

Awbridge Parish Council involvement in Church Lane Development

2019

January – PC supports nursery site enabling development solution in principle

February – PC informed pre-application advice being sought.

March – Planning proposal first discussed at Annual Parish Assembly

August – PC confirms support for Church led application and exhibition detailing scheme

September- Public exhibition held at All Saints Church

October – December – Further discussion about proposed scheme held at PC meetings.

2020

January – 42 residents attend PC meeting, where detailed discussion held before PC votes to support scheme in principle.

April – PC receives update on revised scheme

June – PC discusses scheme

July – PC discusses planning application now submitted and plans for public consultation

August – PC discusses scheme

July/August – Public consultation – collation of responses and result overseen by PC Chair

September – PC notes consultation response but defers decision to allow time for meeting between Church Lane residents and applicant/developer

October – PC defers decision to allow more time for Church Lane residents/applicant & developer meeting

December – PC defers decision to allow for further attempts to arrange Church Lane residents/applicant & developer meeting.

2021

January – PC defers decision and agrees to allow for PC arranged meeting between Church Lane residents and applicant.

January/February – Two meetings held with Church Lane residents and applicant and then applicant & developer

February – PC considers revised plans presented by developer. PC votes by majority to support scheme.

Detailed Chronology including Parish Council minutes:

2005 Concern raised over need to enlarge graveyard by Church.

2013 Attempts to find a solution with neighbouring landowner enabled by new housing. Strong local support for the proposal and 42 positive responses to a letter from the Rector including Parish Council. Unable to negotiate suitable scheme with landowners.

2016 Parish Council support for identifying solution sought by Church wardens

January 2019 The initial proposed scheme was presented to the Parish Council by Churchwarden Fred Tucker. It was proposed that a development of four detached houses would be built on the frontage to Church Lane together with a car park and an extension to the graveyard. It was originally proposed that the Nursery Use would be relocated to the rear of the site. It was explained that:

'The main benefit will be the extension of the church graveyard. In addition, the provision of car parking will enable the Church to realise its full potential as a community hub, regardless of parishioners' religious beliefs or non-beliefs. This will encourage greater community cohesion. The provision of car parking will also address the periodic traffic congestion problems in Church Lane, which presents access problems for emergency vehicles.'

Following a discussion, the Parish Council decided to support the proposal in principle.

February 2019 Church Warden reported to the Parish Council that the TVBC Planning Department had been approached and that it was proposed that a pre-application submission would be made to allow initial consideration of the proposal. The PC agreed to include the proposal as an item for the Annual Parish assembly in March.

Parish Council Minute:

Minutes of the meeting of Awbridge Parish Council held in Awbridge Village Hall, Romsey Road SO51 0HG on Thursday, 28th February 2019 at 7.30pm

4. 15/19 Public observations/questions on agenda items

FT advised that following 'in principle' support for the proposed Church Lane/All Saints development by the Parish Council, and a subsequent approach to TVBC Planning Department, submission of a pre-application is being actively considered. It was agreed by Members that this should be placed as an agenda item for the Annual Parish Assembly at the end of March.

March 2019 Item discussed at the Annual Parish Assembly

Parish Council Minute:

MINUTES OF THE 35th AWBRIDGE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY**HELD IN AWBRIDGE VILLAGE HALL ON 28th March 2019 AT 7.30PM**

Present:	Cllrs Allen (PA) (Chair), Daley (Vice Chair), Jackson (GJ), Legon, Seymour (KS) Wheeler (SW), HCC Cllr Roy Perry, Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC), Cllr Nick Adams-King (NAK), Gordon Bailey GB 18 members of the public.
Apologies:	Peter Allen
Minute taker:	Ian Milsom

3. Local issues:

- **Church Lane/All Saints Church planning proposal**

FT advised that Church running out of burial space and there is a pressing need for a car park. The Church has been looking for a suitable piece of land to accommodate these additions since 2013.

Currently looking at proposal with local developer, support from PC and assistance from planners. Also working with public utilities people, e.g. Southern Water. Developer will fund extension of graveyard and provide car park. **FT** showed an overhead a slide with street scene. Plan is for four houses adjacent to new nursery land. Graveyard and car park to right of this. **FT** asked for questions from the public, there were none.

May 2019 Church Warden provided a further update on the scheme to the PC.

Parish Council minute:

Minutes of the annual meeting of Awbridge Parish Council held in Awbridge Village Hall, Romsey Road SO51 on Thursday, 16th May 2019 at 7.30pm

6. 15/19 Public observations/questions on agenda items

FT updated on the proposed development in Church Lane. A pre-planning application has been submitted.

August 2019 Church Warden updated the PC on the feedback from the pre-app submission, in particular that the planners had emphasised the need for greater involvement in the process from the community. The Churchwarden suggested that the Parish Council might want to be joint applicants with the church to emphasise that it was a community project.

Parish Council Minute:

Minutes of the meeting of Awbridge Parish Council held in Awbridge Village Hall, Romsey Road SO51 0HG on Thursday, 29th August 2019 at 7.30pm

6. 43/19 Planning To consider planning applications notified to the Council.

FT, who at previous meetings has kept the parish council up to date on the proposed housing/extension of the graveyard/additional church parking development in Church Lane, advised that a planning pre-application has been submitted. **FT** informed that the planners seek more involvement from the community, suggesting that the parish council become a joint applicant with the church. **NAK** felt that it should be the Parochial Church Council that leads on any formal involvement with a planning application. **FT** is arranging an open evening at the village hall to enable parishioners and parish councillors to learn more about the proposed development.

September 2019 A public consultation event was held at the Church to inform the public about the scheme. About 60 people attended the event and 66 questionnaire responses were eventually returned. 50 responses fully supported the proposals and a further 6 were partially in support (i.e. they had some reservations such as the number of houses proposed). The main concerns were the precedent that could be set in relation to further development in the village, and the number of units proposed.

October 2019 The PC were updated about the public consultation event. Church Warden also advised that he and church representatives had met with the Parish Council Chairman to discuss the proposals. The Churchwarden confirmed that it was entirely appropriate for the PC to support the scheme in principle prior to its formal consideration of the planning application. It was therefore agreed that a well-publicised public meeting of the Parish Council would be held in November to allow a full airing of the proposals.

Parish Council Minute:

Minutes of the meeting of Awbridge Parish Council Held in Awbridge Village Hall, Romsey Road SO51 0HG on Thursday, 3rd October 2019 at 7.30pm

3. 50/19 Public observations/questions on agenda items

FT updated on the consultation around the proposed development in Church Lane, comprising four new-build houses linked to the extension of the graveyard at All Saints Church and the provision of a car park for church users. Around sixty people attended the consultation event organised by the developer and church representatives. Most responses came via the questionnaire made available at the event. Most written responses seem to support the proposed development; however, this needs to be confirmed via a detailed analysis of the questionnaires completed.

FT and church representatives have met with the parish council chairman to discuss the proposal. **FT** reported that TVBC Planning department has said that there is nothing to prevent the parish council supporting the proposed development in principle, subject to being able to comment further on the full application when this is submitted. **GJ** has requested examples of where parish councils' have taken this approach.

DC asked for clarification about issues to consider if those close to the proposed development raise concerns and/or object

Following discussion it was proposed and agreed that Council's Planning Committee meeting scheduled for 31 October 2019 should be put back to 7th November. This change to be widely publicised to the public and carry information that people who feel uncomfortable with meetings can instead contact their local councillor regarding their views.

November 2019 At a meeting of the Parish Council Planning Committee, Church Warden described the proposals and the justification for scheme.

Parish Council members asked a range of questions which were answered by the Churchwarden and Paul Airey (agent for the proposed application) and members were also promised access to the consultation responses from the exhibition, the viability report prepared in support of the proposals, together with further justification for the need for the graveyard extension and the car park. The committee decided to postpone any decision on 'in principle' support for the proposed project until it has received and considered the information referred to above.

November 2019 A further meeting of the Parish Council was held at which the public were invited again to discuss the proposals. Paul Airey updated the meeting about the progress of the scheme and discussions with the Borough Council. It was emphasised that the scheme was being progressed by the Church as a community supported development and would be considered by the Planning Authority under the provisions of policy COM 9 (Community Led Development). It was pointed out that if the Parish Council did not support the scheme then it would be unable to progress. It was suggested to the meeting by Paul Airey that the proposals could be considered as part of the evolving Neighbourhood Plan as suggested within the policy, however the TVBC representative at the meeting, Cllr Adams-King, pointed out that the Neighbourhood Plan was not sufficiently advanced for this to be a feasible option.

Parish Council Minute:

Minutes of the meeting of the Council Planning Committee held at 8.00pm on Thursday, 7th November 2019 in Awbridge Village Hall, Romsey Road, Awbridge SO51 0HG

Present: Cllrs Jackson (**GJ**) (Chair) Allen, (**PA**) Coggon (**DC**), Sheppard (**AS**)
7 members of the public, Planning Application Representative Paul Airey (**PAI**) , Fred Tucker (**FT**), Warden, All Saints Church, Awbridge.

Apologies: Cllrs Adams-King, Legon

17/047p **Proposed development at Church Lane**
To receive information about the proposed development, take views from the public and to decide Council's position.

FT provided contextual background to the current outline planning application for the erection of four detached houses, provision of a car park and extension of the graveyard on land adjacent to All Saints Church, Church Lane, Awbridge.

All Saints Church has been searching for several years for a piece of land to enable the church graveyard to be extended, and a few potential sites have been explored without success. There is capacity at the graveyard for around seven more years, assuming 4 burials per year. Parking at the church is also problematic and vehicles are forced to park on the roadside. This practice inhibits access for larger vehicles, which could include ambulances and fire appliances. Plans to extend the use of the Church as a community hub is likely to increase the incidence of road-side parking.

Linked to the proposed development of houses in Church Lane is an offer from the developer to gift to the community land to extend the church graveyard and to provide parking for church users.

Earlier in the year around seventy parishioners attended a public presentation about the proposed development. It was reported that around 83% of those attending were in favour of the development.

The land which will be used for the proposed development is classified as countryside as it lies outside the development envelope. In accordance with Policy COM9 (Community Led Development) of Test Valley Borough Council Local Plan 2011-2029, it can only proceed if it is demonstrated that the community has been involved in the preparation of the proposal and supports it.

For the benefit of members of the public present, GJ explained the Parish Council's role in the planning process.

Several queries were raised by the Parish Council regarding the level of public support indicated by attendees at the public meeting and the preceding consultation questionnaire. Council questioned the number of occasions when Church Lane is congested with vehicle traffic.

Council requested sight of the questionnaires that have been completed to satisfy itself as to the level of community support, to

determine if such support relates to the whole of the proposed scheme or just the graveyard extension and the car park; and how many of the respondents live in Church Lane.

PAI advised that the public meeting was just one part of a wider consultation. Need to get whole community on board. Will discuss with the Parish Council how further engagement of the community can be affected.

PAI offered to provide Council with a copy of the project feasibility study, which the Parish Council welcomed.

Comments from the public present:

A member of the public resident in Church Lane expressed a negative view about housebuilding to fund the church graveyard extension, and car park.

Another member of the public said that they had never experienced a problem when driving through Church Lane.

A member of the public expressed concern that if successful, the proposed project would set a precedent.

Council decide to postpone any decision on 'in principle' support for the proposed project until it has received and considered the information referred to above.

January 2020 A full public meeting of the PC was again held to allow public discussion of the proposals. 42 residents were in attendance. There was a wide ranging discussion which took the majority of the PC meeting. Majority support was indicated for the scheme. Some concerns were also raised about the following matters:

- The possibility of increased traffic along Church Lane.
- The appropriateness of the housing types and its affordability
- The number and sizes of the houses proposed
- The subjectivity of supporting evidence
- The danger of precedent if the scheme was permitted.
- Whether the scale of development proposed was commensurate with the benefits to the community
- Whether the Parish Council's established protocol of not speaking to developers until detailed planning applications were submitted would be compromised.

Parish Council Minute:

Minutes of the meeting of the Council Held in Awbridge Village Hall on Thursday, 9th January 2020 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Jackson (Chair) (GJ), Seymour (KS) (Vice Chair), Coggon (DC), Adams-King (NAK), Sheppard (AS), Allen (PA), Legon (PL)

In attendance: 42 members of the public, Cllr Gordon Bailey TVBC, Fred Tucker (FT) Warden, All Saints Church Awbridge, Paul Airey Planning Consultant

2. 2/20 Public observations/questions on agenda items

A member of the public requested that the minutes of Parish Council meetings provide clearer information about the reasons for planning decisions.

GJ advised members of the public that the agenda item regarding the proposed development in Church Lane on land adjacent to All Saints Church was being brought forward to enable the broadest input from members of the public present. **GJ** asked that individual contributions be concise, to allow as many people as possible to speak.

There were several contributions from members of the congregation of All Saints Church, some of whom live outside the Parish. These were in favour of the development.

The volume of traffic parking on the roadside in Church Lane during Sunday services and special events was highlighted. It was suggested that this will increase when, following refurbishment, the church is increasingly used as a community facility. There was also support for the extension of the graveyard, which some residents felt is crucial to enabling those who have close ties with Awbridge to be laid to rest in the village.

There was some input from those living in Church Lane, with one resident claiming that the developer had not sought their views on the proposed development. Concern was expressed that the development will result in increased traffic in Church Lane, to the detriment of residents there. There were additional comments regarding:

- the appropriateness of the proposed housing in terms of size, and its affordability for young families
- The number and size of houses proposed would be over-development of the site
- The subjectivity of supporting evidence submitted by the developer
- The proposed development, if approved, setting a precedent for using Policy COM9 of the Test Valley Local Plan 2011-29 to circumvent planning regulations in order to build homes outside of the settlement boundary.

NAK interposed at appropriate points in the discussion to explain:

- The purpose and process of pre-planning submissions, which enable planning applicants to ask planners if the proposal fits with local and national planning regulations and protocols. Planners will give guidance on what might be compliant and what might not be, so applicants can assess whether it is worth proceeding further.
- Policy COM 9 of the Test Valley Local Plan 2011-29, which sets out the framework for considering development which will meet community needs and help support community facilities. Development can only take place under Policy COM 9 if it is rural affordable housing, AND/OR the development is of discernible benefit to the community which is commensurate with the value of the housing proposed. There will be future questions about the types of housing and whether it fits with existing properties.
 - The question facing the Parish Council tonight is whether it is equitable to lend in principle support to the development on the basis that it has the support of the community, and that the benefit accruing to the community is commensurate with the value of the residential element of the proposal.
 - The Parish Council is not the arbiter of the final decision, this resting with Test Valley Borough Council as the planning authority. Even if the Parish Council gives in principle support to the development, this decision can be reversed when it views the final plans.

The developer's agent commented that the developer has carried out a cost benefit analysis, which suggests that the development will not be sustainable if the residential element of the proposal comprised of social housing. The Agent explained that if the Parish Council does not support the proposal in principle, it will not go ahead. If the proposal does move forward, there will be further opportunity for the Parish Council, and members of the public, to influence the development. **GJ** drew the public session to a close and informed that the Parish Council would now move to consider its response to the proposed Church Lane development (See agenda item 5.)

5. 5/20 Planning. Church Lane - To decide Councils response to the pre-planning submission.

The clerk circulated copies of emails submitted by parishioners.

Members of the Parish Council had a wide-ranging and prolonged discussion regarding the Church Lane development. Areas touched upon included:

The lack of rigorous information needed to reach an informed decision, for example, data relating to: •

The actual level of support for the proposal development, particularly from residents of Church Lane;

- The volume of traffic using Church Lane and the actual extent of the parking problem when the church is in use
- The number of burials and cremations over the past 5 years, which would enable an assessment of the pressure on the existing graveyard.

Alternative sources of funding for the provision of a church car park and the extension of the graveyard were discussed, including a contribution from the Dioceses of Winchester and a grant from Test Valley Borough Council's Community Infrastructure Levy fund.

Concern that the Parish Council's established protocol of not speaking to developers until detailed planning applications were submitted would be compromised.

GJ moved to a vote on the proposed development. It was proposed by **PA**, seconded by **NAK** that a vote be taken on giving in principle support to the proposed development in Church Lane. Three members voted in favour, and an equal number voted against. Chairman **GJ** used his casting vote in favour of in principle support. **Motion carried.**

February 2020 At a meeting of the PC, Church Warden circulated further information justifying the car park and graveyard extensions as had been requested by members. He advised that the Church were proposing a further meeting with TVBC in March and that the PC would be further advised on the position in April.

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in Awbridge Village Hall, Romsey Road SO51
OHG on Thursday, 27th February 2020 at 7.30pm**

6. 16/20 Planning

Church Lane – Land adjacent to All Saints Church

Prior to the meeting, **FT** had circulated the information requested by the Parish Council regarding the capacity of the church graveyard and typical traffic volumes/vehicle parking when the church is in use. **FT** advised that the Church would have a further meeting with Test Valley Borough Council Planning in the week beginning 2nd March 2020 and the Parish Council will receive an update at its meeting on 2nd April. The Parish Council requested that Winchester Diocese provide written confirmation that they will not provide financial support for the extension of the All Saints Church graveyard, or for parking provision at the church.

April 2020 Virtual meeting of the PC. Members were advised that a planned public exhibition of the revised proposal had not been able to take place at the Annual Parish meeting as it had had to be cancelled due to the Lockdown. Instead, an information item about the revised proposals had been included in the Awbridge News newsletter, requesting any comments should be sent to the Churchwarden. The PC requested formal confirmation that the Winchester Diocese would not provide financial support for the scheme and this has been conformed verbally.

The Parish Council noted that the scheme had been revised to three units to address some of the concerns raised by the public/members and acknowledged that the applicant wanted to progress to a planning application. It was the view of the PC that the revised plans should be considered again by the public before the application was submitted and this was communicated to the applicant's agent by Cllr Adams-King by email.

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Zoom
Video Conferencing on Thursday, 2nd April 2020 at 7.30pm**

3. Proposed development in Church Lane on land adjacent to All Saints Church.

NAK advised that the latest edition of Awbridge News had carried information about this proposed development, which is at the pre-application stage.

The number of houses proposed at the site has been reduced from four to three. The developer now wishes to submit a full planning application.

NAK has met with the developer's agent and Test Valley Borough Council's Head of Planning to discuss this. Developer's agent was reminded of the need to demonstrate the value of the benefit accruing to the community compared to the profit from the development project. The ongoing planning impact of nitrate mitigation requirements was also highlighted.

Given the postponement, in March, of the Annual Parish Meeting due to Covid-19, members of the public did not, as the developer intended, have an additional opportunity to comment on the proposed development. The planning authority would like the public to be consulted further when lockdown measures allow the Annual Parish Meeting to go ahead.

NAK will confirm the above points to the developer and other interested individuals by email.

Postscript. It seems clear that at this time the full impact of the Pandemic was not understood.

June 2020 With the lockdown continuing and the inability to hold a public meeting, the Churchwarden approached the Chairman of the PC about whether the PC would support the application being submitted without further consultation, on the basis that local people and the PC would get an opportunity to be consulted during the planning process.

The Chairman consulted his members and it was agreed that the application did not need to be delayed, and this was confirmed in an email to the Churchwarden.

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Zoom
Video Conferencing on Thursday, 25th June 2020 at 7.30pm**

4. 48/20 Planning

3. Church Lane development update

It was noted that a formal planning application has now 3 been submitted. In line with comments made at the public meeting, the number of dwellings has been reduced from four to three, and the plans incorporate a public area. There was a general discussion regarding the parish council's scope of influence in relation to the proposed Church Lane development.

July 2020

Parish Council discusses application at Planning Committee meeting, including

**Minutes of the Awbridge Parish Council planning meeting held on Zoom Video conferencing on Tuesday, 21st July 2020 at 7.30pm Present: 12 members of the public
Apologies: Cllr Adams-King (NAK)**

20/004p To consider planning applications notified to Council Land West of All Saints Church, Church Lane

GJ explained to the members of the public present that no open public session has been included in the agenda for tonight's planning meeting. However, in recognition of the level of interest in the proposed church lane development, the Parish Council (PC) will take questions from the floor and will attempt to answer these tonight where possible.

GJ explained the PC's role in the planning process. The PC does not make the final decision on planning applications, this being the responsibility of Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) as the planning authority.

The PC puts forward comments to TVBC on planning applications and indicates whether it supports or objects to the application. Objections to planning applications are the subject of strict criteria and must be based on material planning considerations.

DC asked for clarification on whether, in this case where community support is required, the PC's support counts for more than it would with other planning applications. GJ agreed that as it is being made under COM9 of the TVBC revised Local Plan 2011-29, the support of the parish council is key to the application's success.

GJ expressed the view that as the PC has already voted to support the project in principle, the focus tonight should be on considering the planning aspects of the application rather than looking back over the process to date. DC expressed confusion at this, explaining that he had understood that giving in 'principle support' meant that the PC was happy for the proposal to be further developed, not that thereafter the PC would have no further input except in relation to planning issues.

PL felt that since the submission of the full planning application the process was moving away from that described in COM9, with the decision seeming to now rest with planning officers rather than on the support of the community.

In response to a question from DC, GJ informed of a conversation that had taken place between the Developer's agent and two representatives of the PC, when community concerns about what was happening with the proposed development were highlighted. Following on from this, GJ advised that the Church is going forward with a community consultation that will take the form of a questionnaire that will be distributed along with the Awbridge District Village Association (ADVA) newsletter.

The questionnaire will simply ask parishioners if they do/do not support the application and is intended to give each member of a household the opportunity to comment on the proposed Church Lane development.

GJ proposed holding off on the PC's decision on the planning aspects of the Church Lane development until it has seen the results of the applicant's latest questionnaire. GJ explained that the PC is not constrained by the planning consultation deadline, (31 July 2020), and it can submit comments up until the date the application is considered by the TVBC Planning Committee.

PL questioned whether retrospective engagement with the community counted under COM9. GJ advised that he had sought advice on this point and is confident that it will not be an issue as it is satisfying the applicant's need to consult with the public. GJ added that the applicant has already met the normal requirements of COM9 and had intended to consult further with the Awbridge community at the annual parish assembly in March. This was not possible due to the pandemic.

PL asked if the PC would have the opportunity to look at the questions in the questionnaire before it is distributed. GJ replied that with the applicants permission, copies of the questionnaire could be made available to Members. PL reminded members that DC had already done some work around a questionnaire. There followed a discussion about how information gathering could be accurately achieved through an appropriately designed questionnaire, with contextualised questions presented in the correct way. DC felt that it might be better if such a questionnaire came from a group that is not proposing the development. GJ pointed out that COM 9 is clear that the consultation must come from the applicant. DC nevertheless felt it would be helpful if the PC had some critical input to the questionnaire in order to ensure that it delivered the sort of information that would enable the PC to reach a decision as to whether to support the development. PL agreed that without detailed answers the PC will not be able to reach a decision one way or the other.

GJ made clear his opposition to this approach and expressed the view that there was a risk of it producing a fragmented picture.

The idea of weighting questionnaire responses from residents of Church Lane was raised. GJ opposed this and felt it was a move away from the process outlined in COM9. DC disagreed, feeling that the issue is not simply about establishing the balance of opinion of the community, but in gauging what the need is.

There was then a discussion about 'fraud prevention' in relation to the questionnaire. Suggestions to prevent this included hand-numbering the questionnaire and measures to prevent it from being photocopied. It was agreed that another planning meeting would be required to consider the results of the questionnaire, and to consider the planning aspects of the Church Lane application. No date was set. FT provided the information that a questionnaire circulated in ADVA news would be delivered only within the parish of Awbridge.

GJ asked Members for their views about proceeding with the applicant's questionnaire, re-designed by DC, with the results being collated by the PC. PL and DC indicated their support. No motion was proposed or seconded, and there was not vote taken.

Questions from members of the public

These included:

- How will it be ensured that only Awbridge residents complete the questionnaire?
- Post questionnaire, will parishioners be able to have further input to the planning process? • Why has there been no previous discussion about alternative approaches to the project, e.g. smaller car park, larger graveyard
- As a gesture of goodwill, can the applicant temporarily withdraw the application pending the outcome of the questionnaire? GJ responded to the above questions.

The clerk asked for clarification regarding Council's response to the planning aspects of the Church Lane application. GJ advised the clerk that this be in the form of a holding response, stating that the parish 4 Documents/minutes/planning/July 2020 council would be submitting comments when the results of the questionnaire were known.

August 2020

Parish Council discuss Church Lane application at Full PC meeting.

**Minutes of the Awbridge Parish Council meeting held on
Zoom Video conferencing on Thursday, 6th August 2020 at 7.30pm**

In attendance: 18 members of the public.

5. 57/20 Public observations/questions on agenda items

There were no observations or questions from the public on items on the agenda.

5. To confirm the minutes of the planning meeting held on 21st July 2020.

4) Page 3, paragraph 7. Take out 2 "No motion was proposed or seconded, and no vote was taken". Motion failed. NAK felt that this text accurately recorded what happened at the meeting and should remain. The motion relates to a discussion at the July meeting concerning a questionnaire that the developer intended to circulate to parishioners. DC felt that this would not provide the information that the Parish Council needed to make an informed decision about the planning application.

An alternative questionnaire and covering letter, prepared by DC, and issued by the Parish Council was discussed and it was agreed to proceed on this basis.

After the meeting, having sought advice from the clerk and NAK, GJ took the decision to proceed instead with the developer's questionnaire. There was a protracted discussion around the reasons for GJ's change of plan. DC asked the clerk for details of the advice he had given to GJ. The clerk informed that he had advised GJ that as the parish council questionnaire had not been specifically identified as an agenda item (motion) in advance of the meeting, a decision linked to this would be unlawful.

NAK clarified that his advice to GJ was given in his role as TVBC councillor, Deputy Leader of TVBC and TVBC Cabinet Member for Planning. He felt that DC's proposed questionnaire and accompanying letter was not appropriate, and in any case would have had to be circulated wider than the parish.

DC questioned the validity of the clerk's advice. In response, the clerk suggested that the matter be referred to the Hampshire Association of Local Council's for adjudication. This was formally proposed by DC and seconded by PA. There was not a majority in favour and the motion failed.

NAK proposed that a way forward might be to add the following text to the minutes of 21st July 2020. "Subsequent to the meeting, GJ sought advice from the clerk and NAK. Based on the advice received, GJ decided upon a different way forward, this being that the developer should issue a questionnaire, which, when completed by recipients, will be returned to the Parish Council for opening, sorting, and collating of the responses". This was proposed and seconded and there was a majority in favour. **Resolved**

There was a discussion about how to ensure that the questionnaires were circulated to, and returned, by individuals residing in the parish (and who receive copies of ADVA news), or who identify with the parish, for example those living in Old Salisbury Lane and in Newtown. FT felt that this would be achieved through the numbering of the questionnaires.

7. 59/20 Planning

2) Church lane development

To receive an update on progress and to consider further action by the Parish Council as appropriate.

NAK updated on an issue raised outside the meeting by AS about the change in planning officer for the Church Lane application. NAK explained that this was purely for reasons of planning officers' workloads. NAK provided an overview of the viability assessment which would be carried out by an external consultant to determine if the Church Lane development will provide sufficient value to the community compared with the developer's profit. Nothing further was discussed in relation to action by the Parish Council.

July/August 2020

Parish Council Chairman oversees the opening of responses to survey sent out in ADVA magazine to residents of Awbridge. Responses checked and collated in presence of PC Chairman, who confirms result of consultation and conveys to PC members via email.

September 2020

Parish Council discuss Church Lane Development, including result of the survey carried out amongst parishioners. PC agree to defer decision to allow time for a meeting between the applicant, developer and residents of Church Lane.

**Minutes of the Awbridge Parish Council meeting held on Zoom
video conferencing on Thursday, 17th September 2020 at 7.30pm**

7 members of the public present

20/01448/FULLS Land West of All Saints Church, Church Lane.

Since Council met last the results of the developer-led survey have become available. There was a thirty-six per cent return rate, with seventy-two per cent in favour, and twenty-seven percent against the application.

NAK advised that the application will not come before TVBC Southern Area Planning Committee until either 17 November 2020, or 3 December 2020, giving the Parish Council further time to consider its response.

A discussion followed, and covered the following:

- How can the Parish Council influence the planning process to make the proposal as acceptable as possible to the widest range of residents?’
- Parish Council to encourage the applicant and TVBC planners to contact residents to hear their concerns.
- Arranging and facilitating a meeting to enable residents’ to air their concerns to the applicant and planners.

- Any such meeting to take place within a timescale that allows applicant to consider residents' concerns and adjust proposal as appropriate.
- Who should arrange the meeting?
- Should Parish Councillors attend, and if so, what should be their role?
- Should the proposed meeting be minuted?
- Protection of the graveyard extension, car park and open area to ensure continuing benefit to the community
- Ongoing maintenance of the car park and open area
- Ongoing oversight of the car park to prevent encroachment
- Transfer of the open area to the Parish Council, thus enabling its ongoing supervision (particularly to prevent anti-social behaviour), and maintenance of the area to be financially supported via the annual parish council precept.

It was agreed that the arrangements for the proposed community meeting, its format, who should attend, and whether the meeting is minuted, should be decided by residents. NAK offered to facilitate the meeting, but expressed the view that an independent facilitator, such as a Community Support Officer from TVBC, would be preferable.

The applicant's representative expressed a willingness to be involved in the proposed residents' meeting, to listen to resident's concerns, and to consider if there is anything that the applicant can do to address these.

It was suggested that it would be helpful if someone from the Parish Council was present at the meeting as an observer, feeding back information that the Parish Council would find helpful in reaching a decision.

Members of the public present were invited to speak. A resident of Church Lane, making clear that he spoke in a personal capacity only, expressed support for the proposed meeting, feeling it to be a constructive move, and long overdue.

The resident suggested that Church Lane and Coombe Lane residents be given time to take stock, and to reach a decision as to who should lead the proposed meeting.

The Parish Council agreed with this approach and undertook to maintain oversight to ensure that the meeting arrangements, and the meeting itself, proceed in a timely manner. The

Parish Council further agreed to hold over any decision on the application until the proposed meeting of residents, the applicant, and planners have taken place.

October 2020

PC discuss Church Lane Development once more. Note that no meeting between the applicant, developer and Church Lane residents had taken place. Agree to defer decision once more to allow time for such a meeting to be arranged.

**Minutes of the online meeting of Awbridge Parish Council
held on Thursday, 29th October 2020 at 7.30pm**

5. 87/20 Public observations/questions on agenda items

Resident A informed that a meeting between residents and All Saints Church had been mooted as a means of bringing the planning applicant (All Saints Church) and residents together to discuss the concerns of the latter concerning the proposed development.

Resident A, together with another Church Lane resident met recently with FT. Resident A described this as a fruitful and open discussion about the concerns that people in Church Lane have regarding the proposed development. It was felt, however, that the Church needs to provide residents with more information regarding the following:

- Plans to extend Church community activity and the impact this may have on the village hall.
- Traffic impact of the Church's extended community activities.
- Why is the proposed Church car park so big?
- What is the justification for the planned community garden, and how will anti-social behaviour here and in the car park be prevented?
- Is there a business case for the graveyard expansion?

Resident A reminded that residents had proposed using Place Studio as a meeting facilitator and had suggested a pre-meeting with Place Studio to agree how the meeting between residents and the Church would be conducted, when it would take place, and the content of the agenda. It was felt that residents should 3/8 have ample time to digest and consider information emerging from the pre-meeting to be fully prepared for the resident/church meeting.

Resident A advised that residents feel that Place Studio are unable to provide the service they were hoping for to have a fully inclusive meeting with the Church, and the proposed

pre-meeting with this potential facilitator did not take place.

Resident A informed that the developer's agent has since become involved on the church's behalf and is viewed as having created constraints to the proposed residents meeting by suggesting that it be online and take place as early as the week beginning 2 November 2020.

It is understood that new drawings have been prepared, which the residents have had no opportunity to study and digest. There is a sense amongst residents that the consultation process is again being controlled by the developer.

Resident A expressed the view that an online meeting with many residents is not a practical option and would be a barrier to participation. A face-to-face meeting, possibly in a village hall setting, is believed possible within current government Covid-19 guidelines, and this is residents' preferred option. A definitive definition of what is allowed under Covid-19 restrictions is awaited. A facilitator will have to be found. In response to a question from GJ regarding Test Valley Borough Council's offer of a Community Engagement Officer (CEO) to facilitate the meeting, Resident A felt that a CEO would not have the required breadth of knowledge of planning processes and procedures. GJ thanked Resident A for his input. GJ informed that he had taken notes of the main points raised and would feed these into the later discussion of item 8. 90/20 1.

8. 90/20 Planning

1. 20/01448/ Land West of All Saints Church, Church Lane.

NAK opened the discussion by referring to an email he had previously copied widely to stakeholders. This proposed delaying the Parish Council's decision on the application to give time for the applicant to meet with residents to explore if any mitigations were possible to address residents the concerns. The proposed meeting has not yet taken place.

NAK remained of the view that the Parish Council should delay a decision until its planning committee meets on 19 November 2020. This date has been chosen to fit with Test Valley Borough Council's (TVBC) timetable, which requires a report to be prepared for its Southern Area Planning Committee (SAPC) by 24 November 2020. TVBC SAPC will consider the application 20/01448/FULLS on 8 December 2020.

GJ made NAK aware of the earlier discussion detailed at agenda item 5. 87/20 above and invited Resident A to summarise the key points. NAK advised that Church Lane residents had asked, due to his openly expressed views concerning the planning application, that he

withdraw from further close involvement in arrangements for the proposed applicant/residents meeting.

Notwithstanding this position, NAK expressed his willingness to help and to arrange for a TVBC Community Engagement Officer to act as a facilitator. NAK expressed the view that the issues raised at 5. 87/20 above are not material planning considerations that can be considered by TVBC SAPC.

NAK pointed out that Hampshire County Council Highways (HCCH) has undertaken a traffic impact assessment and as regards the community garden, he has previously recommended that ownership ideally be transferred to parish council ownership to ensure its future maintenance and management.

In response, Resident A took the view that the HCCH assessment focused solely on the traffic impact of the new houses and does not consider the traffic impact arising from the use of the church car park, and increased church community activity.

Resident A stressed that the issues raised by him at 5. 87/20 above are the concerns of the community and are relevant 5/8 to the application as it has been brought forward under Policy COM 9, 'Community Led Development', of TVBC Local Plan.

GJ brought the discussion to a close and suggested that the arrangements for the proposed meeting between the applicant and residents now rests with the parties involved.

It was proposed that the Council's response to this application be delayed until an extraordinary planning meeting to be convened on Thursday, 19th November 2020.
RESOLVED.

December 2020

Note: Extraordinary meeting of PC suggested in November minutes did not take place.

PC discuss Church Lane development. Note that attempts to arrange a meeting between the applicant, developer and Church Lane residents, with an agreed facilitator had failed.

PC agree further efforts to be made to engage potential facilitators for a meeting.

MINUTES OF THE ONLINE MEETING OF AWBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY, 3rd DECEMBER 2020 AT 7.30PM

8 members of the public present

8. 116/20 Planning

B. To receive an update on application 20/01448, land west of All Saints Church, Church Lane.

PL updated on his efforts to source a facilitator for the residents' meeting with the Church and the developer. The mediator did not wish to proceed, feeling that the parties were not at a stage where mediation was appropriate. The other person identified by PL was willing to proceed. However, PL concluded that although this individual had a planning background, he did not have any experience of facilitation, and so was not right for this role.

NAK has circulated to Members a potential agenda for the residents' meeting. If Council is happy with this he will pass to the parties and let them come back with suggestions.

TVBC Community Officers are willing to facilitate at the meeting, or it may be better to contact and organisation like Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE). The clerk offered to ask Action Hampshire to circulate to other Hampshire charities that may have experience of facilitation.

NAK suggested that as many Members as possible should attend the residents meeting to observe. Hopefully, the meeting can be organised in the next two weeks. Responsibility for organising the meeting was discussed and it was agreed that the Council take this on. NAK agreed to lead on this and to keep Members informed of progress.

December 2020 - January 2021

Attempts to arrange a facilitator for a meeting between applicants, developer and Church Lane residents through TVBC Communities Team failed, despite financial support through councillors' community grant scheme.

Further conversations with Church Lane Residents

January 2021

PC discuss Church Lane Development. Further

**Minutes of the online Zoom meeting of the Council
held on Thursday, 14th January 2021 at 7.30pm**

In attendance: 10 members of the public

8. 08/21 Planning

B. To further discuss application 20/01448, land west of All Saints Church, Church Lane.

NAK outlined the current situation. NAK had a useful conversation with a member of the Church Lane Residents Group, when a range of issues were discussed, including a suggestion that a way forward was a meeting between Church Lane residents and representatives of All Saints Church only.

DC has carried out preparatory work in anticipation of a meeting which, it was emphasised, would not form part of the formal planning consultation process. DC explained his hopes for the meeting, which should take place in the week beginning 25 January to fit with the planning process timetable.

Attendance will be limited to Church Lane residents who have concerns about the development, and representatives of All Saints Church. Awbridge Parish Councillors may also attend as observers only. In summary, this will be an informal community meeting with those most affected by the development. It is hoped the meeting will aid understanding of the position of each of the parties involved and will enable them to make changes that will not compromise their respective positions. It may not prove possible to reach such a position, however, ideas may emerge that can be put to the developer for consideration.

There will be no obligation on anyone to be tied to anything. No solution will be ideal for everyone. It will be helpful if as much preparatory work as possible is done in advance of the meeting to ensure that the time available is put to best use. Anyone can contact DC in furtherance of this end.

DC acknowledge that the above process should have taken place earlier in the process, but felt we are where we are and should take this final opportunity to try and reach as amicable a solution as possible.

GJ expressed concern that the developer will not be present at the meeting to deal directly with suggestions for mitigation. DC felt the developers presence would not be conducive to an informal community discussion. Points raised can be put to the developer via Church representatives. If these are rejected by the developer, clear reasons should be given.

It was proposed that the Parish Council defer reaching a decision on this application until its February 2021 meeting. RESOLVED

January - February 2021

Two meetings held chaired by a Parish Councillor with members of the PC present as observers. One between the applicant and Church Lane residents. The second between the applicant, developer and Church Lane residents.

The PC acknowledged these meetings did not form part of the formal consultation for the proposed development.

The developer agreed to bring forward revised plans as a result of concerns raised by Church Lane residents at both meetings.

February 2021

PC discusses Church Lane Development once more and considered newly revised plans submitted by the applicant and developer. Majority vote by PC members to support proposed development.