

Appledore Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting on 29th February 2016 at 19.30hrs

Appledore Village Hall

Present

Cllrs: James Perkins (Chair), Lyndsey Jenkins, Jasmin Kellar, Chris Vane, and Charles Wilkinson.

In attendance: Borough Cllr. Mick Burgess and the Clerk Mary Philo. Members of the public around 65 people and children.

1. Formalities

I. The meeting was quorate.

II. Helen Hennig was absent due to the death of a close relative and Derek Winter had been called away due to the ill health of an elderly family member.

III. Declarations of interest and dispensations: none.

2. Approval of Draft Minutes

It was resolved to agree the minutes of the meeting on the 15th February 2016 as a true record with the following addition to item 7 Parkwood Picnic Site, at the end of the paragraph – The parish council have also written a non-binding letter expressing its possible interest in the woodland. Proposed by Charles Wilkinson and seconded by Lyndsey Jenkins.

The meeting was adjourned for public discussion of the proposal regarding the parish council owned field.

History of the proposal.

Following a request for consultation by Ashford Borough Council (A.B.C.) regarding the emerging Local Plan 2030 and the call for future development sites by A.B.C., Appledore Parish Council had submitted, to A.B.C.'s initial consideration stages, its field along with Dr. Colledge's field for development to include mixed housing with an enhanced surgery with additional medical facilities and small private offices. With the imminent demise of the doctors' surgery, A.B.C. had asked the parish council to reconfirm its position with regard to its' field and the field's submission to the final Ashford Local Plan 2030 which, would then be subjected to public consultation and A.B.C. council ratification.

Proposal

A.B.C. viewed the Parish of Appledore to be suitable for a development of approx. 15 mixed dwellings across the two fields. The parish council viewed this as an opportunity to provide something towards the housing requirements reflected in the 2010 Older Person's Accommodation Survey and the 2008 Parish Plan in a location that had been

indicated as being acceptable to residents and the borough council. Any profits could be used to support local organisations in the future.

Development Routes

The conventional route would be to sell to a developer whose aim would be to maximise profits with more houses or less affordable homes but the parish council would receive cash immediately. Another way would be for residents to form a Community Interest Company which would provide control over number and design of homes but there would be a greater financial risk.

Public Session

There was a convivial discussion during which the following points were raised:

- Concern that once the land was sold there would be no further source available to the parish council to provide funds.
- Concern that it would set a precedent for many other schemes. However, the Local plan ought to limit the number and size of developments up to 2030.
- Concern that the style and type of houses would be inappropriate for the village. The final design would be subject to planning approval as per usual.
- Concern that the countryside was being concreted over and being spoilt.
- Concern that the traffic problem would be made worse and that the access from The Street would make it more dangerous to cross the road to the Recreation Ground and play area.
- Concern that the current amenities could not support more houses however, Wittersham School still had plenty of room. The local convenience shop owner advised that the post office was struggling and that just a few more houses would be better than no houses. The loss of the post office might translate into a 10% reduction in village house prices.
- Concern that just a few further homes would not lead to more buses or better transport service, however, some preferred the seclusion.
- Concern that new people to the village would not participate in local groups nor use local business.
- Concern that the land would be lost for further recreation.

During the discussion it was advised that the council field could be put forward to the local plan in its own right or together with Dr. Colledge's field.

Cllr. Burgess suggested that a Community Interest Company might be also used to rent the homes built, prioritising local residents and providing more affordable rents. Rye Kino and the Farriers Arms in Mersham are examples of Community Interest Companies. Information about Community Interest Companies can be found on

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-regulator-of-community-interest-companies>

Overall the public were equally divided in support or against the proposal for the field to go forward into the local plan.

The meeting reconvened

3. Council field

A cllr. expressed concern that there were some residents who wished to keep the village the same and that no further houses for the village would be a retrograde step. Another cllr. expressed concern that it would be inadvisable to totally dismiss the field from the Local Plan. A further cllr. remarked that there would likely be more residents in favour of the development than against as, in general, supporters do not attend public meetings. Several cllrs. believed that many of the residents' concerns could be dealt with during the planning process. Furthermore, profits could be put to good use in the parish. Also the idea of the homes providing annual income should be considered when the time comes. **It was resolved to agree to continue to put forward the council owned field for development as part of Ashford Local Plan 2030.** Proposed by Charles Wilkinson and seconded by Jasmin Kellar.

3. Date of the Next Meeting

21st March 2016 at 19.30 hrs Village Hall. The meeting closed at 22.07 hrs.