

MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF BOURTON PARISH COUNCIL

HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.00 P.M. ON MONDAY, 23RD NOVEMBER 2015

PRESENT: S Firbank (Chairman), G Miller, J Morgan, T Heaton, L Jones, P Williams, M Withers, M Martin and I McVie (Clerk).
APOLOGIES: A Miller, and PCSO Vicki Levy (Police).
ATTENDING: Andrew Cattaway County & District Councillor), Liz Beth (Consultant for the Neighbourhood Plan) and Nicola Laszlo (North Dorset District Council).
52 members of the public were present

15.125 DECLARATIONS of INTEREST

S Firbank declared a non-pecuniary interest in Bourton Mill (neighbour)

M Withers declared a non-pecuniary interest in the new village hall (neighbour)

15.126 OPEN FORUM

SF said 'Welcome to you all and thank you for turning out on a cold Monday evening. Will you please all understand that this is the normal Monday Monthly Parish meeting? A number of you are regular stalwarts and understand the rules. For those of you not regular attendees, I will explain. There is always a time set apart for questions, ideas and other matters to be discussed from the floor. However, this evening the only matters that will be considered during the open session must be of relevance to the siting of the New Village Hall. Once that "open session" has been completed there will be no interruption from those attending this Council Meeting. In order to accommodate our two speakers this evening once the obligatory items have been dealt with we will bring the subject of the Village Hall forward so the guest speakers may head for home once they have completed their presentations Mike Withers will explain more when I have finished. Item 3 on the Agenda will be taken as for an Open forum. I wish you all to understand that the VPMC were asked to manage a project to identify a suitable site for a new village hall. They have worked hard to get us where we are today and this is appreciated by all of the parish council and I am sure residents of our village. The NPG was authorised by the PC at its meeting on 28th May 2012 to develop a neighbourhood plan that will provide the residents with the opportunity to have a greater say in how our village develops and improves. In all the NPG has met on 43 occasions during the last three years, and you should all be very aware and appreciative of their dogged and determined perseverance, often in the face of adverse and very personal criticism. The Chairman of the NPG reports in writing to the PC at every monthly meeting and these reports are always available on the council minutes, noticeboards and the village web site for all to read if you have been unable to attend the meeting. I will now hand over to Mike Withers to chair this part of the meeting'.

The planning consultant from LB Planning, Liz Beth (LB) then completed a presentation outlining the legal requirements to select a site, the process used to arrive at two possible sites for the village hall and an explanation of the advantages and disadvantages of both sites. A copy of the presentation will be made available by the NPG for all residents on the village website (<http://www.bourtondorset.org>). Fourteen sites were considered by LB across the village. Of the three short-listed sites the Sandways' site and Jubilee Fields' site were ranked as being (approximately) of comparable merit, with Voscombe Farm site trailing by a wide margin. During the presentation there were some questions asked from the open forum where members of the public were asked to identify themselves to assist in recording what was said, albeit minutes of a meeting are not recorded verbatim.

Firstly, Mr Hart asked LB if there was equal weighting on all the criteria used in scoring the two sites. LB said that certain criteria had been classified as High, Medium or Low weighting and went on to explain that the scoring was not an exact science.

A member of the public asked where access was to be for the housing on the Sandways site. LB said that part of the access was down the existing track next to "Kiama" and the rest was a shared access with the village hall off the main road. The precise details of the access would only be determined when a planning application was made and the illustrated schemes were indicative.

Jean Shepherd, who lives next door to the Jubilee Field said that her views would be spoilt by the new hall development. LB explained that, in planning terms, views enjoyed by properties were not protected and that she agreed that wherever the new development was situated then some people would be disappointed. Once again, LB stressed that these layouts were indicative only and accesses etc., could change once the finer detail of any planning application was submitted.

Following the completion of the presentation, a number of questions and points were raised.

Mike Chapman (MC) stated that a key goal must be to minimise the cost to the village of building the hall and he thought that the opportunity should be taken to negotiate the best deal with the landowner to try to get as much of the development cost as possible transferred to them and to minimise the costs of the new hall. He gave, by way of example the developer agreeing to cover such things as the costs of laying in utilities to the new village hall. Secondly, MC asked could we not use the Community Right to Build procedure and work in close partnership with the developer. MW said that the proposals shown at this stage were indicative only and that NDDC would be the people responsible for dealing with any future planning application. Many things could change before commercial negotiations could take place definitively. NDDC were aware of all the history and discussions and it was up to them to make sure in discussions with the developer that they only provided what had previously been agreed. The NPG were not, at this time, in a position to start commercial negotiations with a landowner beyond what it had already done.

MC said that the council should keep its powder dry on this.

MW pointed out that representatives of both sites were present this evening so they would be listening to all the views expressed and consider them in any eventual application.

LB pointed out that the NP 'Community Right to Build' had, to her knowledge, not been used by the thousands of NPG's over the country. In her opinion, there did not seem to be many advantages in using this procedure which ended up with a referendum and that it was probably best to go down the NP and planning application route.

MC said that he felt that it was better to take things forward in a real partnership with the developer and that this was the best way to tie down any loose ends.

Peter Nathan (PN). Said that he had read the flyer from the NPG and that whilst he appreciated the point that MC was making he thought that the PC will be making a decision shortly and it was only then that the VHMC could try to find funding. This would then be on the basis of a scheme that was likely to go forward. His question was, when would getting finance apply? Was it after the parish council decided on the site?

MW confirmed that it was the intention of the PC to make a decision on which site would go forward at its next meeting on 14th December and thereafter there would only be that site in the neighbourhood plan and that the raising of funds could only seriously commence once a site had been agreed, all legal matters such as ownership and planning applications had been progressed. MC stated that in his opinion it was not the best way to proceed in order to get the best deal from the developers.

PN said that in the presentation, the Sandways site had been scored as "fair" (for location) and questioned why it should not have been good. LB explained that in her criteria she had used the village P.O as representing the centre of the village. She had used within 200 metres as being good, 200-500 metres as being fair, and over 500 metres as being poor. LB said that this demonstrates that such scoring and weighting is fairly arbitrary in nature, as Bourton did not really have a traditional centre.

Vivienne Sturt (VS). Stated that she had no connection with the village hall and was making her point as a villager. She had undertaken private research and had found that on 1st August 2006, at a meeting with John Hammond of NDDC, he had described the Sandways site as reasonably flat and well located near the village centre. He had not looked at the Jubilee Field site. At a later meeting with Trevor Warwick and James Lytton-Trevers (NDDC) they had both confirmed that the search for a new hall site should start in the centre of the village and work outwards. They also thought that the Jubilee Field was too visually intrusive. VS therefore asked what had changed and stated that she thought that the last ten years had been a waste of time and money.

LB confirmed that the Jubilee Field had scored lower because it was more visually intrusive than the Sandways Farm site. However, on the whole range of criteria it was clear that the two sites were broadly similar. She added that residents' opinions were also important to the process.

VS then asked why the parish council were going to be selecting the preferred site.

LB said that the parish council are the qualifying body and that this meeting, together with past information would help inform the parish council in its decision making. This meeting though was an opportunity for residents to show the council what they thought.

MW added that, at a recent meeting of the PC, VHM and NPG all parties had agreed that both sites had significant merit as new village hall locations and that they did not favour one over the other. This was after they had been fully briefed on the sites and the selection criteria and process.

Sandra Parsons (SP) said she had lived opposite the Jubilee Field for 31 years and had been to many meetings where planners had said that they did not want development that joined up Bourton with Chaffey Moor and West Bourton. MW asked her who had said this and in what context? She replied that it had been various councillors at district and county level. MW explained that past discussions could not be taken into account with the NP process. This operates under different robust and rigorous rules. All three short-listed sites had been discussed with NDDC and DCC Highways Department, to see if any of the sites would be ruled out. They were not. In planning terms, all three were acceptable. This is the current situation and no site would be included as an option site if this were not so.

Bernard Sullivan (BS) pointed out in respect of Mike Chapman's (MC) comments of the financial implications in the development of housing that the Parish is also a developer and as such it needs to undertake an exercise of the relative costs to build on each site. He felt that an early selection would be premature, until the point where discussions with the landowners showing the relative costs involved to build a broadly similar development are available. To date, there has been no financial discussion. LB said that the landowners had each donated land to comply with requirements of the village. Fund-raising would be necessary to build the hall. With two broadly similar sites, for example, access to the main road, further negotiations would be with the landowners. Mike Chapman said that he was looking for more contributions from the developers. LB responded that the current deal is for the developer to donate the stated amount of land in exchange for a development albeit the village may want to change this approach.

Carole Brake (CB) said that at her end of the village, the road became very busy and fast with the brow of the hill which makes it more dangerous. She felt that they get a lot of traffic already, associated with the school. She thought the new hall and development would be more suited nearer the centre of the village. MW told her that these issues had been raised with DCC Highways Department. The view received is that there is no difference in Highways assessment between the sites and both sites are acceptable. CB and others registered their surprise at this view.

David Bett (DB) said that the time has come to 'bite the bullet', make a decision and choose a site. He also pointed out that in negotiating terms there needs to be a Plan B.

Nicola Lazslo (NDDC) (NL) explained that once a site is allocated in a neighbourhood plan it is fixed unless a review of the plan is undertaken. She said that a technical possibility would be to nominate both sites to be processed in the plan but neither one be selected. Technically the parish council could go ahead with one site. If the other site came forward with a planning application it would then be contrary to NDDC Development Plan.

LB suggested a third way forward, using the process of a Neighbourhood Development Plan although there may be developer concerns with this method. The housing would not be allocated, but would come in further along in the process, but she stated this method was used in Sturminster Newton, where the developer then 'jumped ship'. NL said that one or both sites could be allocated purely for the new Village Hall. The Policy would be drafted so as to understand that the enabling development would come later with NDDC ultimately deciding as the planning authority.

David Bett (DB) said that his view is that it is time to make a decision and choose a site.

Cathy Price (CP) accepted the need for an enabling housing development but noted there is no allocation for affordable housing. In the past the neighbourhood plan questionnaires and village design statement (VDS) indicated a preference for this. She noted that the Jubilee Field site has 2-3 bed roomed houses while the Sandways site has 3-4 bed roomed houses. The demographics show an elderly population and that we need to attract younger families for the future. Smaller houses should therefore be given greater consideration.

David Scott explained the statistics gathered in the 2013 questionnaire, with an 80% response rate, showed that 77% of respondents said that up to 5 houses in a development was acceptable and over 80% wanted small affordable houses as opposed to larger houses. MW added that 3 or fewer bedrooms are classified as a small family house, 4 or more is classified as large.

Peter Nathan (PN) highlighted that in the March parish council meeting there was a resolution passed that no more than 20 houses should be built at the Mill Site. However, 29 were agreed to by NDDC, therefore based on this how can NDDC be relied upon in the future?

MW said that we must move forward as the important question is the new village hall and its site.

Mr Hart asked if the early questionnaire referred to the new village hall. MW explained that at that stage, the VHMC were working alone on the new hall site. Now the NPG, VHMC and parish council are working together because NDDC advised that this would be the best and most certain way to achieve planning permission. Both sites are outside the current settlement boundary and hence need to go through the neighbourhood planning process to achieve planning permission for the enabling housing development. Mr Hart asked about the type of houses needed to enable the development of the new hall and whether this had been asked in any of the questionnaires. MW said the village had shown a definite general preference for smaller houses in the questionnaire. The second questionnaire showed an acceptance by residents, in principle, of a small number of houses to enable the new hall. MW pointed out that landowners had been advised by the NPG to look at the responses to both questionnaires before preparing their indicative schemes for the village hall development. Mr Hart asked if the location for the hall had been asked of the village. MW said that it had not, but it had come from a robust technical exercise carried out by the NPG's consultants. In principle, 50% of residents accepted an enabling development to release land for a new hall with over 80% of the village responding.

Mr Hart said that with the demographics of the village, then surely the new hall should be in the centre of the village to make access easier for people without transport. MW added that on certain nights, such as Film Nights, many cars were always parked along the road and most people drive to the existing hall. Pat Withers noted that less mobile members of the community often used mobility scooters to attend the hall.

MW said that the Sandways site had been scored highly for being central in the village. However, the scoring overall against a range of criteria showed two broadly similar sites. Mr Hart asked if the scoring system could be open to the village. He felt that LB scoring was subjective and pointed out that she is in the pay of the NPG as their consultant. LB answered that she had performed a technical planning assessment therefore is not just opinion and has to be seen to be objective. She further pointed out that planning is not an exact science and legislation changes.

VS asked how other groups and villages have managed to get permissions and halls built. MW said they had probably used the then existing planning procedures pre-neighbourhood planning and had finance from local benefactors.

Harriet Palmer (HP) said that film night cars come from far and wide including outside the village therefore the number of drivers attending functions could be misleading. She said that the findings of the Village Plan 2008 showed that many people found the slope to the hall too steep. If people want to walk, the hall needs to be in the centre of the village. She also noted that there are a lot of young people in the village with a thriving school.

HP further pointed out that both developers would be giving a substantial amount of land as a donation therefore both developers would be contributing to the building of a new village hall and the provision of amenity land. She said that the developers on the Sandways site are giving a large chunk of land very generously and therefore 3-4 bedroomed houses are not unreasonable. She also stated that the Jubilee Field site has a large amount of non-allocated land while the Sandways site contains all the land as 'gifted' to the community.

MW said that this comment could be misleading, and implied that the remainder of the Jubilee Field site could be for further development. MW stated that this was certainly not the case.

LB said that the landowner of the Jubilee Field site has offered to the village exactly what the NPG had requested and there would be no further development on any unallocated land.

Nicola Lazslo (NDDC) said that any land not allocated would be outside the settlement boundary and therefore the Countryside Policy provides the necessary protection from development.

HP again asked if the landowner of the Jubilee Field might want to build more housing. MW said this is not the case. All landowners were asked to meet the same criteria of 1.5 hectares for amenity land, 0.3 hectares for the new hall and parking, 0.3 hectares for enabling housing development, which both have done. The Sandways entire site comprised a little more land and this is now included in the scheme. 1.5 hectares in total is all that the neighbourhood plan could ask for to incorporate all the uses laid out in the 2008 Village Plan. We cannot ask for more and be able to justify it to the Examiner later in the process of getting the full neighbourhood plan agreed.

HP talked of the history at the beginning of the VHMC site selection process and why this had been disregarded. MW explained that it could not simply endorse the VHMC work for the neighbourhood plan (NP) as it did not comply with all the required procedures under the neighbourhood planning regulations.

VS stated that at one time the Bourton Mill site had been suggested as a suitable site for the new

the new hall which was clearly unacceptable. MW said that this site was one of the fourteen sites originally looked at by the VHMC. MW then referred to the contents of the VHMC February 2014 Flyer. This had stated that the Sandways site was a very generous offer which could not be matched anywhere else in the village. This was just before the NP Questionnaire was distributed. Therefore, the residents of the village have only ever been presented with one site. To comply with NP regulations, the exercise had to be completed with regard to the new NP regulations. VS said the fourteen sites had been assessed originally by the VHMC and officers at NDDC. NL explained that those discussions and advice took place under different planning rules and prior to Neighbourhood Planning.

Peter Williams (PW) said that he had been involved at that time and confirmed the process used. He confirmed that 13/14 sites were assessed with Mr Lytton-Trevers and Trevor Warwick from NDDC. At that time they were adamant that both the Voscombe Farm and Jubilee Field sites were not viable due to landscape issues. However, we have moved on and guidance from NDDC and planning regulations have changed and this is why there are two broadly similar sites to consider. He stated that there is no need to go backwards through old minutes, we need to go forward.

HP again remarked that Sandways Farm offers a bigger chunk of amenity land.

Caroline Nathan remarked that the VHMC have a greater understanding of the workings of the village hall and therefore, should they not be part of the selection for the site.

MW agreed that she is partly correct. The VHMC has been closely involved with the process. The VHMC along with the NPG and the Parish Council have all agreed the procedure whereby the final decision would be made by the Parish Council at the next full council meeting in December. This decision was made unanimously by all three groups at a meeting on 9th November 2015.

Alison Scott (AS) said that we can have an opinion as residents but the parish council is the elected body, therefore anybody who has an opinion can make representations to the parish clerk by 14th December. Views can be written, emailed or made by phone, to Iain McVie the Clerk who will pass these onto councillors who will be acting for us all.

Mr Bett asked if there could be a show of hands to denote which site the audience preferred. MW said that this would not be appropriate. He said that, apart from the representations made to councillors, everybody would have two six-week periods of consultation on the full draft neighbourhood plan (NP) as well as a vote in the ensuing referendum in which residents views could be made. Peter Nathan asked if there could be a show of hands.

Simon Firbank (SF) said that the whole village needs to be involved and not just those attending this evening, hence the referendum on the full neighbourhood plan.

Mike Chapman asked for confirmation of the statement by Nicola Lazslo in relation to two sites being taken forward would be reflected in the minutes. The Clerk confirmed that the minutes would reflect what the NDDC representative had said. MW explained that all the planning decisions would be made by NDDC in Blandford and not locally by the parish council, hence the view to go forward with one site.

MC said that high levels of communication are necessary between the parish council, NDDC and the village. MW responded that barring interludes when NDDC was working flat out on its own Local Plan the NPG has had excellent communications with NDDC and would continue keeping the residents updated with progress and reporting to the parish council every month.

Mr Hart asked if the village hall site is outside the settlement boundary and what does the settlement boundary define. MW explained that inside the settlement boundary, there remained the potential for market housing development whereas outside the settlement boundary it will be restricted by the Countryside Policy. Mr Hart asked that as both sites are outside the settlement boundary, how it can be guaranteed that further development will not be allowed. MW replied that it would be contrary to the existing Countryside Policy and in turn the NDDC Local Plan and policies.

NL further explained that the general principle of development within the settlement boundary is accepted. Outside the settlement boundary, development is much more restrictive. It can be possible for rural development, such as community halls, adjoining the settlement boundary, but not for market housing. Therefore, the neighbourhood plan (NP) and NDDC local development plan determines whether to bring forward the enabling development for a community hall. The NP can stipulate a number of houses but the ultimate decision is reached by NDDC and takes into account the development plan, the NP and developer viability. She pointed out that this can fluctuate, with land values and housing numbers.

Mr Hart asked that the parish council look for the greatest value possible for the hall. Would, for example, a decision by the VHMC to have a tennis court mean extra housing for the developer.

NL suggested that the landowners have considered the content of their schemes within their offer of the amenity land and land for the hall and parking.

C Davies referred to the two plans of the sites and asked if the defining lines around the sites and the allocation of housing, amenity and hall land sizes could be changed and how specific were they. MW answered that they are indicative only at this stage. MC asked if the developers might change the scale of the amenity area. MW replied that the landowners had been very cooperative with the NPG, changing their plans to fit in with the village remit. There have been many discussions with them in which it was clear that they were fully aware of the size of the development to compensate for their land donations. We are all agreed that we have two broadly comparable sites. NDDC will be dealing with the detail of the planning application through the normal planning processes.

MC stated that he wants to aspire to get the best site. He feels the best way is to get the right partners to help the funding for the new hall. We will need a big funder to maximise developer contributions and he stated there needs to be a real aspiration for this.

Les Jones (LJ) reminded all that the village will be gifted the land as the developers' contribution.

Simon Firbank (SF) reminded everyone that there are three weeks to make points known to the councillors. He asked that these are clearly made, in writing, to the parish clerk.

Vivian Sturt (VS) asked about the decision being made and how will the village know the result?

SF said to read the minutes of the meeting, on the village notice boards, on the village web-site, and the villagers talking amongst themselves and to attend the December parish council meeting. Edna Gibbs pleaded that the decision would be taken then, as the process had been going on too long.

SF noted this and with the parish clerk concluded the session by thanking the VHMC and NPG for working together to progress the selection of a site for the new village hall and the guests Nicola and Beth for coming to the meeting and helping us understand how we have arrived where we are today and what the options are for the future. It was reaffirmed that Councillors will consider the options and where individuals have further thoughts or views if they could let councillors know or e mail the clerk then they can be considered. If residents, the VHMC or the NPG think of any additional information that may assist the parish council it should be sent in writing via email or letter to the parish clerk who will copy all councillors into any communication. SF thanked all of the residents for coming out on a chilly evening and contributing to this 'important future improvement to our village'.

The next stage will be that the parish council will consider the options and make a final decision on the preferred site at our next parish council meeting that will be held on Monday 14th December 2015.

Concluded at 8.46pm.

15.127 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes were agreed by all as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

15.128 ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Item 15.108.1 SF confirmed that the planning group had reviewed the application for 2 The Gables and the clerk had written to NDDC confirming the parish council objections to the application.

Item 15.114.4 IM confirmed he had asked DCC to provide a quote for two suitable signs and fitting for the two laybys to warn offenders not to illegally deposit litter or fly tip.

ACTION: IM to report back to next meeting once cost obtained from DCC.

Item 15.123 SF confirmed that the owner of the remaining land at the bottom of Millers Close is the estate of the late G. Maggs.

SF confirmed that all actions had therefore been completed from the October meeting.

15.129 REPORTS BY THE DISTRICT AND/OR COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Andrew Cattaway (County Councillor and District Councillor) and Peter Williams (District Councillor) confirmed that there were no new updates for this meeting.

15.130 PLANNING MATTERS

15.130.1 Applications received – None

15.130.2 Applications granted – None

15.130.3 Applications withdrawn - None

All applications can be viewed on dorsetforyou planning portal or via the village website.

15.130.4 Bourton Mill

PW confirmed that the perimeter security works were being completed by a local contractor and although an obvious improvement they were still not as substantial as had been hoped for. Councillors expressed concern about how effective this work would be and would monitor the situation along with officers from NDDC.

15.130.5 Solar/Wind/Photovoltaic Sites – Clapton Farm, Cucklington – Solar Farm 15/03373

PW reported that South Somerset Council had held the planning hearing on 11th November 2015 and that he and SF did attend the meeting and made representations objecting to the proposal as agreed at previous parish council meetings. He informed the meeting that the application had been agreed by a vote of 5 to 4 councillors with the local district councillor abstaining from the vote, which was disappointing from both Cucklington and Bourton's perspective. Therefore the proposed solar farm array will now be built in Cucklington.

15.131 FINANCE

15.131.1 Accounts to be paid

P. Cowell.	4 invoices for cemetery, verges and council directed maintenance.	£532.00
I. McVIE.	Expenses including purchase of paints for telephone kiosk.	£154.80
Royal British Legion.	Donation for supply of wreath for Remembrance Day Service.	£25.00
HMRC.	Payment of quarterly employer contributions (PAYE)	£321.16
Ecological Surveys Ltd.	Payment for NPG contracted work.	£1612.80
LB Planning.	Payment for NP consultant services.	£2000.00
Graham Dukes.	Urgent replacement of noticeboard.	£745.75
P. Cowell.	3 invoices for cemetery, verges and council directed maintenance.	£300.00

Proposed by PW, seconded by JM and agreed by all.

15.131.2 Accounts received

15.131.3 Grants and Donations. One.

Bourton Players Theatre Group.	Equipment, paint for 2015/16 pantomime.	£550.00
--------------------------------	---	---------

Proposed by JM, seconded by MM and agreed by all.

The meeting concluded at 9.10pm.

15.132 DATE OF NEXT MEETING - MONDAY 14TH DECEMBER 2015 AT 7PM.

Chairman: S.Firbank

Date: 23rd November 2015

Note: The minutes will be reviewed and formally ratified by the BPC on 14th December 2015