

COMBERTON PARISH COUNCIL
The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on
Wednesday 14 October 2015 in the Village Hall at 7.30pm

Members present:	Miss A Bacon (Chairman) ^(AB)	Mr S Moffat ^(SM)
Councillors:	Ms S Higman ^(SH)	Mr T Scott ^(TS)
	Mr A Hollick ^(AH)	Mr N Taylor ^(NT)
	Dr J McCabe ^(JM)	Miss C Westgarth ^(CW)

In attendance: 9 members of the public, Mr David Thompson (SCDC Planning Officer) and Mrs Gail Stoehr (Clerk).

1. Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

- 1.1 To receive written apologies for absence and reasons
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Preston (unwell) and District Cllr Robert Turner (SCDC Planning Portfolio Holder).
- 1.2 To receive declarations of interests from councillors on items on the agenda and details of any dispensations held
None.
- 1.3 To receive written requests for dispensations for interests and to grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate (if any)
None.

Comments & observations from members of the public and County and District Councillor reports

A resident expressed concerns about the right-hand corner in Branch Road, and requested a large reflective mirror for visibility. Damage to tyres had occurred on two occasions due to the holes at the side of the road. The Parish Council responded that Highways and the County Council did not approve of mirrors. The Transport Working Group will look into the matter and bring a recommendation to the next meeting.

With regard to the planning application for Bennell Farm, the following issues and concerns were raised:

- Flooding, traffic issues outside Comberton Village College, and building in the Green Belt. It was observed that the Local Development Framework Inspector had stated that development should be on the Cambridge fringe.
- The publicity for the application and whether the plans had been on display. Reference was made to the public meeting held at Toft.
- The capacity of the sewerage system. A resident asked whether the recent works to the pipes would prevent ingress into the pipes. David Thompson responded that SCDC had consulted with Anglian Water and the Environment Agency, and would be looking at the Anglian Water capacity responses. The responses of the County Council and the Environment Agency would be available to view at SCDC by prior appointment. Residents expressed strong concerns at the capacity and the ability of the system to cope with the flooding and drainage implications of the development. There were particular concerns about Swaynes Lane, South Street and The Causeway. It was felt that the provision of the football pitches and any facilities thereon, would further exacerbate the problem.
- The Parish Council confirmed in response to a query that it had shared information and views with the village.

- The District Councillor was asked whether he opposed or supported the inclusion of the site in the Local Development Plan. He replied that he had opposed it, and explained the background to its inclusion.
- Submission of the application before the Local Development Plan was adopted. SCDC's views were sought and it was explained that the LDP was an emerging plan so weight could be given to some policies. A decision would be made based on the representations made, and the content and the weight of those.
- According to national policy, residential development in the Green Belt would be inappropriate, so the applicant would have to demonstrate reasons why SCDC should go against policy. It would be necessary to look at whether the site was sustainable or whether there were special circumstances leading to its inclusion in the emerging Local Development Plan. The SLAA had looked at the sustainability criteria and then included the site in the Local Development Plan.
- The timing of the application. It was explained that SCDC were duty bound to give weight to the emerging plan and there were pressures to provide affordable housing.
- The impact of the development on the village and rural roads, and the question of adequate infrastructure.
- Highway safety. SCDC will assess matters relating to this aspect.
- Parking for the Village College in the evening. Residents anticipated that it would be used at other times. Changing rooms had been included as part of the application.

A large mobile home/static caravan had been parked in Swaynes Lane. Concerns were expressed that it did not have planning permission. The Enforcement Officer will be asked to look into this.

A post on the map had broken and was missing. It was noted that a resident had carried out a repair.

The District Councillor's report was taken as read.

On a proposition by the Chairman, it was agreed to take Item 3.1 at this point.

- 3.1 S/2204/14/OL – Bennell Farm, West Street, Toft – Outline planning application for up to 90 dwellings, car park, football pitch and associated infrastructure works
 RESOLVED ^(Prop SM, 2nd CW unanimous) to recommend that the application is refused. (The RWG and TWG are to draft the points for inclusion)

Drainage and water supply.

It is understood that Cambridge Water has limited excess supply. It has been acknowledged that there was insufficient water supply for all the new developments, and allocation would be on a first come, first served basis.

Comberton already suffers from flooding with two events in recent years, as the watercourse is unable to deal with north – south flow.

Adjacent land is already under a foot of water for most of the winter. The back gardens of houses near the Village College are also affected. Kentings, and historically, sewerage problems at the eastern end of the village had caused entire gardens to be submerged.

Traffic issues and congestion at school arrival and leaving times and impact this will have on traffic and road safety in the Comberton village area.

Traffic survey data

The Parish Council has reviewed the traffic survey from 2013 shown in Figure 7.1 and 7.2 of the Transport Assessment. The Parish Council believes the figures shown for the traffic flow are inaccurate because:

- the application survey shows a throughflow of approximate 575 vehicles between 8.00am and 9.00am;
- the Parish Council's own traffic survey carried out on 12 November 2013 on Barton Road showed 746 vehicles, which is 29% higher.
- the absence of any traffic entering or leaving CVC during the evening rush hour (5.00–6.00pm) suggests this cannot have been surveyed during term time.
- since the traffic survey in 2013 CVC has built up its 6th form college, which has generated considerably more traffic and parking.

The traffic survey should be repeated during school term to reflect current flows before the planning application is considered.

Traffic congestion at school arrival and leaving times, with a number of school buses coming and going, makes the location unsuitable for a large development. Potentially more than 90 cars seeking to leave the village right opposite the school is unacceptable. It is already difficult to pass the school at peak times. The Parish Council disagrees that there will be negligible traffic impact, including on junctions.

Safety of children

Children attending the Village College will have to negotiate the egress from the development and children will need to cross the access road. No bus is available from Toft to Comberton Meridian Primary School. There is a particular risk to children from heavy construction vehicles during the construction period and timing constraints will be essential to avoid school times.

Cycling provision

The cycle path is very narrow at the Comberton end, requiring cyclists to pass only two inches apart. This is very dangerous. Whilst the proposals include making a path or cycleway on the section without a path by the bus stop, and covering up a ditch, even so the cycle path ends and turns into a footpath, so this is not considered a viable solution and not conducive to safety.

2.5 and 3 storey dwellings and blocks of flats are out of keeping with the rural nature of Comberton and the adjacent area

Ecological considerations

The site is an example of pasture land which has probably been untouched since Medieval times, and the nicest piece of pasture land in the area, which should not be lost.

Medical provision

Residents already experience problems getting medical attention in the evening, having to go to Addenbrookes or Chesterton. The new residents will have difficulty in finding a GP, given that Comberton is already full, understaffed and unable to expand. Basic services need to be in place first.

Development in the green belt***No need for additional football pitch as new pitches in Comberton on the recreation ground are now in use***

If the District Council is minded to grant planning permission the Parish Council would like the open space on the site for general recreational use rather than for sports pitches. Comberton Parish Council is concerned that, if the area were developed as sports pitches, this risks detracting from the existing facilities at the recreation ground.

Recreation considerations -

The developer of Bennell Farm to provide with regards to recreation in Comberton:

- Comberton Pavilion extension and refurbishment
- Programme of enhancement of existing sports pitches
- Multi-use recreation area, to include a goal and basketball hoop
- Additional fitness equipment
- Additional skateboard equipment
- Disabled parking and access
- Tennis court resurfacing and new fencing

Highway and transport considerations -**Relocation of the main entrance to Bennell Farm**

The proposed main entrance to the Bennell Farm development is almost directly opposite the entrance to Comberton Village College and the sports facilities. This will cause congestion and a road safety hazard as vehicles will be entering and leaving Bennell Farm and CVC in large numbers in the morning rush hour.

The main entrance to the Bennell Farm site should be moved to the west of the proposed football field where there is currently an access road to Bennell Court office complex.

Speed reduction measures at entrance to Comberton

Cars often exceed the 30 mph speed limit when they arrive from the direction of Toft into Comberton. This adds to the danger of the Bennell Farm entrance and CVC entrance and exits.

As part of the development there should be speed reduction measures at the western entrance to Comberton (speed cushions / chicane); and the 30 mph speed limit should be extended west from Comberton to the lay-by (approximately 200 m).

Cycleway from Bennell Farm to Comberton village centre

The Parish Council welcomes the proposal to install a pedestrian footpath linking Bennell Farm to Comberton village centre on the north side of West Street. This should also provide a safe cycle route, continuing the existing cycle way from Bennell Farm.

The proposed footpath from Bennell Farm to Comberton village centre should incorporate a cycleway.

Speed limit vehicle actuated signs

We welcome the proposal to install speed limit vehicle actuated signs at appropriate locations along West Street. In order to be most effective, these should show the driver the speed that they are travelling.

Speed limit vehicle actuated signs on West Street should display the current speed of motorists to encourage compliance with speed limits.

Other

- All affordable housing should be rented.
- The ransom strip should be excluded from the plans.
- The S106 money should come to Comberton Parish Council.
- There should be bungalows for the elderly which should be warden controlled.
- Allotments should be included instead of a football pitch.
- There is a need for additional parking.
- The lighting around the car park area should be sensitive.
- A bigger pumping station is required.

2. To approve the minutes of the last meetings on 9 September and 6 August 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 9 September be approved and signed by the Chairman. (Prop AB, 2nd JM, carried with 2 abstentions)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the extra-ordinary meeting on 6 August be approved and signed by the Chairman, subject to the inclusion of the full planning response. (Prop AB, 2nd NT unanimous)

3. Matters arising or carried forward from the meeting or a previous meeting for discussion or decision and to note the Clerk's report

The Clerk's report, which included background to items on the agenda and matters arising, was noted.

3.1 S/2204/14/OL – Bennell Farm, West Street, Toft – Outline planning application for up to 90 dwellings, car park, football pitch and associated infrastructure works

Taken above.

3.2 (4.5) Vandalism at the Pavilion – to consider quote and costs of installing grilles over the windows

RESOLVED unanimously, having considered the cost of grilles, to instead board up all the windows on the northern elevation. Other window is broken in the future are also to be boarded up (Prop SM, 2nd AH unanimous)

3.3 (6.2) Tree adjacent to 41 St Thomas Close – to consider tree surgeon's report

RESOLVED to accept Peter Oakes' report and also his quote for £120 plus VAT. (Prop CW 2nd JM unanimous)

3.4 (6.3) CCC Minor Highways Improvement Scheme bid – to consider and approve submission

RESOLVED to approve the draft bid for a zebra crossing as previously circulated for submission. (Prop AB, 2nd HG) The Police had offered their support.

3.5 (3.1) Ditch clearance behind the School Houses – to consider quotes

RESOLVED to seek quotations from three contractors for a revised specification to cut to ground level all vegetation, hawthorns, etc and clear out all vegetation and litter back to the fence line. It was noted that a mini digger would be required.

RESOLVED that Cllr Taylor should meet the contractors on site.

3.6 (3) Report and recommendation on meeting with CGM to discuss contract problems

RESOLVED to receive Cllr Taylor's verbal report and noted that CGM had been very apologetic that the contracts had not been completed.

4. Finance, procedure & risk assessment

4.1 To receive the financial report and to approve the payment of bills

RESOLVED to receive the financial report and that this be checked against the invoices and statements before the cheques are signed at the end of the meeting.

RESOLVED ^(Prop HG, 2nd NT unanimous) that the payments as listed in the financial report should be paid, and signed by the Chairman, plus John Boocock (Benches) £420.00, RPM (play equipment repairs) £216.00, and LGS Services (Admin support) £1548.34 (not £1291.70 as shown in the Finance Report)

PKF Littlejohn (Audit)	£720.00
CGM (Grass cutting)	£130.98
Connections Bus Project (Youth bus)	£1250.00
Salaries	£291.87
Shanard (Wooden posts)	£240.00

Credits including deposits for cleaning and pavilion keys, and receipt of the precept, were noted.

RESOLVED that Cllrs Griffiths and McCabe should sign the S106 agreement for 5 Long Road. ^(Prop AB, 2nd CW unanimous)

4.2 To consider the specification for the annual grass cutting and village maintenance contract including the land extension so that tender invites can be issued

RESOLVED ^(Prop HG, 2nd AH unanimous) having discussed the specification for the tender invitation for 2016 to 218 inclusive to amend the specification as follows –

The price should be quoted as an annual price to maintain all areas in the specification rather than by cut as in previous years.

Grass should be in all areas apart from the land extension at 2 inches max. Price for maintenance to specification.

Tree Group changes agreed.

Cllrs Griffiths and Moffat left the meeting briefly during this item.

The Causeway – to keep clear and weed free and the cobbles visible at all times.

Verges – to include strimming by the Village Hall gate.

Ditch – to be kept clear.

Ongoing maintenance of the ditch behind School House

Recreation Ground extension – as per the Agrostis specification

4.3 HMRC Option to Tax granted to consider the implications

RESOLVED to note that the option to tax had been granted and the Council would now register for VAT for the areas in the option i.e. the recreation ground and land extension.

RESOLVED to note that the Council was unable to reclaim any VAT from the date of the application until the option was granted which was in the region of approximately £8,000. This included the VAT on the special projects during the year.

4.4 Annual Audit completion and to consider the qualification

RESOLVED ^(Prop HG 2nd AB unanimous) that the Parish Council now had a better understanding and would take the Auditor's qualification in to account when making future decisions.

4.5 Pensions Regulator – automatic enrolment

RESOLVED that this would be considered further by the Employee Working Group which would bring a recommendation to a future meeting.

- 4.6 Arrangements for staff annual reviews
On a proposition by the Chairman, it was agreed to defer this item to the end of the meeting.
- Other
The Assets Review will take place on 14 November 2015. All members were invited to attend.
- 5. To receive reports and recommendations from committees, working groups and members**
- 5.1 Planning Committee report
The report was taken as read.
- 5.2 Recreation Ground Working Group report and recommendations
- 5.2.1 The Parish Council purchase a builder's bag of topsoil, sand and seed to enable Comberton Crusaders to fill in the rabbit holes in the recreation ground extension
RESOLVED to open an account with Madingley Mulch and to purchase a builder's bag of topsoil with sand, to be delivered to Cllr Scott.
- 5.2.2 The Parish Council purchases a container for storage including Comberton Crusaders' football posts and that the Parish Clerk obtain 3 quotes for the cost of a container (at least 26 ft in length)
RESOLVED to defer this item pending clarification.
- 5.2.3 The Parish Council seeks planning permission to install a container for football goalposts at the north side of the Pavilion
RESOLVED that the RWG should consider if a base is required before the quotations and costs are considered again.
- 5.2.4 RESOLVED in response to the correspondence received from Comberton United requesting a section of hedge be removed between the recreation ground and extension that the responsibility for the health and safety of the children rests with the Crusaders Club if they are their players or visitors and if they are spectators then it is the responsibility of the parents. Therefore no hedging is to be removed. (Prop CW 2nd HG unanimous)
- 5.3 Proposal that a Finance and Budget Working Group be set up
RESOLVED that a Finance and Budget Working Group be set up with the membership of Cllr Griffiths (Convenor), Cllr Higman, Cllr Bacon. (Prop CW, 2nd AB unanimous)
- 5.5 Complaints about litter outside the Post Office
RESOLVED that Cllr Taylor as Chairman of the Planning Committee should raise concerns with the Enforcement Officer.
- 5.6 Contact Editorship
RESOLVED to note that a new Editor was being sought and that the Council's members should consider whether they knew of anyone suitable to take this on.
- 6. To consider matters arising out of correspondence/communications received**
- 6.1 Resident – request that the vegetation is cleared from land adjacent to 15 St Thomas Close
RESOLVED to obtain quotations.
- 6.2 Comberton Crusaders request for a payment plan
RESOLVED to approve the payment plan as proposed. (Prop HG, 2nd SM unanimous)
- 6.3 Circus Tyanna request for permission to visit
RESOLVED to refuse the request. (Prop CW, 2nd HG, 1 abstention)

