site to provide for 630,000sqm of warehousing / storage uses. It is acknowledged that this 630,000sqm is approximately double the level of space which is used under the temporary permissions however, when the secretary of state granted permission a number of conditions were attached that were deemed vital to mitigate the impacts of the uses on Alconbury and the surrounding road network and these were considered necessary before any business use commenced should the permission ever be implemented. Those most relevant as taken from the decision letter are:

115) No building hereby permitted shall be occupied unless and until the following works have been completed:

21. Works to improve the A14/A1126 Spittals Interchange as shown on Plan No

43566/SHF/0004 Rev P6;

3II. Improvements to the A14/A1 Brampton Hut Interchange as shown on Plan No

43566/SHF/0005 Rev P4; and

4III. Improvements to the A14 Rusts Lane Interchange as shown on Plan No

43566/SHF/0008 Rev P2.

16) No building hereby permitted shall be occupied until a scheme for the improvement of the A141/C339 roundabout to facilitate bus priority and improve cyclist provision has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority...

17) No part of the development shall be commenced unless and until a scheme of traffic calming works to the C339 through the Stukeleys prepared generally in accordance with The Stukeleys Traffic Calming (shown on Savill Bird & Axon drawings nos 1, 2, 3 & 4 dated 16 November 1998) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority...

22) No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until a rail link to the East Coast Mainline is provided in accordance with the Order made under the Transport and Works Act 1992 and associated with these proposals or such other link as may otherwise be approved by the Local Planning Authority.

24) Operational rail sidings shall be provided to a minimum of 90% of the Class B8 floorspace in the development hereby permitted...

5. The current applications propose no such measures or even partial measures to mitigate the impacts of the uses.

6. Whilst recognising the temporary nature of the proposals the site has already operated for a three year temporary period and a further three years is sought. The operations will therefore have taken place for six years which is longer than might be expected of a 'temporary' use. The Parish Council requests that if the temporary permissions are to be renewed planning conditions or S106 obligations should be placed on the developer to reduce non residential / non local traffic entering the village. A package of measure could include improved signage around the village, the implementation of entrance features such as posts / piers at the entrances to the village to highlight the residential nature and the putting in place of routing agreements with the site operators requiring HGV traffic to be directed away from the village and Rusts Lane.

2. VISUAL IMPACT

7. The application proposes to stack containers up to four high where they are more than 200metres from the boundary and two high where within 200 metres. As the Council is aware the stacking of containers at four and five high has lead to numerous complaints from residents regarding visual impact. The containers are highly visible from the Rusts Lane / A14 interchange. They are also visible from Alconbury Hill and Buckworth Parish. It is understood that the current permission is not the subject of a height restriction condition which has allowed the current position to develop without any control.

8. We are aware that the current storage permission was granted before the secretary of states decision was released. The secretary of states decision as referred to above contains a condition relating to external storage that would have to be adhered to should

that permission be implemented. It states:

148) No items shall be stored or stacked in a designated storage compound so as to exceed the height of the approved boundary treatment with the exception of the area marked 'Rail freight handling' on the scheme Masterplan, where containers shall be stacked no more than 10 metres high.

9. The secretary of state was therefore clearly of the view that any external storage except in small designated areas where 10 metres was permitted, should not exceed the height of the boundary fencing (approx 2 - 3 metres high). Even a generous ten metre restriction would only allow stacking at 3 containers high but this application seeks four high. This would mean storage up to 11.6 metres or 38 feet. If the current renewal application is to be approved a condition should be placed on the consent restricting the storage to a maximum of 3 containers high, just below the recommended 10 metres. Allowing container storage at four high would be inconsistent with the secretary of states decision. The Parish Council is also concerned that any storage of containers within 200 metres of the perimeter fence would be visually intrusive, particularly for neighbouring residents. It is felt that no storage should be permitted within a 200 metres radius of the perimeter.

3. ECOLOGY

10. Whilst the comments of the submitted Ecology report are noted the Parish Council considers that the use of an additional 20,000 sqm of space within the site for external storage purposes will result in some harm to wildlife habitat. That is there will be an additional 20,000 sqm of space which is currently open taken up with storage and this storage and the associated movements and activity will inevitably have an impact on the bird and hare species which inhabit the base. Since the initial temporary permissions were granted the site has been considered of sufficient wildlife merit for it to be designated as a County Wildlife site. This is a material change in circumstance which requires consideration.

4. NOISE / HOURS OF OPERATION

11. The Parish Council is aware via complaints from local residents and from discussions with Members of Stukeley Parish Council that night time working at the site has a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of those living in close proximity to the perimeter. Concerns involve the use of gantry cranes, movement of lorries and machinery and excessive lighting.

12. It is considered inappropriate to allow 24 hour working at this site and that a condition restricting the hours of operation should be applied in consultation with local residents and Stukeley Parish Council.

PARISH COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

1 The Parish Council is of the view that the application should be refused for the reasons set out above. That is:

1. Traffic - adverse impact on residents leaving the village, HGV's entering the village and causing damage to the heritage bridge and general air quality concerns.

2. Visual Impact - The storage of containers at four high has a detrimental impact on the

visual amenity of this rural area and has resulted in many complaints

3. Ecology - Adverse impact on habitat and species within a County Wildlife Site as a result of the utilisation of additional site area for storage.

4. Noise / Disturbance - Adverse impact of the use on the residential amenity of neighbouring property owners particularly in terms of noise and light pollution.

However, should the Council resolve to grant permission the Parish Council would seek the imposition of conditions or legal obligations that would:

i. Require the implementation of a package of measures which may include improved signage, village entrance features and particularly a HGV routing agreement with the aim of minimising HGV traffic passing through the village and utilising the Alconbury exit off the A1. The agreement would ensure that HGV access to and egress from the site is via the A14 rather than A1.

ii. Impose a maximum height restriction for external storage of three containers and in any event not exceeding 10 metres.

iii. Prohibit any storage of containers (even two high) within a 200 metre radius of the site perimeter.

iv. Require the entrance gate to the site at the top of Rusts Lane to be moved well back into the site to allow a number of HGVs to pull off the public highway and queue on the site rather than on the public road. This would assist in alleviating some of the delays experienced by village residents.

In addition to this formal application recommendation the Parish Council would seek assurances from Huntingdonshire District Council that any permission which is granted will be carefully monitored to ensure compliance with planning conditions and that storage only takes place within the permitted areas. Whilst the Councils workload is appreciated, given that the historic experience with this site is that the operators have erred from what has been permitted the Parish Council is of the view that regular inspections are justified and should take place.