

Notes of a meeting of Chatteris Town Council's Planning Working Group held on Tuesday 25th June 2019.

Present: Cllrs W Haggata (Chairman), L Ashley, I Benney, A Gowler, M Petrou & J Smith. Cllr Benney declared an interest as a member of FDC's planning committee and took no part in the decision making process.

P6 19/20 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs J Carney and F Newell. Cllr Carney had submitted comments on applications a) to d) and item P9.

P7 19/20 Appeals, Decisions and Withdrawn Plans

Notification had been received that an appeal by Mr Barrett against FDC's decision not to grant planning permission for 5 x 2-storey, 3-bed dwellings, involving the partial demolition of 13 Clare Street, at land east of 13 Clare Street had been allowed and permission was granted for the development.

Notification had also been received that permission for the following developments had been granted by FDC and Cambridgeshire County Council: an irrigation reservoir at Mepal Reservoir (with access on to the A142); an extension to 1A West Park Street; two single-storey dwellings at the rear of 50 Wood Street; change of use from offices to a 4-bed dwelling and a studio apartment at 10 Park Street; erection of a single-storey day room at 94A High Street and change of use from office to micro pub at 2 Market Hill. The application for alterations to 128 High Street had been withdrawn.

P8 19/20 Planning Applications

a) F/YR19/0470/F - Erection of single storey extensions to front and rear of existing dwelling at 3 Hive End Court - *Support*

b) F/YR19/0469/LB - Works to a Listed Building for the erection of a 1.980 (max) metre high wall to rear of existing dwelling at 46 New Road – *Support on the condition that the wall is re-built in accordance with the instructions of the Conservation Officer.*

c) F/YR19/0493/O - Erection of up to 2 dwellings (outline application with matters committed in respect of access) at land south west of 12 Doddington Road – *Support, request the trees which have to be removed are replaced with new trees elsewhere on the site.*

d) F/YR19/0511/F - Erection of a single-storey extension to rear of existing dwelling involving demolition of existing outbuilding at 10 York Road - *Support*

e) F/YR19/0523/O - Erect 1 x dwelling with detached garage (outline application with matters committed in respect of access, layout and scale) involving demolition of existing building at land west of 1 King Edwards Road – *Support, request provision of bat box as suggested.*

f) F/YR19/0370/VOC - Variation of condition 6 to enable amendment to approved plans and removal of condition 5 in relation to staff parking relating to planning permission F/YR13/0794/F (Change of use from flats to day nursery involving alterations to attached outbuilding/garage) at 8 Station Road – *Recommend Refusal, condition should remain and should be enforced because of parking issues in the area.*

P9 19/20 Wenny Road Development – Suggestion from Cllr Carney

Cllr Carney had put forward an idea for the Wenny Road Development which might appease those campaigning to save Wenny Meadow whilst also satisfying the need for housing. He suggested saving the parcel of land to the south of the site (Wenny Meadow) and instead building on another area which had been set aside as “The Village Green”, which was next to the bypass.

Members discussed the idea but agreed the planning process for the site was “too far down the road” and it was too late in the day to suggest such a major change to the developers and FDC.

P10 19/20 Growing Fenland – Chatteris Interim Report

Copies of the Interim Report had been received and the Clerk suggested it would be advisable to submit a Town Council response to the 15 ideas suggested in the report.

A discussion took place on the report with Cllr Benney outlining the benefits of encouraging cycling, providing a cycling store and de-criminalising parking so FDC could take action on parking time limits. Cllr Haggata argued transport should be a priority and not just community transport and everyone agreed that the Advanced Manufacturing Launchpad and a new training centre were very important to the town as was additional housing which would bring in extra facilities.

It was agreed that members should be asked to read the report and prioritise the suggestions in time for the full council meeting on the 2nd July when the results would be analysed and the Council’s submission prepared.

P11 19/20 Asset of Community Value Information

The Clerk had received many, many pages of paperwork relating to the request to nominate the Empress Swimming Pool as an Asset of Community Value.

This included 14 emails from members of the public asking the Council to change its mind and support the nomination. Most of the emails were polite and pointed out the benefits of the pool to the Chatteris community. An email from Mr Lawrence Weetman, who had submitted the nomination, asked the Town Council to change its mind, explaining about ACVs and pointing out the building surveys were out of date. A trustee of the pool had taken the surveys and walked around the pool providing a comparison with the original report. She had assured members that chlorine and water samples were taken daily and bacteria tests were sent off for analysis weekly. She invited members to come and view the pool.

The paperwork included advice from FDC's Senior Community Support Officer who confirmed there would be no legal or financial implications if the Town Council was to support the application and there would be no liability on the Council if they knew the building was in a poor condition. The Town Council would also have no obligation to contribute towards the purchasing of the building or essential repairs unless the Town Council felt it was necessary.

Following a request from Cllr Benney a copy of the latest Health and Safety Assessment of the pool commissioned by FDC (carried out in 2010 when FDC was asked to consider opening the pool to the public) had been received. The Assessment had highlighted a number of issues which would need to be addressed if the pool was to open to the public. The trustees had been sent a copy of the report and had refused, at that time, to carry out the work and the pool had, therefore, not opened to the public. The Clerk acknowledged the report was out of date and had received permission to send it to the current Trustees to ask for their comments and updates.

Brief discussions took place on the paperwork with Councillors admitting there was a lot of support from the public for the ACV but there were still concerns about financial implications and the need to safeguard taxpayers' money. There was anger at suggestions on social media that the Council and Councillors were corrupt and had not acted correctly. The Clerk pointed out that the Council had never put any money into the Empress Swimming Pool and had never had any say in how the pool, a private venture, was run.

It was agreed that the matter should be discussed in public at the full council meeting on the 2nd July and the Council could consider again whether to support the application in view of the additional information which had been received and the level of support shown by members of the public. The recommendation would be that the Town Council should support the ACV on condition there were no financial or legal obligations.