

Highnam Parish Council  
Highnam ~ Linton ~ Over ~ Lassington



**Extraordinary meeting of Highnam Parish Council Meeting**

**Gambier Parry Hall: Friday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

**Present:** Cllrs C Coats, M Welch, V Tustin Smith, B Nicol, W Badham, J Smith P Sherratt and N Cook.

**In Attendance:** Clerk Jo Badham and 13 members of the public.

**Public Forum – Members of the public (MOP) may make representations, ask questions and give evidence at a meeting in respect of the business on the agenda by invitation of the chair.**

- Firstly, I would like to thank the council for all their hard work. Whilst I was a Councillor for Highnam I raised there was flaws in the 'The Neighbourhood Development Plan' (NDP) which subsequently led to my resignation from the council. The questionnaire sent to all residents was flawed and included a leading question.
- The statement below was read out of the meeting and the resident requested this to be added to the minutes.

Statement to the Extraordinary Meeting August 2023

Having stepped down from the council earlier this year, I was most disappointed to learn that the Neighbourhood Development Plan is back on the agenda. As a resident of the Lassington Reach estate, I am very concerned about the impact of any changes to the NDP, which could strengthen M7's case for development on the adjacent land and the imminent planning appeal.

I will quote from the "Planning and affordable housing statement" submitted by M7 in their appeal submission under the heading "**Informal discussions – Highnam Parish Council**":

**"M7 and their representatives have discussed their proposals with the Parish Council in association with their promotion of both land parcels for allocation within the emerging Neighbourhood Plan Review."**

This statement is alarming as it refers to conversations with the Parish council and references an "emerging Neighbourhood Plan Review".

I would like to know which members of the council spoke directly with M7.

Furthermore, I would like to understand whether the council approved this meeting in advance, as this is mandatory for any councillor asked to represent the parish council when meeting any third parties. This statement clearly states that the NDP will be under review when clearly this was not the case and, if this was indicated, constitutes a due process violation.

I would like to remind the council that there was a meeting last year on the 24th of August to review all the activities and work to be carried out and prioritise these accordingly. The NDP was discussed, and a majority agreed that this was not a priority. It is important for me to mention that the only person who strongly objected was the Chair.

This statement from M7 and subsequent council discussions and agenda items regarding the NDP could easily lead people to suspect collusion between a councillor

or councillors of Highnam Parish Council, M7 and the landowner, Ed Keene, to influence the outcome of the appeal hearing or, at best, question the integrity and governance of Highnam Parish Council. There must be clear and transparent disclosure of all interactions with M7 and the landowner, and any "off-record" discussions must not be allowed to continue.

When this agenda item is discussed this evening, the council should vote in favour of the recommendation to defer any work on the Neighbourhood Development Plan until after the M7 planning appeal is heard or until next year, whichever comes first.

In addition, any further meetings with M7, on behalf of Highnam Parish Council must be properly agreed upon in advance by the council and clearly minuted.

- Smalls groups should not include councillors who have a vested interest or benefit financially.
- Can you ensure when the questionnaire goes out the questions are clear so the resident knows what they are answering. A. The draft plan is just a draft and if the council agree to update the community will be involved.
- I am slightly confused as the NDP 2011-2031 approved, why are we refreshing it? Q. What is the difference between Parish Plan and NDP. A Both plans are very different the Parish Plan was implemented when the S106 money from Lassington Reach was secured and illustrates how the PC was allocating money for projects. I.e. Oakridge footpath, The Dell, and the recreation ground.
- The last questionnaire was 2 years ago and was highly flawed, is dead in the water and insignificant. Can the next one is not loaded, have leading questions and the previous questions were dreadful.

The Chair replied to some of the questions:

- M7 Planning meeting was held before the submission. Two members of the Council meet Cllr C Coats and Cllr V Tustin Smith with full support and knowledge of the Council without prejudice. I refute ascertains of manipulation, the council act under of Best Practice. A considerable amount of work in putting the report and presenting at the 5 day planning committee.
- Cllr N Cook mentioned we all have interests of land and I have a relatively small holdings in the village. There are two other Councillors that have large areas of land with a strong possibility of interest, and we should be clear. I am not alone.

**1. To receive apologies for absence.**

Cllr R Keene.

**2. Members of the Council are invited to declare any interest they may have in the business set out below.**

None received.

**3. Request for dispensations, Declarations of Interest, Gifts and/or Hospitality**

None received.

**4. To consider planning applications received.**

Application 23/00414/FUL

Erection of a single-storey rear extension (part retrospective).

7 Lassington Grove, Highnam

Once again, a retrospective planning application, not sure what we can do about this, All residents to be reminded on the process and people are changing the village. We can only

refer residents to the planning process we are only a statutory consultee we have no powers.

The PC decision was to not object on the rear single storey extension however query the works on the garage as being permitted development if those rights have been removed.

Following comments. The property has a substantially sized garden at the rear and will easily accommodate the rear single story extension and do not foresee that the proposal will cause any overlooking issues with neighbouring properties.

The proposed floorplan suggests that there is to be works carried out on the garage. It is not clear whether this is to provide living accommodation?

"Separate price to be dropping existing ceiling height within garage to match adjacent bedroom floor level. Allow for making good to existing roof to suit engineer's design/details. Garage ceiling to be provided with fireline boards to provide 60minute fire rating between floors. Allow for rigid Kingspan insulation to suit joist thickness above garage."

The PC also understands there is a covenant on the land of the properties that permits building over a certain size? Can this please be taken in consideration.

## 5. July Meeting Voting and Recording

Council discussed correct process of recording votes and setting agenda items. The council have two committees Finance, Audit and Governance Committee and Planning Committee. Agendas need to be clearly written so council know what they are agreeing. Cllr Smith the full motion needs recording on the agenda, so members that vote are clear of the motion. Do we want to review the draft or write a new NDP?

Future of any committee minutes will be clearly set up to be discussed and what is being decided. Setting of agenda notes should be included if any of substance, clear motion to be included. Council agreed to include correct wording and description on what council is voting within in the agenda.

## 6. Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

Resolution of the NDP and Council to debate, agree and vote on the review of the current NDP.

Following the July meeting three councillors requested an extraordinary meeting due to Agenda July item 11. **Planning Committee update**. Council to receive July minutes and discuss any recommendations.

One recommendation was debated at the meeting 'updating of the Neighbourhood Development Plan'. Following voting on the NDP it has been raised that the voting should be declared invalid and noted in the minutes for the following reasons:

- Standing Order procedures & protocols were not followed.
- Councillor declaration of interest not declared – Fenton Estate.
- Conflict of interest.
- Chair allowing Councillor to discuss/debate the issue to be voted on in knowledge of Councillors interest.
- Councillor debating/discussing and influencing other Councillors prior to vote.

- Councillor with interest casting a vote.

The clerk confirmed as the agenda item was not specific on subject the council was voting that the voting of 'Updating of the NDP' was declared invalid.

The minutes made reference to including the NDP at the September meeting, however the extraordinary was called.

The resolution to be voted is to defer the update of the draft NDP to 2024. This would follow the M7 Appeal and the review of the Joint Core Strategy by Tewkesbury, Gloucester and Cheltenham which includes the updated settlement boundaries.

Obviously the views of the village will be consulted and the NDP process will be dictated by legislation and a debate will be on each category. The community needs to take control on how they see the future of the village.

Council unanimously approved by resolution the NDP will be brought back to council to debate, agree, and vote on the review of the current NDP. Council to discuss to work on a new plan imminent or defer commencement to January 2024. Proposer Cllr C Coats, seconded Cllr M Welch.

## **7. Village Link Inclusion**

Chairman agreed to circulate prior to publication the article for the Village Link and would include the discussion tonight on the NDP.

## **8. Residual Items**

- The planning application at Linton Farm for the Battery storage decision by the planning officer was permitted. TBC Planning Committee will be discussing this next week.
- Highnam Community Centre Trustees comprises of 5 trustees, 2 from the PC. The three trustees intend to stand down when the Old School is completed. Therefore, they will be a recruitment drive to find replacements. There is a lot to deal with as HCCT has charity status and details of the constitution needs addressing.
- Cllr B Badham will be away for September.

## **9. Correspondence**

- Work at the recreation ground has stopped, TBC are going to follow up and will update next week.
- There are no costings included on the plan of the recreation ground for the replacement of the fence as its rotten.
- EWG projects will start again in September. Jo Storey will be writing an article for the link asking for volunteers.
- Trees have been planted by GCC on the grass verge outside 9 Maidenhall.
- PCSO add their details in the village link. Action Clerk.
- Thank you for everyone attending tonight's meeting and remind everyone the next meeting September.
- Resident mentioned about kissing gates at Monkey Bank and the other two locations. PROW offered to install free of charge however the land owner refused. Cllr J Smith raised they were not asked and would approve a kissing gate.

- Cllr J Smith will be raising funds by offering a tea/coffee morning with scones for the Lassington Church yard maintenance and supporting Highnam Heritage and English Heritage.

**Meeting closed @ 20.08hrs**

**Signed.....**

**Date.....**

**Chairman Cllr Charlie Coats**

**Next meeting of Full Council: 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023**