

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SOUTHAM TOWN COUNCIL, HELD AT THE GRANGE HALL, COVENTRY ROAD, SOUTHAM ON THURSDAY 24th OCTOBER 2013

Present: Councillors: J Ward (Chair), M Gaffney, A Forster, V Shepherd, M Willoughby, B Thomas, J Soni, L Tasker, C Worsh & C Pratt

In attendance: Mrs D Carro, Mrs D Sanders, Cllr A Crump, Cllr J Ellard & Cllr D Wise

80. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr J Smith	Holiday
Cllr L Smith	Holiday
Cllr E Thornley	Work
Cllr N Gascoigne	Holiday

81. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr C Pratt	Personal Interest Reason	Public Representation Travellers site Adjacent land owned by relatives
Cllr V Shepherd	Personal Interest Reason	Urgent Business Grandchild attends this school
Cllr C Worsh	Personal Interest	Urgent Business Child attends this school

82. REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Lorraine Day 7 Sitwell Avenue Long Itchington

Spoke regarding her business Love Ballet Dance School and asked the Council to remove its objection to her planning application to extend her operating hours. She told the Council that she had invested heavily creating jobs and needed the extra hours to be viable; she is currently operating from four other halls which not sustainable. She said in her opinion the Council's concerns regarding lighting on the site had been addressed but the works required on Welsh Road East were outside her control.

Mrs P Jackson, 40 Hillyard Road, Southam

Objected to the proposed development on the Holy Well field, read a poem about the beauty of the area and asked Redrow and Stratford District Council not to build there

Mr G Oubridge, 42 Hillyard Road, Southam

Objected to the proposed development on the Holy Well field, he referred to SDC's 2011 Landscape Sensitivity Study. He said the proposal would be intrusive and adversely affect the Stowe Valley; it would be undesirable and more suitable sites for development are available to meet any need for housing in Southam. This would be a significant incursion into the area of restraint and would extend into and be visible from the Stowe

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Valley. He urged Southam Town Council to proceed with the development of a Neighbourhood plan which he said could be valuable at the Planning Inspectorate stage.

Sue Glenn, 23 Glebe Road, Southam

Objected to the proposed development on the Holy Well field on the grounds of sustainability; she said this should be a space to relax and enjoy and that the heritage should be protected. She spoke of the problems that would be caused by one route for possible 150 cars and the possible congestion, 'not low carbon'. Her main concern was that the adjoining fields would also be targeted by developers.

Mike Brooks, 21 Glebe Road, Southam

Objected to the proposed development on the Holy Well field, he said that earlier development had been low density to protect the area but the proposal was for medium density. He also said that even if provision for walking and cycling were to be made cars would be used causing congestion and buses using such narrow roads would grid lock the area.

Katherine Lloyd, 25 Manders Croft, Southam

Objected to the proposed development on the Holy Well field, she spoke of the need to retain the open character of the Stowe Valley for the many residents and tourists who use the area. This would be 'devastation of the natural environment' contrary to what Redrow has said, noise and pollution would increase with an average of 2 cars per household and delivery vans. 'Redrow has failed to engage in any proper consultation and should withdraw. There is huge opposition to this proposal and I urge the Council to reject it.'

Diane Favill, 16 Holywell Road, Southam

Objected to the proposed development on the Holy Well field she said the development would be in contravention of planning policies PR1, would not 'respect the quality & character of the Area', PR5 Resource Protection and EF3 Area of restraint development must not affect the 'open nature' of the area.

John Turner, 16 Holywell Road, Southam

Objected to the proposed development on the Holy Well field he said the transport statement was flawed and economical with the truth as the proposed footpath is not complete and residents would need to walk in the road. The development would generate significant traffic, pollution and noise and parking would also cause problems.

Rev John Armstrong, The Rectory Park Lane, Southam

Objected to the proposed development on the Holy Well field he said he supported those residents who had spoken. This is not a NIMBY protest but a genuine desire to protect the Area of Restraint.

Peter Ball, 15 Gorse Lea

Objected to the proposed development on the Holy Well field, he said the proposal is inappropriate development and would harm the open nature of the Area of Restraint. Sustainable development should have an economic role, but sufficient other land is available for development, a social role, to provide a strong vibrant and healthy community and an environmental role. This fails to contribute but threatens and has a negative effect on the Holy Well.

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Ken Clarke, 5 Bury Lane, Southam

Objected to the proposed development on the Holy Well field he spoke of the Landscape Sensitivity Study of 2011 and the Draft Core Strategy which already says this development should not go ahead. He is concerned about the NPPF 'golden thread' which he fears will permit this development. What is the Council going to do.

Mrs Daphne Smith, 20 Springs Crescent, Southam

i) asked how much green space was required per head of population
ii) complained about the drain on Tomwell Close which is higher than the land and ineffective – water is halfway across the road.

83. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 26th September 2013 and the Extraordinary Meeting on the 3rd October 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

84. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

RESOLVED:

That payment of accounts dated October 2013, totalling £19,684 be authorised.

85. APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

i) Council considered the applications for planning permission detailed on the schedule dated October 2013 upon which the Town Council had been consulted by Stratford District Council.

ii) Planning Application decisions dated October 2013

Noted

iii) Planning Committee Meeting Dates

Noted

86. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

86.1 PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

Lorraine Day -Love Ballet

RESOLVED:

To move this item to the confidential part of the meeting

86.2 Representation regarding the proposed development on the Holy Well field dealt with under minute 85

86.3 Mrs Smith was advised that the Town Clerk would look into the green space deficit issue and that the Mayor was willing to meet with her and a WCC highways representative to look at the faulty drain.

87. PLANNING APPLICATION SDC/13CC021 change of use of land from a redundant chipping store to an emergency stopping place for up to 12 touring caravans and towing vehicles

RESOLVED: to approve the draft objection and submit it to SDC and WCC

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88. THE HOLY WELL

Members considered the proposal that it is now safe for the Holy Well gates to be unlocked and

RESOLVED:

i) that the gates should be unlocked once a permanent sign has been installed to warn of the danger of slippery surfaces ii) that the Town Clerk bring details of the proposed sign to the Council for approval iii) that a monthly inspection visit to the Holy Well should be added to the Council contractors contract

89. TRAINING EVENTS

Noted

90. COUNCIL MEETING DATES

Noted

91. CORRESPONDENCE

91.1 WARWICKSHIRE YOUNG VOICES

Noted

91.2 SOUTHAM & BI CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Noted

91.3 SOUTHAM IN BLOOM – GRANT FEEDBACK

Noted

92. REPORTS FROM WORKING PARTIES

92.1 GRANGE HALL STEWARDS

Noted

92.2 TOWN/PLAN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN members considered a report from Cllrs Ward, Gaffney and the Town Clerk on the meeting with SDC.

RESOLVED:

That a working party consisting of Cllr's B Thomas, A Forster, J Soni, L Tasker & C Pratt should meet with a view to submitting an 'Area Application' to SDC

92.3 HOLYWELL WORKING PARTY

Noted

92.4. SOUTHAM TOWN REDEVELOPMENT STAKEHOLDER MEETING

Noted

93. INFORMATION FROM COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

District Councillor Ellard informed the Council that i) budget setting was in progress and SDC needed to save over a million pounds ii) work on the Grange Hall gardens had started but more still to be done iii) Planning – robust policies are still in place and that the five year land supply target in the draft core strategy would be exceeded by the time the Holy Well fields proposals were due to be decided

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District Councillor Crump also talked about planning and said that applications in Middle Tysoe & Bishops Itchington had been turned down. He spoke in favour of Neighbourhood plans and advised that Snitterfield Parish Council could provide advice. District Councillor Wise Spoke regarding bushes and trees overhanging the Daventry Road footpath from private land and advised that WCC were dealing with it and that High St would be swept daily.

District Councillors then advised they would make themselves available after the meeting to speak to the public

94. BUSINESS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE MAYOR SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY

TOLLGATE ROAD PLAY AREA

94.1 Members considered the St James School proposal that shared use of the fenced area should be reconsidered.

RESOLVED:

i) that the Town Clerk and Mayor attend a meeting with representatives of WCC and the School to ascertain why the Council's proposal to reduce the fenced area is not acceptable.

ii) that the Town Clerk discusses this with the solicitor prior to the meeting.

95. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING

It was moved and

RESOLVED: that pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the public be excluded from the meeting because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

96. STAFF SALARIES AND PAYMENT FOR SERVICES

RESOLVED:

To authorise payments of staff salaries dated October 2013

97. ORBIT DEVELOPMENT members considered information from the Mayor and the Town Clerk regarding the proposed Community Garden within the Orbit Development.

RESOLVED:

i) This Council confirms its long held belief that the garden in the Town Centre Development is to be a Community Garden and not a Memorial Garden and that no dedications of any kind will be permitted in this garden. The Peace Garden will remain in its present location and not be moved.

2) To write to Dave Webb advising that the Town Council believe that they are being briefed against behind the scenes regarding the Community Garden

98. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

LORRAINE DAY – LOVE BALLET DANCE SCHOOL

Members considered the representations and the safety aspects of non-compliance with the planning conditions for the site and

RESOLVED

That in the interests of the safety of the public attending the site, the Council's original objection to the change of conditions should stand

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Meeting closed 10.10pm

SCHEDULE OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS B					
SOUTHAM TOWN COUNCIL SEPTEMBER 2013					
APPLICATION NO.	APPLICANT NAME	SITE	PROPOSAL	OBSERVATION DATE/COMMENT	Additional Information
13/02415/TREE	Orbit Homes	Land at High Street, Southam	T1 - T3 lift crowns to 4m and rebalance - T4 lift crown by 1m - T5-T8 lift crowns to 4m and rebalance - (mixed chestnut,Ash, Lime and Sycamore species) T9: Sycamore: Lift crown to 3m - T10 Chestnut : remove limb overhanging Park Lane - T11: Hombeam: lift crown to 4m	30th October 2013	Please refer to the Arboricultural Officer
13/02541/OUT	Redrown Homes Southam Midlands	Land to the West of Holywell Road Southam	Outline planning application with means of site access from Holywell Road to be determined (internal access, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping reserved for subsequent approval) for the erection of up to 75 dwellings (ClassC3), public open space, balancing pond, pumping station and associated earthworks to facilitate surface water drainage and site construction, landscaping, car parking and other ancilliary and enabling works.	1st November 2013	Southam Town Council objects to this application - see documents

PLANNING OBJECTIONS REF 13/02541/OUT

1. LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY STUDY

In July 2011 SDC commissioned a Landscape Sensitivity Study. As part of this study the application site was assessed (study reference So08). With regard to the possibility of residential development on the site the findings were:

“The area is sensitive as part of the green valley corridor well used by locals and forming part of the setting of the Holy Well. Any new housing to the west (which includes the application site) would intrude down the valley sides increasing its effect on the skyline and adversely affecting the setting of the valley and Holy Well even if designed to back onto existing housing and facing the valley floor with appropriate planting. It is therefore considered to be undesirable.”

There is no justification as to why this site should come forward when clearly in landscape terms it has been assessed as inappropriate for residential development.

2. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY PILOT SCHEME

That the proposed development would undermine the Environment Agency's 15 year River Leam Catchment Area Plan. The aim of this DEFRA funded pilot project (one of 25 in the country) is to improve the environment for everyone living, working and visiting the catchment area. The River Stowe, on the southern boundary of the proposed development, is a tributary of the River Leam and currently has poor ecological status due to pollution from a number of sources including domestic ones such as washing detergents and sediment transfer through overland runoff from gardens. The proposed development would cause further pollution and hamper future efforts to improve the water quality across the whole catchment.

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3. AREA OF RESTRAINT

The proposed development would be a significant incursion into the undeveloped Area of Restraint. Saved Local Plan Policy EF.3 clearly states that in Areas of Restraint development will only be permitted where:

- a) it would be ancillary to agriculture or existing authorised uses;
- b) it would not harm or threaten the generally open nature of the area, taking into account any possible cumulative effects; or
- c) exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated.

It is evident that the proposal fails to comply with any of the above requirements and is therefore contrary to clear objectives set out within Policy EF.3 which seek to protect the Areas of Restraint from inappropriate development.

The clear aims of this policy (Saved Local Plan Policy EF.3) have been carried forward into the Intended Proposed Submission Core Strategy (July 2013) into Policy CS.14. Here it states that “specific circumstances will need to apply for substantial forms of development to be supported, including a clear demonstration that no alternative site outside an Area of Restraint would be feasible”.

In this instance there are no “specific circumstances” which warrant development on a significant part of the Area of Restraint – furthermore there are other alternative sites outside the designated area that can accommodate proposed housing. Therefore the proposals are clearly contrary to both the above policies.

4. BUILT-UP BOUNDARY

The application site is located outside of the established Built-Up Area Boundary as defined on the Policies Map – development on such sites is contrary to Policies STR.4 of the Local Plan and Policy CS.16 of the Proposed Submission Core Strategy. The proposed development would significantly extend the built-edge of Southam further into the countryside on the rural western edge of the town.

5. CHARACTER OF AREA

Policy PR.1 within the Local Plan requires development proposals to respect, and where possible enhance the quality and character of the area. Proposals that would damage or destroy features which contribute to the distinctiveness of the local area will not be permitted unless significant public benefit would arise from the scheme.

This proposal fails to respect, and enhance the significant contribution that this part of the Stowe River Valley contributes to the quality and character of this area of open space to the west of Southam. Draft Core Strategy Policy CS.6 also reinforces this approach in that development which does not protect landscape character and has a detrimental effect on patterns and features of the setting of a settlement should not be allowed.

6. HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Draft Policy CS.9 with the Core Strategy states that “the District’s historic environment will be protected for its inherent value and for the enjoyment of present and future residents and visitors.” It would therefore be contrary to the aims of this policy to permit a large scale housing scheme on a site which would harm the siting of a Scheduled Ancient Monument and a Listed Building.

The natural rural context of the Holy Well would be damaged by the proximity of the proposed development, spoiling the tranquillity of the ancient site and the approaches to it. The proposed

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development, on the sloping sides of the valley, would be clearly visible on the approaches to the Holy Well which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and from the medieval barn on the other side of the valley and from the Holy Well area itself during autumn, winter and spring. In addition noise pollution and light pollution would be significant. As stated by English Heritage in its letter of the 2nd July, *"we think this potential development would cause substantial harm to the significance of the Scheduled Monument by impacting on its setting."* The Council would also like to draw attention to the fact that, in its view, the position of English Heritage has been totally misrepresented in the Redrow application.

7. DEFICIT OF GREEN SPACE

SDC's own Open Space Sport and Recreation Assessment PPG17 2011 states that 'Southam has relatively low amounts of unrestricted green space due to the comparative lack of natural accessible green space' This Council believes other more suitable areas for development have been identified by the District Council in the Core Strategy and these have been fully supported by STC. To allow this application would undermine that core strategy and the Town Council's progression of its Neighbourhood Plan and increase the deficit of green space in the Town.

8. ACCESS

In contravention of Policy Dev.4 the vehicular traffic will not be distributed appropriately around the proposed development and there will not be a choice of vehicular routes; this will have an adverse effect on the existing residents of Holywell Road estate, remove the safer environment of a cul-de-sac and impair the safety of all road users and pedestrians.

9. SUITABLE HOUSING SITES

Significant work has been carried out on the Intended Proposed Submission Core Strategy (July 2013) – within this document Policy AS.7 identifies two sites (SOU1 – west of Banbury Road, and SOU2 – west of Coventry Road) which are considered suitable and deliverable for providing the required number of additional dwellings identified for Southam. There are no 'special circumstances' which warrant a departure from the proposed allocations for Southam and therefore no reason to allow an application at Holywell Field. The granting of permission for the application site will undermine the aspirations of the draft Core Strategy and will set a dangerous precedent for similar applications on other Greenfield sites in the Stowe valley and around the town.

10. HOUSING REQUIREMENTS 2008-2028

The Intended Proposed Submission Core Strategy defines the need for 9,500 new dwellings in the District from 2008 to 2028, which is consistent with ERM Group's study "Review of Housing Requirements for Stratford-on-Avon's District Council" dated April 2013.

The Intended Proposed Submission Core Strategy states that Southam can accommodate 515 of these. Along with existing completions and permissions (103 and 61 respectively), and the two site allocations identified in Policy AS.7 (SOU1 and SOU2) this figure can be exceeded, and there are no material considerations which would justify a departure from this approach.

11. FIVE-YEAR HOUSING SUPPLY

Whilst it is acknowledged that the Council are currently unable to demonstrate a five year housing supply – and therefore in accordance with the NPPF policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up to date – this does not overcome the other policy considerations. In this instance the proposals are clearly contrary to a number of saved policies within the Local

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Plan and a number of proposed policies within the draft Core Strategy. There are no material benefits that would warrant an approval on this site contrary to policy.

12. LOCAL OPINION

One of the National Planning Policy Frameworks core planning principals is that local people should be empowered to shape their surroundings. In Southam there is general support for the principal of new housing in the town, but it is clear due to the high number of local people signing up to the “Save Holywell Fields” group, and the large number of signatures on the petition that this site is not considered suitable by a large majority of Southam people. Consultation and interaction with Southam residents has been poor and the developer declined to attend a public meeting chaired by the Town Council to explain its proposals or to listen to local resident’s opinions.

The proposed development is not environmentally sustainable and would begin the process of the destruction of the historic Stowe Valley to the detriment of future generations.

Southam Town Council strongly objects to the proposed development.

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