

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF ODIHAM PARISH COUNCIL
HELD IN THE OLD SCHOOL, LONDON ROAD, ODIHAM ON
WEDNESDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2015 COMMENCING AT 7.30PM**

Present: Cllrs Hale (Chair), Bell, David, Faulkner, Fellows, Harris, Robinson-Giannasi, Stewart and Worboys

In attendance: Mrs Weir (Clerk) and Mrs Tilt (Deputy Clerk)

Also present: District Cllrs Crookes and Gorys; Daniel Hawes, Planning Policy Manager and Nick Steevens, Head of Regulatory Services from Hart DC; 61 members of the public

FULL COUNCIL

161/15 RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

162/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RELATING TO ANY ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Cllr Worboys declared a non-pecuniary interest in items 165/15 and 166/15 – the Deer Park.

163/15 PUBLIC SESSION

The leader of Save the Park Action Group (SPAG) addressed the council. He commented that everyone is in attendance to hear the second proposal for the Deer Park, proposal number one having been withdrawn. He stated that no one can comment on its replacement until presented and it will be a matter of judgement as to whether it really is materially different.

He stated that Bell Cornwell had refused to answer questions from SPAG and hoped that their questions would be answered tonight. He spoke about the £2m profit he believed the owner would make from proposal number one to build 11 expensive houses, to pay for all the works which the owner presented as benefits, solely to win public support for planning consent for his own large house in the middle of the Deer Park. He explained that the term enabling development that was used for the first proposal related to development that would not otherwise be allowed in order to pay for maintenance of a heritage asset that could not otherwise be preserved. He believes that the proposal will destroy what is left of our heritage, not preserve it. Bell Cornwell apparently admitted that the term was used inappropriately and the speaker said that if they continue to use it, they have a professional duty to make it clear to the public that it is not lawfully applicable in such circumstances.

He talked about how the previous scheme had already been put to the test and that from the 678 people that had voted, the answer to being open to such a scheme was no, by a majority of 2:1. Out of the 333 written comments, only 22 were in support of the recent proposal. He said that if people want to see the Deer Park destroyed as a Conservation Area, as a designated heritage and as a Local Gap, then so be it. If people want to see it urbanised, or want to open the door to unlimited development, then so be it. If people don't want these results, then he urged them to register their opinion with OPC. He finished with advising everyone that SPAG had circulated an objective analysis after proposal number one and would do the same after this meeting. It would be available on their website: - www.odihamdeerpark.org.uk.

The chair thanked the speaker. There were no comments from Cllrs.

164/15 APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:

Monday 7 September 137/15 - 153/15

The above minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

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165/15 PRESENTATION FROM BELL CORNWELL ON THE REVISED PROPOSAL FOR THE DEER PARK

Graham Bell informed the meeting that proposals for the Deer Park began many years before there was anything called a NH Plan. The NH Plan process and the park's proposal have got entwined and run in parallel, a consequence never envisaged originally. The proposal was always going to be a special one-off proposition for the area within which it sits, i.e. the Conservation Area.

The idea was originally brought to OPC and then later to the public via an exhibition and website information. They watched the NH Plan emerge and were first contacted by the steering group in March 2015. They have made their comments on the NH Plan known just like any others have done so. Although the Deer Park is being put forward as a very large Local Green Space, in planning terms, they are where they were before. They have addressed many of the issues raised by the public and are happy to present them to OPC for discussion. They are nearing the stage of the formal submission of an overall landscape-based scheme for this part of the park and an application for those elements needing planning permission.

In summary, the main changes (Appendix 1) are relating to:-

1. The landscape plan overall
2. The hub, off the public car park
3. The access and footpaths
4. Deer Park fencing
5. Tree planting
6. The housing
7. Public open space

1. The Plan overall - issues were that it was too ambitious and needed scaling down in size; concern was expressed from the owner of the grass runway to the north and increased tree planting in top fields; surface water flows speeded through the site to the west.

Solutions - leave other land to north alone, concentrate on single ownership of 42h only; increase the likelihood of complete delivery by doing less; have wet woodland landscape in parts and restore ponds to help natural flow.

2. The hub, off the public car park - issues were not enough parking, how would it be run? Do we need a community building or something else?

Solution - increase area available for parking and events - retain the community building offer until not wanted officially; widen events field to increase potential uses; retain potential for level footpath to Health Centre from Palace Gate area; retain hub as part of land offered to OPC for the community.

3. The access and footpaths - issues were road access unsafe for amount of traffic; don't want footpaths extinguished or diverted away from Deer sanctuary field; don't want footpaths fenced in or corralled in high hedges.

Solution - leave as many footpaths alone as possible; reduce height of hedges and create viewpoints across the park; check safety of access with HCC/HDC Highways engineers. Designed by WSP as a 4.1m driveway and 2m joint footpath/cycleway within a 12m wide landscape zone; use an existing access point onto Dunleys Hill; HDC have agreed the junction is suitable; can become part of a new definitive footpath network linking to FP17; no footpath extinguished in full, only 2 diversions; 2 new definitive footpaths offered by landowner; overall increase in linear meters of footpaths across the site; public open space will also increase the linear meters of footpath but not counted here.

4. Deer Park fencing - issues were didn't like the idea of unsightly fences being seen; how high? What do they look like? Where are they?

Solution - follow the principle of a pale boundary and effectively hide the fencing in the landscape; use virtually invisible fencing.

5. Tree planting - the issue was that the tree boundary will create a continuous screen stopping our views into the park.

Solution - show a defined scale, the effect of the spacing being suggested of 25m centres and 6m oak trees from year 1; relate to other established and listed deer parks.

6. The park housing - issues were too much housing (12 units); too large; Parkers House not acceptable and too prominent.

Solution - lower the number of units by 4 (1/3rd less) and give more plot size to provide significant landscape setting to each; re-site houses away from any direct views; reduce the size of Parkers House by 20% and re-site further back into the site using the stream and topography; relate to other examples of houses in parks elsewhere.

7. Public open spaces - issues were what is offered and how and for how long? Is a lease to OPC good enough? What happens in 25 years' time when a lease runs out?

Solution - clarify the land to be dedicated (6h); enlarge the area to provide a better events field and permanent and overspill parking associated with it; clarify it is gifted in ownership through planning covenant to OPC forever and not by lease; clarify that planning covenants on the land would be offered at the application stage; create owner/community liaison group for management issues.

Summary - continued liaison with OPC is welcome. Changes have been made to explain better or amend matters that create objections. More clarity will become apparent at an application stage to satisfy Hart DC as to what is on offer can be delivered securely and lawfully. This is a one off proposal for all the 42h of land in a single ownership. The landscape enhancement and heritage restoration will be phased in relation to development so that one does not occur without the other. The landscape planting, restoration and open space is for future generations to enjoy as well as all of us now. The scheme meets many aims of the NH Plan vision agreed with the community.

Question from Cllrs

1. JH - Does placing covenants on the land offer protection for the future?

GB - The covenants will be legally binding and offer better protection than policies.

DH - Confirmed that covenants are the strongest security available.

2. MF - Now that the economics of the proposal have changed; i.e. less houses, we presume that the revenue generated will be less than anticipated. Is there a source of funding from elsewhere?

GB - As the revised proposal is for the land that is in ownership only, there is a saving there as the owner is not purchasing the 2 fields. To clarify, it was only ever said that the project could be considered under "enabling development" by analogy to the Historic England process of enabling development. If people had found that unhelpful, the phrase would not be used tonight. As there is less land to do work on the costs are lower and money is available from another source, but Graham was not prepared to talk about this at the moment. The work that the owner is offering will still be to the same standard for the ponds, pale wall and access.

MF - enabling development offers open books accounts - any revenue generated and spent will be subject to openness, will there be the same level of openness on this revised project?

GB - Hart DC will be able to see what they need to make a lawful decision as to if the project meets the criteria. There are historic elements that need to be maintained in the future. Historic England said no to this area as a park and garden due to the loss of the historic features.

3. RH - I am interested in better use of the Deer Park for the youths, elderly and visitors. Some of the current footpaths are very muddy and dangerous. Are you intending to re-surface any of the footpaths to allow better access?

GB - Currently it is HCC's or the farmer's responsibility to maintain the footpaths and hedges. In the future, the owner is happy to have a liaison group formed to deal with these problems, perhaps with representation from OPC, Odsoc and other local groups. If a problem is identified, there is money to

sort it. He is happy to consider the re-surfacing of some of the paths that could become joint paths and cycleways. The public have given mixed views on the surfaces of the paths; - some want better access, some want grass paths. There is money available to upgrade if that is what the community want. The footpath through the hub area will be solid.

4. JM - The gift of the land to OPC for the benefit of the community is a fantastic offer. Can you expand on the covenants for the rest to the land?

GB - OPC will pay £1 for the open space area. There will be a covenant stating that no development can take place on it apart from a community hub. The council will be responsible to manage the land for the benefit of the community. Everything else apart from the private curtilage will have restricted covenants on it to prevent any further development. There is also a possibility that there will be a covenant on Parkers House, that covers the future management of the land.

5. DC - Where are the deer going to go?

GB - The deer will be allowed everywhere apart from the land for the private dwellings and the public open space. There will be a herd of approximately 30 introduced, which will increase to 60-100. The size of the herd will be managed and culled. Advice has been taken from the deer manager at the Petworth Estate which have the largest and oldest herd in GB. The herd will also come from there.

6. JB - You talk about improving drainage to the area, the canal is short of water. Would you be prepared to talk about assisting the canal?

GB - Water will be held in the ponds and in the wetland woodland area, so there won't be any torrent flow of water. When working on the Hatchwood project this same question was asked. As long as there is enough water for the ponds and wet woodland and water is not rushing through them, they are happy to engage about the canal. The culvert is not on the owner's land, so they need to ensure that water enters the culvert at the same speed. Please provide canal contact details of who to talk to.

6. JRG - Is there any shelter / feeding station for the deer?

GB - In the previous proposal the inner sanctuary provided this. They have since been advised that it is ok for dogs to mix with the deer but at certain times of the year notices will be displayed, asking that dogs are kept on a lead due to young deer. There will be 1 shelter provided.

7. JF- Do you think this proposal is compatible with the area being designated as Local Green Space?

GB - It is up to the examiner to decide if the land fits the criteria as a LGS, but Graham believes it is too large. Happy to offer up the land for OPC as a LGS.

JF - If the land is designated as LGS, is your proposal compatible?

GB - If the land is designated as a LGS, this proposal meets the "special circumstances" required for development.

8. CW - Does the curtilage of the gifted land include the oak trees?

GB - The oaks will be 6m high when planted and at 25m intervals along the boundary.

CW - what other species of trees will be in the park?

GB - There are plans for a variety of trees; the blue bell wood will need beech and hazel trees, in the wetland alders and willow.

CW - will the oaks have a preservation order on them?

GB - the Deer Park is in the Conservation Area which protects the trees anyway. If OPC wants preservation orders on them then it can be looked into.

9. DH - Re the fencing, how do people access the open space?

GB - There will be a 7ft gate with an automatic closure on it, people will need to be responsible and you can get special deer fence gates.

10. JH - re the community building. If the community don't wish it to be built here, can it be built elsewhere?

GB - The client has identified funds for a community building. If a site can be identified in Odiham and it is the will of the public it can be done.

JH - can a pre-school, or something at the wharf be considered?

GB - £400,000 has been identified. The community can decide on what they want and where.

11. MH - parking - is it solid parking at the hub?

GB - It has been identified that the High Street require 30/40 spaces for workers, shoppers and

visitors. The surface will be solid - to be agreed, but the overspill will be grasscrete to start with and then grass.

MF - Is the Dunleys Hill access through the gifted land?

GB - detailed discussions are needed. The houses need to control their own access road. There will be covenants in place and there is a new footpath next to the access road. The drive is designed for 6/ 8 houses only, as there is not control of all of the junction.

12. RH - Deer fence. Will there be a hedge on the visible side to make it softer?

GB - Where there is a pale, there can be bulbs and bushes, but the idea is to not to prevent enjoyment of the views. For some of the fencing there is probably hedging there already. The fence will have backing.

13. JM - Gifted land - where will the funding come from to maintain it in the future?

GB - Hart will work out the calculation based on yearly maintenance and then times it by 25 years. The owner will maintain it for the first few years to ensure the planting is all done and will then hand it over it with the maintenance money.

14. DS - Re the pale - how much of the site will be visible on our side as the ground slopes away?

GB - The pale is an historic solution to fencing. The average height person will be able to see over this.

DS - the land slopes to the canal, concerned people won't be able to see over this.

GB - other solutions from public – orchards, planting. Detail will be in the landscaping.

15. JB - What is the exact variety of the oaks to be planted, what if there is a future problem with this variety?

GB - can't predict the future. Using English oaks and different varieties in other areas, e.g. beech, hazel. He is not a landscaping expert, but will put this question to them. The expert did suggest planting in between the oaks and then removing them at a later date. This can be agreed with the management team and plans made for the future.

16. JRG - no further question.

17. JF - urbanisation - what lighting will there be from the houses and the driveway? Flood lights on Parkers House? What effect will this have on the area as it is currently dark?

GB - lights already on the houses around the edge of the deer park. A private driveway does not have to have lights. People buying the houses will be happy to live in a dark area. The planning department can implement what they feel is necessary. He can't see the driveway having lights.

JF - If Hart decide, OPC can give an opinion but is not always agreeable with Hart. Any controls?

GB - Hart can negotiate the scheme with the applicant. Could for example have bollard lighting. Can't give certainties.

18. CW - big projects take time. What is the time scale to produce this, will it be in stages? When could OPC take ownership of the gifted land?

GB - There is an element of what needs to be done first, there will be a phased approach. The land for OPC would be handed over after 2 years.

JM - Applaud the use of the pale - a clever idea. Don't obstruct the views with hedges.

The chair thanked Graham Bell for the presentation and for answering questions from Cllrs. Graham advised that he would send a PDF version to the clerk and check with his client about putting it on the website.

166/15 AGREEMENT ON ANY NEXT STEPS REGARDING THE PRESENTATION FROM BELL CORNWELL

At the next full council meeting, Cllrs will be agreeing on any feedback or comments to Bell Cornwell on the revised proposal.

Bell Cornwell will advise if OPC can put the presentation on its website due to copyright issues.

It was agreed that Cllrs would agree on the content of a press release via email and that the recent email correspondence from Bell Cornwell about this meeting would be added to the website.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.05pm.

Signed.....

Date.....