

**OWSLEBURY PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
26th JUNE 2017
COMMENCING AT 7.30PM IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, OWSLEBURY PARISH HALL**

PRESENT.

Parish Councillor John Chapman (in the Chair).

Parish Councillors: Paul Bowes, Mark Egerton, Will Martin, Paul Phillips, Roger Page.

IN ATTENDANCE.

Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO): Michael Cleary.

Mr Peter North, Director, Footsteps Livings Limited ('Footsteps')

Mr Charles Wilkinson, Director, Footsteps Living Limited.

Jeremy Tyrrell, Director, T2 Architects.

9 members of the public were present.

111/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Parish Councillor Gerry Tull (the Clerk noted Councillor Tull's absence from the meeting was due to his pecuniary interest in the main subject matter of the meeting, affordable housing)

County and City Councillor Rob Humby.

District Councillor Amber Thacker

District Councillor Laurence Ruffell.

112/17 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS FOR AGENDA ITEMS.

No Councillor present had any personal or prejudicial interests to declare.

113/17 APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

Councillors noted their acceptance of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12th June 2017, and the Council **Resolved**, unanimously, they were a true record.

114/17 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS.

At the outset of the meeting the Chairman noted the survey of parishioners conducted in April 2016 and which had identified the need for additional affordable homes in the parish (between 11 and 25), including homes for those wishing to downsize. However, whilst the Council had decided to support a suitable and small development of new affordable homes, the Council was not directly involved in negotiations between the landowner and developers. The Council would listen to the presentation by Footsteps, which he understood was currently in negotiation with the landowner. The Council would not make any decisions until a formal planning application had been submitted to the planning authority, SDNP.

There were a number of questions and comments raised by members of the public and these are summarised in the appendix to these minutes.

115/17 PRESENTATION BY FOOTSTEPS LIVING LIMITED.

Peter North noted he had presented to the Council previously (see September 2016 minutes) and had subsequently been asked by Gerry Tull to consider the potential development of two sites for affordable housing: opposite The Ship Inn, and the other at the junction of Owslebury Bottom and Longwood Road (Crabbes Hill). They considered the site opposite The Ship Inn to be the better of the two. Mr North noted the agreement with Mr Tull was currently on an 'in principle' basis, and not on a detailed basis. Mr North summarised the recent experience of Footsteps in providing affordable homes in local areas such as Otterbourne, Brockenhurst, Kings Worthy, Weeke and Winchester. Footsteps built small and compact homes which complied with the National Planning Policy Framework in relation to rural exception sites. The homes would be permanently affordable (for further information, refer to September 2016 minutes) and at a discount to market value of between 20% and 40%. He gave illustrative examples of a one bed roomed home selling for £120k (35% discount to market value), two bed £240k, and 3 bed £250k. Footsteps was also developing a rental model whereby a housing association or council would own the properties subject to them being rented at affordable levels.

Mr North noted the proposed site was some 2.7 hectares, currently reasonably level for most part and was well screened. Footsteps had in mind a development of 10-12 affordable housing units and 3-4 'market price' houses. He noted the 'market price' homes were necessary in order for the land to have value to Footsteps,

and would be in line with the requirements for rural exception sites - whereby up to 25% of floor area could be made available for 'market price' housing. Mr North and his colleagues had discussed (on an in principle basis) the proposed development with WCC housing department (who were supportive), but not with, as yet, the planning department. He noted the demand for additional affordable homes was evident from the recent parish survey and those on the WCC housing register. The survey suggested a need for a mixture of tenures, and the next stage would be to obtain greater precision as to the number of people involved and the type of tenure they sought. Mr Wilkinson referred to a similar and successful exercise undertaken by WCC using the analytics available on Facebook. The next stages would also involve consultation with the community and Council, with a focus on local requirements and the need for the homes to be available at affordable prices/rents in perpetuity.

Jeremy Tyrrell outlined some of the ideas (and stressed that at this stage they were only 'ideas') Footsteps had in mind, and provided illustrations of similar developments. He noted the access point to the development would be the same as that for the present land. The affordable homes would be grouped in a farmhouse, low rise, style using suitable brick and wood works. This would be in accord with the agricultural nature of the village. Further along from the affordable homes, there would be three or four 'market price' two storey, units.

The meeting was adjourned for a short while to allow Councillors and the public to inspect the illustrations provided by Mr Tyrrell. After the meeting reconvened, the Chairman invited questions – the matters raised by Councillors and members of the public are summarised in the appendix to these minutes.

At the end of the session, the Chairman thanked Mr North and his colleagues for their presentations and for answering questions that had been put to them by Councillors or members of the public. He noted the main matters for further consideration included:

- the impact on traffic volume in the village;
- the suitability of the access point to the development;
- the style and character of the development in relation to the village environment;
- whether the other site at the junction of Owslebury Bottom and Longwood Road would be more suitable than the site at The Ship Inn;
- the intentions of the landowner or developer for the use of the land which would not be needed for the proposed development.

16/17 INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING.

There were no matters Councillor wished to place on the agenda for the next meeting.

117/17 DATE OF NEXT COUNCIL MEETING.

The Council agreed the next Council meeting would be held at 7.30pm in the Committee Room of the Parish Hall on 10th July 2017.

The meeting closed shortly after 8.30pm

ChairmanJohn Chapman.....Date: 10th July 2017

APPENDIX: SUMMARY OF POINTS RAISED DURING THE MEETING.

1. The need for new affordable housing.

A parishioner questioned the need for more affordable housing in a village with no shopping facilities and very poor public transport. Other areas would be better suited. Another parishioner noted she knew of parishioners living in private rented accommodation who would dearly like permanent affordable housing in the village. Footsteps noted the parish wide survey had indicated a clear demand for additional affordable housing in the village.

Councillors noted the survey had shown more of a need for affordable rented homes than for homes to buy. Mr North commented that he thought the data showed a fairly even split between those who wished to rent and those who wished to buy their homes. He indicated it would be possible to provide affordable rented homes. Such homes would be bought by a housing association or the district council, or retained by Footsteps and rented via a housing association. These would be matters for consideration in the next stage of their planning process. He confirmed they would not be available for the 'buy to let' market of private landlords.

In response to a question, Mr North confirmed those living with parents but wanting their own property would be eligible to apply for affordable homes – not just those currently on housing benefit.

2. Criteria for consideration for affordable housing.

A Councillor noted that in other schemes near to the parish non-local people were acquiring or renting affordable homes. Mr North considered the terms relating to the Owslebury development would ensure, as far as reasonably possible, the homes would be occupied by local people. Only those with local connections to the parish would be considered in the first instance, and would need to be earning below a maximum level of income. If a home subsequently became available through eg sale, there would be an exclusivity period – a maximum of four weeks – for another local resident to rent or buy the house. The exclusivity period could be longer but needed to be fair to all concerned. Only in the event no local person was interested in acquiring or renting the property would non-local people be eligible to do so.

3. Style of development.

A parishioner commented that the style of the proposed settlement seemed to be alien to the present village environment – it needed to fit-in with the nature of the village. Mr North and Mr Tyrrell commented that detailed planning had not been undertaken as yet. Their intention was for the development to fit-in with the styles normally expected in villages such as Owslebury.

4. Traffic.

Considerable concern was expressed by Councillors and members of the public about the potential impact on traffic volume.

Mr North and Mr Wilkinson commented they would be engaging a highways engineers to consider traffic related issues, and this would clearly be a matter for the planning authority as well. However, as the intention was for the homes to be bought or rented to people already in the village, there may well be traffic substitution rather than any additional traffic.

5. Access.

Councillors expressed concerns about the proposed access to the site – it was simply not fit for purpose. The single track lane is narrow and at present traffic would have great difficulty in turning left from the site.

Mr North explained the access would be reviewed and most probably widened. It would be a matter for further investigation in the planning process.

6. Suitability of the proposed (opposite The Ship Inn) site.

Councillors noted that two sites had been put forward for consideration for affordable homes – the site opposite The Ship Inn and the site at the junction of Owslebury Bottom and Longwood Road. The latter was preferred by some as access would be far better than at the site opposite The Ship Inn.

Mr Foot commented that it was felt the Owslebury Bottom/Longwood Road site would have too great an impact on the views of the countryside, and would be 'too challenging' for the build process. Councillors were not entirely persuaded and the matter was left 'open' for further reflection.

7. Land at the site not needed for proposed development.

Councillors enquired as to the use of surplus land.

Mr North explained Footsteps had been asked to acquire the whole of the site and this was currently being considered. Footsteps had not reached a view on how –if it did acquire the whole site – the surplus land would be utilised.