

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF EYNSHAM PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 15<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2005 AT 7.30 PM  
AT THE BARTHOLOMEW ROOM, EYNSHAM**

**Present:** Mr G Beach (Chairman)

Ms G Barwell, Mrs L Gerrans, Mrs E Graham, Mrs V Hughes, Mrs M Jones, Messrs. P Dhesi, N Hines, P Hughes, J Mittell, C Roles, D Rossiter, Dr F Wright

**In Attendance:** J Heath (Clerk), Mrs M Stevens (WODC) and fourteen members of the public

**05/224 Apologies for Absence** – No apologies for absence – Mr T Green and Mrs D Seeney did not attend (see Minute 05/225 below)

**05/225 Declaration of Interests**

The following declarations were noted in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, s81 and the Parish Councils (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2001:

Dr Wright - Village Hall Management Committee

Mr D Rossiter – West Oxfordshire District Council

Mr T Green – personal and prejudicial interest.

Mrs D Seeney – personal and prejudicial interest

**05/226 Introduction**

The Chairman explained to all present that the meeting was to discuss and decide upon planning application No. 05/1856/P/FP – submitted by Cottsway Housing for the development of 40 affordable houses on Land off Chilbridge Road, Eynsham.

**05/227 Items Raised by Members of the Public – Standing Orders were suspended**

The following concerns were raised by members of the public:

1. Infrastructure of the village could not cope with 40 houses on this site.
2. Serious traffic problems would arise from the increase in vehicular movements. Only 20% of residents work in the village, the rest will use cars to get to work.
3. Queries that the affordable housing survey results were open to question.
4. Concerns that the Heads of Terms document between OCC and Cottsway seems to suggest that a further development of 60 houses and perhaps 160 houses is being considered. There is no natural boundary to stop this.
5. The western side of the village is inappropriate for the site.
6. Concerns that Eynsham could become a “dormitory town” to Oxford if this development, the possible further development of 160 houses and the eastern development goes ahead and the character of the village would be eroded. This would result in a further 750 – 900 residents and would be far too many. The policy of Eynsham Parish Council and West Oxfordshire District Council has always been to resist development of the western side. This should be continued. One proposed application on the western side of the village had already been successfully fought through the public enquiry procedure.
7. The amenity of a quiet lane would be lost.
8. Mixed development of private, shared ownership and rented is preferable.
9. Conflict of interests in respect of WODC as the Council is both sponsor and judge/advocate.
10. Conflict of interests in respect of OCC as the Council owns the land and is also the Highways Authority.
11. Proposed site is not a rural exception site but an agricultural site. It only becomes a rural exception site after the application has been granted.
12. Other sites are available and this one is inappropriate.
13. Concern that the declining population of Eynsham has been exaggerated.
14. Grave concerns that the development would result in flooding in Station Road, the pump station becoming engulfed – leading to sewage spillage in Station Road.
15. There should be greater clarity in the presentation by the applicant and the Parish Council should request that the cards be laid on the table.
16. The legal status of Chilbridge Road is unclear and should be proven.

Other points noted were:

1. The application should be called in by the Secretary of State to ensure a balanced and objective consideration can be made.
2. The application should go to a public enquiry.

3. There is a need for affordable housing in the village but careful consideration should be given as to where this is developed.
4. The Parish Council had ensured that a democratic and objective process had been followed and should now look at the balance of objectives and objections

**Standing Orders were resumed.**

**05/228 Consideration of Planning Application No.05/1856/P/FP – Land off Chilbridge Road, Eynsham.**

**228.1** The Chairman invited members of the Council to ask for clarification on any points and then state their position in respect of this application. Objections to the application should be on planning grounds only and conditions to any approval should be given. Clarification of OCC's position and rationale on the need for low cost housing was given. It was noted that OCC have stated that there are no intentions or plans to further develop the adjoining land or to facilitate housing on the site. However, the County Council's position is that it would be wrong to say that this would never be the case.

The housing need questionnaire was not deep enough and had inaccuracies. It is doubtful whether there are 200 people requiring housing in Eynsham as WODC state that there are 107 on the waiting list. Given that the questionnaire appeared to note that there were a number of people interested in part ownership, it is noted that only 12 are allocated from the 490 units and 4 of these are for OCC key workers. However, it is felt that there is a need for affordable housing in the village.

**Comments:**

- 228.2** Clarification had been requested from OCC on the legal status of Chilbridge Road in June 2005. This was not forthcoming. Chilbridge Road is a public bridleway and private carriage road for those landowners having property adjoining the road. OCC therefore only have the right of use by virtue of being a landowner. The application should only be granted on condition that the legal status of the ownership of the road is confirmed.
- 228.3** The application was an attempt to fulfill the government's policy to provide 1000 houses in the south east. No consideration had been given to the fact that the proposed development was part of the flood plain.
- 228.4** There is a need for affordable housing in the village. There is some doubt about the principle involved but the statement from the applications is accurate. There should be no objection to the application. There should be a condition imposed that the development should not set a precedent for further development in the same area.
- 228.5** Both surveys done showed a need for affordable housing and therefore there should be no objection to the application or any conditions to be set.
- 228.6** The development of the western side would result in unacceptable traffic movements. 40 units constitute overdevelopment. However, the number of children from 0 – 5 years living in the village has dropped by 30%.
- 228.7** There should be sympathy with the people who cannot afford to buy houses in the village. However, there is anxiety that the development would open the floodgates to further development. From a planning point of view the flooding issues were important and the infrastructure of the village could not cope with such a large development on that site.
- 228.8** The village needs more affordable housing but the Chilbridge site is not the right one. The WODC survey was not done very well but was probably an understatement rather than an overstatement. The Parish Council's survey showed that the residents felt any development should be on the eastern side of the village and there was real support for affordable housing. The Chilbridge site was favoured for a small development. The village is dying, the number of 20-30 year old residents is down and the school has lost funding as the numbers have fallen. The community needs to address this and act now to reverse the trend. The planning issues were those of flooding and the increased traffic.
- 228.9** The need for affordable housing should be supported but there are real concerns over increased traffic, flooding and further development.
- 228.10** The public exhibition showed that there were as many supporting this development as those against it. It was disappointing that none of these people were present. There are real concerns regarding overdevelopment, increased traffic problems and the destruction of wildlife. The application should be rejected on this site.
- 228.11** The application should be supported as affordable housing is needed in the village. Other issues noted above cannot be raised under the current planning legislation. Traffic will increase but the housing is required. Future development, flooding and the query over the legal status of the road were concerns. This application should go to a planning enquiry to be determined.
- 228.12** The representative of West Oxfordshire District Council would not be voting on this application but wished to say that he was in favour of the principle of affordable housing. The policies that the Parish Council would need to consider when reaching its decision were H10 and H12 of the current Local Plan, which covered rural exception sites (small scale affordable housing schemes and Condition 3 which states it should be well related to existing built up area and no conflict; no erosion of the character of the area and not set an undesirable precedent).

**05/229** The Chairman thanked all the members for their input and asked them to vote on the scheme as set out in the application. If they are in favour they should be prepared to give conditions and if against planning reasons why.

The vote was four in favour of the application and five against the application. The Chairman then gave his vote which was against the application. There were three abstentions.

**RESOLVED that the Parish Council objects to the application in respect of this site on the grounds that:**

1. The Council does not believe that this development site “is well related to the existing built up areas” and “does not adversely affect the character and quality of the local environment”(in accordance with Policy H10 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan and Policy H12 of the review Local Plan 2011).
2. The development “would erode the character and appearance of the surrounding area including...public or private open space” Policy H12 of West Oxfordshire Local Plan and “adversely affect the character and quality of the local environment” (Policy H12 of the review Local Plan 2011).
3. The development “would set an undesirable precedent for other sites where in equity further development would be difficult to resist and where cumulatively the resultant scale of development would erode the character and environment of the area”(Policy H12 of West Oxfordshire Local Plan).
4. The development will create additional traffic in an area which already has traffic problems. As such it is contrary to the part of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan which states exception sites should not mean “allowing houses which cause unacceptable amenity, environment or highway problems” (Policy H12 of the review Local Plan 2011).
5. The development is likely to increase problems of flooding to properties in the Station Road area, this area being in the flood plain.
6. The application is not a rural exception site as it does not meet the criteria set out in Policy H10 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan and Policy H12 of the review Local Plan 2011 which quotes “small scale affordable housing schemes”. The Parish Council does not consider this to be a small scale scheme.

The Chairman then read out a statement as follows:

“In determining this application, the Parish Council requests that the District Council should ask the County Council to clarify fully the legal position with regard to the adoption of Chilbridge Road.

The Parish Council sought to be involved in the discussions regarding the possible development of this site as soon as they became aware of the negotiations that were taking place involving Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) and Cottsway Housing Association (CHA).

The site has from the start of our meetings been described as a “Rural Exception Site” and it has been pointed out to Parish Councillors and members of the public that if Planning Consent were granted on this basis then no precedent would be set for any further development in the future. Whilst we accept that the Heads Of Terms document, in respect of the sale of the land, drawn up between OCC and CHA, does not in itself give a precedent in planning terms we believe that the requirements demanded by the parties to that document are not within the spirit of a Rural Exception Site and seek to establish a way to enable further land to be developed to the West of Eynsham.

Along with WODC the Parish Council have sought over a number of years to protect the western boundary of the village and whilst we accept that there is a need for affordable housing in Eynsham, the Heads Of Terms document in respect of this site has, in our opinion, sought to create a way in which other land could be used for residential building. This site would only gain Planning Consent on the basis that it was a Rural Exception Site and we can only come to the conclusion that parties to the Heads of Terms have not entered in to this transaction in the spirit of the scheme and are seeking to use this project as a gateway to further development.

In view of this, and the objections above, the Parish Council feels unable to support the proposed development of this site and asks the District Council to withdraw its support for the scheme and not to enter in to further discussions with the County Council without the participation of the Parish Council.

Proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Dr Wright that the statement be included in the letter of objection to West Oxfordshire District Council.

**RESOLVED** by nine votes in favour and two abstentions that the statement be included in the letter of objection.

**05/230 Dates of Next Meetings**

Finance meeting – Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2005 at 7.30 pm – Bartholomew Room Parish Meeting –  
Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2005 at 8pm – Church Hall  
Planning sub-committee – Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2005 at 5pm – Bartholomew Room Parish Council meeting  
– 6<sup>th</sup> December 2005 at 7.30 pm – Bartholomew Room.

**The meeting closed at 9.50 pm**

Date of Signing: **6 December 2005**