



Watlington Parish Council

Parish Clerk: Kristina Tynan
Watlington Parish Council
1 Old School Place
Watlington
OXON OX49 5QH

Tel: 01491 613867 Email: WPC@watlington-oxon-pc.gov.uk

Minutes of the 'Remote' meeting via Zoom of the Strategy Committee held at 7pm on Wednesday 17th February 2021

Present:

Strategy Members:

Andrew McAuley (AM) - Chairman
Matt Reid (MR) – Vice-Chair
Ian Hill (IH)
Terry Jackson (TJ)
Tim Horton (TH)
Roger Beattie (RB)

Other Councillors:

Nicky Smallbone (NS)
Alex Basden (AB)
Steve Bolingbroke (SB)
Richard Dorney-Savage (RDS)

NPAB Members:

Gill Bindoff (GB), Tony Powell (TP), Keith Jackson (KJ)

OCC:

Steve Harrod (SH)

SODC:

Anna Badcock (AB)

Pyrton Parish Council:

Colin Ludlow (CL), Alex Woodeson (AW), Ben Scofield (BS)

Cricket Club:

Neil Boddington (NB), Owen Lewis (OL)

Football Club:

Keith Woolfson (KW)

In Attendance:

Jonathan Harbottle (JH), Robert Wickham (RW) – Providence Land
Rhian Woods (RW)

Officer:

Kristina Tynan (KT)

01/21 Apologies for Absence

There were none. It was noted that Rob Smith has resigned from the Strategy Committee.

02/21 Minutes

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the Strategy Meeting held on 15th December 2020 which were received by Council on the 11th January 2021 and to be signed as a correct record when it is possible to do so.

03/21 Matters Arising

There were none.

04/21 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest notified.

05/21 Membership of Committee

RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL: That Steve Bolingbroke becomes a Member of the Strategy Committee.

06/21 Edge Road

To discuss the following motions proposed by Matt Reid:

1) That WPC express its support for an option for the Edge Road to pass south of the ICC playing field extension and join with Pyrton PC in pushing for this option as part of the optioneering process before final public consultation. (We would of course work with the ICC Governors to specify appropriate safety mitigation measures).

AM welcomed all to the meeting and said that he will ask MR to introduce the motion, however, first he would set the scene.

At Full Council on the 9/2/2021 it was agreed that the Watlington Parish Council would form an interface committee with Pyrton Parish Council. The meetings of this committee would be official and minuted. It would have no decision-making powers but rather would bring recommendations to Strategy Committee and/or Full Council. It was also agreed that a special Strategy Committee meeting would be held to discuss the motions proposed by MR. Subsequent to Full Council MR withdrew 1 of the motions and amended the remaining one and this is what we will be discussing tonight. It is important to note that at this meeting we are not discussing the validity of the Edge Road which now sits in the SODC Local Plan 35. Also, the discussion tonight is held against the backdrop of the OCC/AECOM OAR which is due to be issued shortly. In terms of available information, we are not in possession of the full facts as we do not yet know the proposed route that OCC will be putting forward. AM said that we also do not know the ICC's Board of Governor's views regarding the proposed route. We understand that there are some concerns about safeguarding, safety and supervision if there was to be a split site school sports field. It was unfortunate that the Chairman of the ICC Board of Governors was not available to attend this meeting. It is understood that OCC have had discussions with both the ICC and its Board of Governors.

AM stated that in order to get through this meeting as efficiently as possible he would like the speakers to take no more than 5 minutes to put their views across and to also be prepared to answer questions.

MR said that most people are aware that the AECOM optioneering process had been in two parts: a Watlington centric part and a Pyrton and Shirburn centric part. After this, bilateral talks continued with Pyrton and some common ground has been found. This is the first opportunity to discuss issues and to involve other interested parties and stakeholders. MR said that although he had proposed the motion, he would be happy for any suggested amendments. There will be a public consultation in the summer on the OCC proposed route of the edge road and it would be good to have a common position prior to this.

AM asked Alex Woodeson (AW) to update on the current Pyrton's position.

AW stated that Pyrton's original position, as published in its Neighbourhood Plan, was that development within the Parish should be limited to a maximum of 15 homes on the Pyr1 site. Pyrton had opposed the edge road through Pyrton Parish because it necessitated greater development. This had been the position until the SODC Local Plan 35 was adopted which included the safeguarded route. The inclusion of the route was challenged at the Examination stage of the Plan however, the safeguarded route remained was confirmed by the Inspector. There is very little a small parish can do now that Sites Wat B and C have been given outline approval. So, Pyrton face a scenario that the edge road is coming unless by some miracle nothing happens. In which case the traffic would then use Pyrton Lane to get to the B4009 which would be a ridiculous alternative. Pyrton has not really changed its position; they still want to limit development and want to maintain a large open and green space between the parishes albeit now with a road factored in. AW said that initially the parishes were at an impasse, that this was understandable due to the differing priorities and needs that the parishes have. However, as it became clear that the facts were changing Watlington and Pyrton sought further dialogue last year and during these talks it was quite obvious that there are some shared concerns and some common ground. This led to more detailed meeting with AECOM and OCC, and it became quite clear that it is far better to have a combined voice. If we can agree on a way forward for both Councils, it would put us in a much better position. AW said that he agrees with AM that we do not focus on detail tonight but more on the broader outline of the desires of both parties. Good progress has been made on the routing with OCC and AECOM and Pyrton have seen the plans from both the Cricket and Football clubs and would like to explore these in the future but felt that this meeting had to happen first. He urged people to remember that this land is in Pyrton Parish and they, like Watlington, have NP that they want to uphold for their community and that as a Parish they have some ideas of how the land to the outside of the road should be used. In summary, Pyrton want to work with Watlington and agree a plan that can create something

long lasting that benefits both parishes for generations to come. We have only one chance at this, the road is big piece of infrastructure that will impact both Parishes. We want to maximise the green space and separation between the parishes with enhanced amenities and facilities for both. Pyrton would like the road to be as close to Watlington as possible for obvious reasons. It will become the new unofficial parish boundary given its physical presence. It also limits any further development as anything that lies on the Watlington side is liable for development in the future. It will be almost impossible to defend at planning given the building that will surround it. These houses to all intents and purposes are going to be part of Watlington. AW said he did not think this is a meeting for the minutiae of details but the beginning of a process to work together to ensure a joint powerful voice.

AM then asked Jonathan Harbottle (JH) from Providence Land to speak.

JH stated that WAT, B and C and PYR1 have now been approved by SODC and PYR 2 is the last link is the delivery of the Edge Road. JH said he is promoting WAT B, WAT C and PYR2. The land of PYR 2 is owned by a local family and he asked for support for a sensible package which can be agreed by both Parishes so they can obtain the planning permission for this site.

PYR 2 is about 14 hectares and they are looking to put 100 homes at appropriate densities and allowing for landscaping and these will be within 4 hectares.

The owners have confirmed that they are willing for the rest of the land (on the other side of the road) to be given over as a green space for amenities that will act as a buffer between the parishes. JH said Option 4 in the Cricket Paper seems to be a sensible use of this land, but this was a decision for others to make.

MR said that that there will be under met need for sport provision if the ICC was to expand and could this land be used for this? JH said that land will be transferred over and it would be their decision and they are agnostic on this and on who it goes to.

GB asked if JH could confirm how much land OCC wish to safeguard for a future extension to the school? JH said that he is unaware the exact area, but he will follow this up.

KJ said that there may be an increase in housing density and how flexible is the housing density especially in the area that floods, and it would be best not to have housing in this area. JH said that there will be 100 houses over 4 hectares, and this allows for good landscaping. JH said there would be sustainable drainage, and this would be a requirement. As regards lighting JH said that this can be picked up offline but asked if there were any specific concerns to let him know. RB said he was concerned about noise from the Edge Road to residents. JH said it depends on where they are built but the houses will act as a shield. RB stated that this area used to be full of cress beds and said he was concerned also about drainage.

CL asked how does these 4 hectares compare to the 2016-2018 Plan? JH said he could follow this up. TP said the housing density is in line with the response the NPAB received from SODC.

TH said he had concerns about the transfer of lands to ICC if the school was to move off site and would wish this land to be retained as recreational/leisure use.

NB, Chairman of Cricket Club and said he would speak for WCC and WTFC. He said that the size of Option 4 in their paper was 4 hectares and said they supported the motion raised by MR and would like some urgency to be placed on resolving this key issue. Policy C5 of the Local Plan states the need for open spaces contribution or land. Sports England support leisure development and a refusal to PYR2 would not benefit anyone as the land will only be transferred if development takes place. NB said he would be happy to be involved in discussions and would be happy to give his professional help at no charge.

TP said he supported the cricket plan which is very timely but overdue. It is important to move fast and there is an obligation for WPC to do an update and assessments on sports provision. This should go before WPC do an assessment as soon as possible. TH agreed that WPC should have looked at sports issues earlier and said he would like this to be strategy based.

NB said that there has been a shortfall in sports provision in Watlington which SODC recognised in 2016. He said KW has produced a plan of the minimum pitches WTFC would like, and it is good that WTFC is

being as ambitious as they can. MR stated that everyone sees a need for support for sport. GB said that there is also the issue of facilities in the wider area and reported that the cricket field in Lewknor is not being used. NB assured all that they have looked at all facilities in the wider area and have not dismissed anywhere, however one problem is that WCC have only 1 set of machinery and cricket scoreboards and it would be impossible to move them around to different sites.

CL said that PYR 1 which was for the care home has now come back with an application for 34 flats and Pyrton are keen to keep housing limited. He said more land for recreation would be welcomed and Pyrton have their own wishes and demands and some ecological concerns and it is important to find joint interests and pursue this. AM echoed CL comments and said that separation of the parishes by the green space is important to both parishes.

IH stated that he has been encouraged by what he has heard tonight from all parties and that it is best to deal with where the road should go and work together with Pyrton. He would also like to see provision for hockey facilities locally. RDS echoed this.

TJ said that it is important to mention that it would be inappropriate to design a road that bisects the school and to have children having to cross a road to access sport facilities. It was noted that we are unaware of the view of the ICC Governors. She stated that there is no wish to have traffic lights on the Edge Road and this would put off people from using it. GB agreed with these points.

TH said that the Strategy Committee need to look at sports provision at their next meeting. He also stated that the 1995 lease of the Sports field from Beechwood Estates also need to be looked at carefully.

AM invited Rhian Woods to speak. She said that she is not speaking as an ICC Governor but her personal view is that the school has enough land for its 700 pupils however OCC would like it to be a 1500 pupil school and Icknield Community College would have no influence over this.

After much discussion it was agreed that the Interface Committee as agreed by Full Council should meet and further discuss all issues raised at this meeting. Other people will be invited to join when there is a specific need on certain issues. It was also noted that this would be best when we have received the AECOM report.

TH proposed: That this motion remains on the table for further discussion. MR seconded this

Resolved: That the motion remains on the table and to be brought back in some form following meetings of the Interface Committee and once the OCC/AECOM plan has been received.

AM said that he thought this had been a very useful session and hoped everyone found it so.

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE METING CLOSED AT 9.10PM