

Extraordinary Watermead Parish Council Meeting

Thursday 16 September 2021 at 7.00pm
Held at the Village Hall, Watermead

Attendees: Cllr Severn (Chair), Cllr A Schwab, Cllr M Singleton, Cllr I Schwab, Cllr M Morgan, Cllr S Mackay
BC Cllr Ashley Bond
Noreen Shardlow (Clerk), Michelle Jackson (Assistant Parish Clerk)
Emily Temple, Gareth Jones, Sam – ET Planning
plus the following members of the public:

Greville Wilson	Natalie Mitchell	Jen (Guillemot Way)
Charlotte Lakin	Sam Buckingham	Becky Hannaway
Maria Gessner	Graham Severn	John Brooks
Len Bone	Diane Bone	Andrea Bone
Phil Toler	Roger Cooling	Susan Mc Cabe
Jim Chignell	Majorie Hirons	Nicholas Clark
Andy Pearce	Mandy Pearce	Julia Beer
Jo Cottle	David Watkins	Elaine Farrell
Mark Aldridge	Hany Girgis	Marcia Lang
Donna Lightfoot	Peter Dean (Sat with PC)	Simon Forest
2 guests	Mr Bennison	Mrs Bennison

21.45 Apologies
Cllr E Rose

21.46 Declarations of Interest
To declare any personal or prejudicial interest regarding the agenda – None

21.47 Questions/Comments from the Public – Planning Application
21/03659/AOP

Outline Planning Application with all matters reserved except for landscape for change of use from garden centre to Industrial/Storage Unit Land North of Watermead Aylesbury Buckinghamshire.

A presentation for storage and distribution units to the North of Watermead was given by Emily Temple of ET Planning.

John Brooks – asked for clarification that the application was for 7am to 7pm Monday to Friday with approximately 100 lorries per day.

Emily – Confirmed this was correct

Jo Cottle – she had read the drainage strategy available online produced by the applicant, which states that most of the site will become impermeable and the only solution would be to use swales around the surrounding areas with everything draining into the River Thame. Disposal of surface water is likely to be feasible with adequate attenuation but ...EA and LFA?? Watermead already has flooding from the River Thame. It doesn't take much rain for the whole area to flood. Emily had stated permeable but EA say 95% impermeable. That water will only go into the Thame.

Emily - Water has to drain somewhere eventually but in order to mitigate a flooding problem it is necessary to slow the passage of water down which is where the different draining solutions such as swales come in to be able to collect and hold the water before it percolates and disperses away.

Cllr Severn added that a flood risk assessment or mitigation had not yet been done so an answer was not yet known.

Roger Cooling – when Buckingham Park was developed, Martin Dalby and (planner) assured that the rural aspect of the road out of Aylesbury would be

retained and screening hedges would be planted to obscure the housing. ET plans go against condition 5 of the original application for a garden centre which said that the hedgerows on the A413 were to be retained. Plans show a 3 foot cosmetic hedge around the edge which would mean views of a 30 ft high factory unit from the main road. This will take away the rural aspect of the view from the road out of Watermead. Why has this condition been taken away on the planning application?

Emily – this is not the application for a garden centre and do not have to abide by the conditions of that application.

Outline planning application and have landscape reserved, which means detailed landscaping information would be addressed at a future period in time. It is relevant to raise the issue, important that they do it and the plans are indicative. A very detailed planting plan including species, sizes and quantities would be provided in the future.

Mrs Bennison - Why are industrial units being proposed and considered here? What is the rationale?

Emily – there is a demand in Aylesbury, for different sizes of units/warehouses. Amazon for example taking on larger and larger sites which is ruining the ability for smaller firms to be able to grow and develop locally and support more local businesses with their storage and distribution needs. Looking at supporting regional businesses within Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. Proposing an application where the units can be sold. Many warehouses are only leased which means companies do not have control over the buildings. Significant demand from online shopping over the last 2 years which is set to increase, demand for storage and distribution has increased.

Andy Pearce – commented that with respect this is a residential estate not an industrial estate

Emily – this site was chosen as there is already a commercial application which has been granted.

Roger Cooling – a garden centre is a retail outlet for the benefit of the community, a factory is not.

Audience Comment – commented that it makes a mockery of Aylesbury Garden Town to which others agreed.

Audience – Firstly if water drains to River Thames, does it mean it will go into the lake in front of people's houses and secondly, Emily had stated there is a need for industrial units, but apparently there are over 100 empty units in and around Aylesbury. What is the justifiable need?

Emily – a study had been undertaken with the transport consultants within the last 6 months prior to submission.

Audience – why was submission put in just days before no more comments were allowed. Very little time for people to log their comments.

Emily – BC have allowed statutory time period of 21 days

Cllr Severn – presumably pre-application advice had been taken from the Local Planning Authority (LPA)?

-

Emily responded that they hadn't

Cllr Severn asked when was the application submitted?

Emily – advised she would need to check the date on the internet.

Roger Cooling asked if statutory notices had been put up as he had not seen any.

Cllr Severn advised that due to Covid sometimes these aren't always put up but they are on the website.

Roger Cooling – believed it to be the law that they must be displayed

Emily – to provide reassurance the council is bound to accept comments up and until the day they make their decision

Cllr Severn advised that the PC had asked for the application to go development control.

John Brooks – interested to hear an answer on the link between the lakes and the River Thame

Emily – her understanding is that the discharge of water is to the River Thame. The existing site would drain into the River Thame. With the planning application have to measure the infiltration rate of the existing green field site and show measures on the development so that infiltration rate is equal to the greenfield infiltration rate.

Audience – that is the theory but in reality does not work

Emily – those are the measures that have been proposed and identified and would be put forward in a detailed drainage design as part of the planning process

Cllr Seven once the PC has resolved its position and taking into account the hundreds of people met over the weekend haven't found anyone who is in support of the application. Asked if Emily was aware of the case of Watermead PC against AVDC in the case of Westerleigh Crematorium. WPC went to the Court of Appeal after 2 judicial reviews and fundamentally the law says that if building on a flood plain, there is a requirement to carry out a sequential test and she had not seen on in ET's documentation. Asked if it was their intention to do one?

Emily – advice received from drainage consultant was that one was not required for the type of development but if Buckinghamshire Council ask for one to be provided then they would do so

Roger Cooling – had Emily seen photographic evidence of flooding submitted from last year? Field under 3 foot of water.

Emily – have not had EA response to planning application

Cllr Severn – showed photo of flooding since the crematorium had been built. As soon as asphalt or concrete is put on top of non-porous clay the water has no where to go, it does not permeate. Flooding is of huge concern.

Emily – It is a material consideration that would need to be addressed and if more information is required then it will be done.

Cllr Severn – a sequential test is needed in order to prove that there is no better site in a non-flood risk area to build the units.

Cllr A Schwab – asked if Emily was aware that the outer area is Level 3 and the inner area is level 2 risk

Emily – professional advice has been taken from drainage consultants who have consulted with the EA to prepare the documentation submitted with the

planning application.

Cllr Severn asked if EA were assisting with the application?

Emily - not assisting but providing data.

Audience – how many new jobs will be created?

Emily – difficult to tell as don't have an occupier for the third unit.

Len Bone – 40 years ago there used to be a river which flowed but this is now blocked with reeds all the way to Thame, the river is no longer cleared.

Emily – needs to be explored outside of the planning process with the relevant landowner.

Cllr Severn advised that the PC had had meeting with the EA and the River Authority they have no powers to make anyone clear the river.

Graham Severn – details suggest that the site will be raised prior to building. Why raise if not concerned about flooding? There used to be pylons on the land which were taken down and the cables buried underground.

Len Bone confirmed that they cables are buried along the path.

Emily – when constructing foundations for buildings need to do all the other associated groundwork that goes alongside including any physical or other drainage mechanisms. Are aware of the underground cables.

John Brooks – how much will the land be raised and how high will the buildings be above it? How high will the security fences around the site be?

Emily – will be dealt with in the detailed plans.

Cllr A Schwab – how high will the buildings be?

Sam ET Planning – buildings will be 2 storey but doesn't have exact measurements

Cllr Severn 50-60 ft high approx?

Sam – under 10 metres to the ridge (35ft)

John Brooks – if land being raised by 2-3 feet need to add that on.

Emily – if details of the security fencing are required in advance of the planning committee then they will submit

Cllr Severn – if something is built which requires security fencing and lighting it would be impossibly overbearing and totally out of keeping with the village

Peter Dean – Emily had stated that the units would be for a courier company

Emily – logistics company

Peter Dean – not aware of any courier company that operates 12 hours a day. How long would it be before an application is made to run for 24 hours. Amazon had been previously mentioned.

Emily – these would be smaller units to be run by local businesses to serve local businesses which would need to be done within working hours.

John Brooks queried opening times of other Sivatech building in Aylesbury

Cllr Severn – believed to be 24 hours

Emily – this was not her understanding

Cllr Severn to check on internet

Emily – can only reassure what is being applied for with this application

Jo Cottle - Emily had stated that the other buildings were likely to be sold but with the prevalence of kitchens springing up everywhere, how do we know there won't be 3/4 restaurants operating a delivery service out of the units providing food at all hours of the day.

Emily – because use class being applied for is storage and distribution

Cllr Severn – we don't know what potential use of the building could be

Emily – reassured that due to the size of the buildings there is not permitted development rights for them to be changed to something else and full planning permission would be needed should any future owner of the buildings wish to change use

Cllr Bond – confirmed this to be correct

Peter Dean – when at hedgerow stage, how on earth is any vegetation going to conceal the units

Emily – would see the units initially until planting is established and grows

Mrs Bennison – how can a company decide where any excess water will flow? What if it doesn't?

Emily – already explained the process and that it would need to be signed off by the EA

Julia Beer – what do Westerleigh think of the application?

Cllr Severn advised that they strongly objected on grounds of impact, environment issues, flooding etc.

Audience asked if Best Western have complained?

Cllr Severn yes on grounds of flooding.

Cllr Morgan – not found anyone in support of the application yet

Cllr Severn showed the number of objections on the planning portal

Audience asked Mr & Mrs Bone why the garden centre was never built?

Len Bone - Said he was now too old. If it was a garden centre, there would be traffic from 7am to 6.30pm

Mandy Pearce – how would you feel with that monstrosity, water going into the River Thames, overflows into the sewer drains, the nursing home car park was flooded, 2/3 roads around Watermead and Oliffe Way, How are they going to reassure everyone that is not going to get worse?

Cllr Severn – it is up to the LPA to properly interrogate the facts put before them.

Audience – is there any impact on the road junction?

Cllr Severn yes there be much more traffic

Cllr A Schwab – will be a massive impact as only have one way in and one way out of Watermead.

Cllr Morgan added that Watermead does not generally have articulated lorries as they cannot turn around

Cllr A Schwab commented that WPC had fought Westerleigh for nearly 6 years and had taken them to the High Court. Disappointed that the landowner never sought opinion or asked the residents of Watermead what they would have liked.

Audience - How many parking spaces is the development? Thought to be 123? Reason for asking was that the garden centre only had 12.

Cllr Severn commented that the application for a garden centre had been granted in 1992 when the population of Aylesbury was considerably less.

Cllr Severn asked members of the public if anyone would like to speak in support of the application – none was in favour.

All objections had been noted in great detail and comments read on the portal.

Audience - Is there any chance of us not being able to object when the lighting and tree situation is known?

Cllr Severn responded that the application has come in as a change of use which the PC does not accept and believes it should be treated as a new application.

With a new application, all of the details would need to be presented as part of the new application including traffic and flooding.

Roger Cooling – department of communities in local government states that a change of use is very dependent on the current use, eg the design and exterior appearance, transport and highways, impact or flooding risk all of which are very different from the original application.

Cllr Severn advised that Cllr Bond had already requested that the application will go to development control whereby it will go to committee and everyone will have a chance to go to the meeting if it gets to that stage. Objections can be made right up to the day of the planning meeting, either directly or via Cllr Bond, the Clerk or the Chair.

21.48 Parish Council – Planning Application 21/03659/AOP

Outline Planning Application with all matters reserved except for landscape for change of use from garden centre to Industrial/Storage Unit Land North Of Watermead Aylesbury Buckinghamshire

Parishioners present were asked whether they wished the PC to remain neutral to the application or object. Parishioners unanimously wished the PC to object.

Cllrs gave their individual opinions on the application and it was proposed and unanimously agreed to support and represent the residents in objecting to the planning application based on flooding, traffic, not in keeping with Watermead etc. Objection letter will be published on the website.

Cllr Severn thanked Emily and her colleagues for attending and also Mr & Mrs Bone with their daughter.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 20.08pm and thanked people for their attendance.

