

ST JAMES, ISLE OF GRAIN, PARISH COUNCIL

M I N U T E S

16th JULY 2024

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD
IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 19:03

Present:

Councillor P Blakeley (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs C Hardingham
Councillor A G Jones
Councillor Mrs G Sands
Councillor T Sands (Vice Chairman)
Councillor Ms J Sharp
Councillor Ms H von der Holle
Councillor D Warrington

In Attendance:

Mrs Christine Gurr – Parish Clerk

Recording, filming and broadcasting of the meeting:

- There were no members of the press and public present.

Apologies for absence (received and accepted):

Councillor H Ogunfemi - Work commitment

(To avoid possible disqualification under the 6-month rule, Councillors must provide a reason for non-attendance)

Declarations of disclosable pecuniary Interests (DPIs):

- A member need only disclose at any meeting the existence of a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) in a matter to be considered at that meeting **if** that DPI has not been entered on the disclosable pecuniary interests register maintained by the Monitoring Officer.
- A member disclosing a DPI at a meeting must thereafter notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of that interest within 28 days from the date of disclosure at the meeting.
- A member **may not participate** in a discussion of or vote on any matter in which he or she has a DPI (both those already registered and those disclosed at the meeting) and **must withdraw** from the room during such discussion/vote.
- Members may choose to voluntarily disclose a DPI at a meeting even if it is registered on the council's register of disclosable pecuniary interests but there is no legal requirement to do so.
- Members should also ensure they disclose any other interests which may give rise to a conflict under the council's code of conduct.
- In line with the training provided to members by the Monitoring Officer members with also need to consider bias and pre-determination in certain circumstances and whether they have a conflict of interest or should otherwise leave the room for Code reasons.

The following DPIs were received:

- None

(A Councillor who declares a DPI must withdraw from the room unless a dispensation has been obtained from Medway Council's Monitoring Officer)

ST JAMES, ISLE OF GRAIN, PARISH COUNCIL

24.89 Consideration of Planning Application

There was a lengthy discussion of the following application

MC/24/1289

Land West of Edinburgh Road

- Construction of 34 dwellings together with access, parking, landscaping, open space and associated infrastructure and earthworks

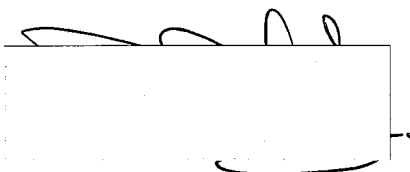
Action/Comments Agreed:

It was proposed by Councillor T Sands, seconded by Councillor Ms J Sharp, and agreed unanimously to:

- Send a letter of objection to Medway Council enclosing a Schedule of Comments to meet the deadline of 17th July 2024 as per the Appendix;
- Publish the letter of objection and Schedule of Comments on the website;
- Councillor Mrs C Hardingham will also publish these on Facebook.

20:31 *There being no further business, the meeting was closed.*

Signed:



Date:

30/7/2024.

APPENDIX

ST JAMES, ISLE OF GRAIN, PARISH COUNCIL

SCHEDULE OF OBJECTIONS TO

PLANNING APPLICATION MC/24/1289

LAND WEST OF EDINBURGH ROAD, ISLE OF GRAIN

ACCESS

- Access to Grain Village is via the A228/B2001 which is a major road for local industry and is heavily used but is not well maintained - as is evidenced by the considerable time it took to resurface Stoke Bridge which had deteriorated so far that many vehicles suffered damage owing to the appalling condition of the road surface;
- Traffic lights are constantly in use on this route and local transport and school buses are often delayed leading to the children being penalised for lateness even though the circumstances are beyond their control;
- Major incidents anywhere have a domino effect with Grain being the worst affected as there is no alternative route available to residents;
- COMAH regulations will also apply to any additional houses so new residents will need to be informed of the significance of PIZ;
- The main access to the new development would be via Chapel Road which is poorly maintained and is currently in an atrocious condition;
- Construction vehicles will find it impossible to access Coronation Road/Edinburgh Road which are very narrow and further restricted with parked cars as the adjacent houses have no driveways;
- There is an existing problem with passing parked cars on this route with access for emergency vehicles being highly restricted;
- Coronation Road is also well used as overflow parking from Chapel Road and again passing issues will ensue as well as entry/exit restrictions;
- Edinburgh Road is too narrow to provide adequate access to the proposed new development and major issues will inevitably arise which will demonstrate the poor thought that has gone into this scheme.

THE PLANS

- This scheme is an over development of very small parcel of land at the edge of the village and obviously the previously tightly controlled 'village envelope' has been abandoned without any consultation with existing residents;
- The use of shared tandem drives is included within the plan but these do not work and will result in additional on road parking;



APPENDIX

- Many properties have more than one car – which is essential for commuters without access to public transport – and any additional parking bays will soon be full with the consequent increase in on road parking;
- The houses in this development will obstruct the vision for those using exiting Chapel Road or High Street as it is an extremely dangerous bend with poor visibility;
- No planting should be allowed the Grain Road verge as this would exacerbate the visibility problem for which Medway Norse are required to cut the grass verge back to an additional depth for this reason;
- Safe and quick exit from the Fire Station will also be hampered by these houses and this could be extremely important in an emergency;
- The positioning of the proposed pedestrian crossing is dangerous;
- The houses will be too close to the adjacent Grain Village Siren;
- Many houses already suffer from low water pressure so additional houses will impact the water supply further;
- Additional fire hydrants would be required and would also impact the water pressure to existing properties;
- Interruptions to the power supply are already frequent so additional demand would increase such occurrences.

GENERAL

Obviously, much is said of the lack of facilities here – no attending doctor, minimal health cover, school full (not just with local children), distance to attend doctor, dentist, hospital and the basic, but not reliable, bus service. Grain is the end of the line for so many services and there appears to be some reluctance to provide these owing to access issues here.

We have two shops – Co-op and a small corner shop. However, the Co-op shop is usually inundated with contractors looking for breakfast, lunch or dinner items and queues do form – sometimes to the detriment of residents.

The Co-op is a well-used shop but issues arise on a regular basis with parking both on the road and half on/half off the footpath. The Post Office also operates from this shop which adds to the parking problems, despite the limited opening hours and lack of privacy for customers.

St James, Isle of Grain is a community that relies heavily on willing volunteers to take on tasks when other services are not provided. The volunteers who form the Friends of Grain Coastal Park have developed our foreshore over the past 15 years and any additional burdens created could not be met by them. Medway Council choose to promote this as a place to visit without providing any funding or facilities for visitors – such as the much needed (and much requested) public toilets. The



APPENDIX

creation of the England Coastal Path (two sections of which link at Grain) has further increased visitor numbers.

If Medway Council consider this as a viable area for housing, serious attention needs to be given to the issues highlighted here - and supported by others with similar concerns. A large amount of Tax is paid into central government by the local industry but very few any benefits are seen by residents either in road improvements, jobs or infrastructure development.

The local primary school is already oversubscribed and the Head Teacher has commented that it is difficult to recruit teachers for the school because of its remote location so any attempt to increase the school intake would fail. There is also no space for a further extension of the building.

The fire station is manned by retained fire officers and again is currently under-resourced with recent attempts to recruit having failed. If the fire station at Grain is unavailable owing to staffing issues, the nearest fire engine (from Strood) would take at least 20 minutes to reach the village by which time a fire could have taken hold – possibly with disastrous consequences. If a fire engine was not available from Strood, then the respond time would be even longer.

There is a minimal police presence in the village and increased housing would exacerbate the situation and may lead to an increase in anti-social behaviour.

Emergency ambulances must travel from the Medway Towns or beyond so additional residents would increase the burden on the already over stretched South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECamb).

This development will bring no prosperity to the village as there are no jobs locally and insufficient resources - as already highlighted - but it will put more vehicles on the road as people commute to the Medway Towns, or beyond, for employment.

The community of St James, Isle of Grain, needs to be left as one of the few remaining villages on the Peninsula – albeit surrounded by water and industry - and not destroyed by this ill-conceived and thoughtless plan.