

**MELDRETH PARISH COUNCIL  
UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF THE PLANNING MEETING**

An Extra Ordinary Planning meeting of the Meldreth Parish Council was held in Village Hall on  
Friday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at 7:00pm

**Present:** Cllr C Land – Chairman (**CAL**), Cllr CJ Fallon (**JF**), Cllr R Goddin (**RG**) Cllr A Keena (**AK**),  
Cllr R Searles (**RAS**) and Cllr A Young (**AY**)

**In Attendance:** Mrs J Damant (Clerk), Cllr S van de Ven (CCC) and Cllr P Hart (SCDC)

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**1. Apologies for absence:**

Apologies, due to personal reasons, received from Cllr Stewart, Cllr Lee and Cllr Pellatt

**2. Public Participation: See Appendix 1**

(For up to 15 mins members of the public may contribute their views and comments - 3mins per item)

**3. Councillors to disclose any Pecuniary Interests (disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) include interests held by a member's spouse, civil partner or similar) listed on the Agenda:**

There were no interests declared.

**4. Request for the following:**

**4.1 Eternit UK, Whaddon Road**

**S/1901/16/OL**

J Munnery, Footprint Land & Property Ltd

Outline planning application for mixed use development (up to 150 dwellings, public open space, and new technology plant); new car park and access for Sports & social Club and associate infrastructure all matters reserved except for access.

The Parish Council discussed the outline proposal following the public response.

Concern on the scale, it would result in an increase of 19% is there any way that the Parish Council would be able to see what impact this would have by looking at another similar situation?

It was also felt that Meldreth would not be able to physically cope with this development taking into account all the other developments happening in the area. There will be over 1000 new houses being built.

It was felt that rat running would increase and the traffic survey already shows this to be a problem.

The distance of the development from the main village area is too great, even though it is 2km and that people will walk it is known that they don't and this will increase traffic in already congested areas of the village especially along the High Street and the station. It was felt that a smaller scheme would be preferable, however the viability of a smaller scheme may not be agreed due to the costs.

Cllr Young enquired as to what will happen if this goes through, what can the Parish Council do to protect the environment.

Chairman suspended the meeting at 8.25pm

What is the environmental impact? Marley will clear up the site but what is the risk of asbestos, what monitoring will occur once it gets touched as it will blow towards the village?

Chairman reopened the meeting at 8.30pm

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) S/2228/16/EI. In general the Parish Council do not get notified of these reports which was released on the 5<sup>th</sup> September, however due to the postponement of the Parish Council meeting they were able to access this report. There has been no mention in the report on asbestos and its impact. Landfill sites ,already on the land, have been flagged and the Environmental Agency has stated this is hazardous though it can be dealt with. The Parish Council need to ask the question and get clarification concerning contamination during the construction process. The omission of asbestos in the EAI report is critical to this application.

Cllr Searles enquired if the Clerk could obtain the delegation report which Melbourn had done.

**Action: Clerk**

Closed 8.35pm

Q. Sustainability and severe traffic impact can be used but they appear not to carry any weight.

Open 8.37pm

**Recommendation:**

It was proposed by Cllr Young to recommend Refusal, this was seconded by Cllr Fallon all agreed. It was agreed to put a report together detailing all that has been said.

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**Chairman**

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**Date**

For the avoidance of doubt the only legally acceptable version of the Minutes of Meldreth Parish Council are those signed in Public Meetings by the Chairman. They are available for public inspection from the Clerk.

There were 34 members of the public in attendance

Cllr Young informed the meeting of the results from the recent survey whereby 540 replies were received either online or hard copy.

The results showed:

433 No

90 Yes

17 No opinion

The main topics on the survey were: Affordable Housing, Traffic, Transport, Schools, Health Provision and Environmental Concerns. 88% of residents felt that the community would not be able to cope with the development.

Cllr Hart introduced herself as the District Councillor and explained about the working group who had conducted the survey on behalf of the Parish Council. Cllr Hart also reported that she had been in contact with a planning lawyer Mr P Kratz. Mr Kratz believes that there is a 60/40% chance of this application succeeding as it is difficult to identify any major argument to stop it. The mandate is to increase housing carries more weight than material planning decisions. The only application, in this area, which has been upheld at the appeal stage is Foxton and this was due to the impact it would have on Foxton Hall. Melbourn's appeal was based on the visual impact however this was addressed by the developers and therefore was allowed; however it could be argued that the development in Meldreth would improve the visual impact. The material argument is vital, at the moment the Local Development Framework (LDF) is currently suspended which is allowing for speculative developments to be assessed and approved, which would not normally have even been considered under the old framework. The idea of retaining the site as an employment site could be the main material argument.

The area will be expensive to clear and will have to be done carefully but would result in a cleaner site than is presently there at the moment; however, the cost of doing this will ultimately reduce the percentage of affordable housing and could result in no affordable housing being offered.

Cllr van de Ven then introduced herself as the County Councillor and informed the meeting that she also represents Foxton and Melbourn. Cllr van de Ven reported that it is vital to make sure that all mitigations can be negotiated. Developers have to give a financial contribution known as Section 106 (S106) to SCDC to be used for the community to off set the impact of the development on the community, this is given to CCC for schools, highways, NHS for health/doctors and some to the Parish Council. Concern was raised about the number of school places, and there have already been meetings with the school representatives and the planning department, there will be a high level demand to expand the school. The issue regarding health and doctors surgeries is not an easy one. S106 contributions are paid to the NHS but it is their decision as to where it is best used. In many cases surgeries do not wish to expand this can be due to the cost of extending the practice too not being able to provide adequate health care professionals. The Highway department has already recommended 'refusal' as it stands, as the application does not demonstrate access from the site and clear footways.

S106 should be put together and include the footpath to the school via Fenny Lane to join the High Street along with other projects.

#### **Public Questions:**

Q. Why was the questionnaire done as it would appear this is a foregone conclusion and the more technical aspects were not taken into account.

A. The Parish Council believed that residents should have the opportunity of putting forward their thoughts.

Q. When Melbourn did this and residents didn't want it, the inspector overruled the residents thoughts. This does not seem to be a very democratic way of doing things. Can the Parish Council write to MP Heidi Allen and say that when it goes to appeal the inspectors have always backed the developers. Ms Allen should be aware of the role of the inspectors, the government wants more houses built so inspectors are being forced to go in favour of the developer in order to get these developments through. Melbourn were against this but it still got approved at the appeal stage.

Q. Have there been any appeals which have not gone through due to residents feelings?

Q. What was the value of S106 in Melbourn?

A. About £2 million it is believed. However, Meldreth would not receive this amount due to the cost of cleaning up the site and that Melbourn started this process over two years ago.

Q. How does S106 happen?

A. The Parish Council have to identify and cost schemes that they feel may be directly impacted by the development, footpaths, footways, recreational facilities etc.

Q. What can be gained if this goes ahead, however this was not asked in the questionnaire.

A. Marley/Eternit stated that the majority were in support, but it was felt that short answers with a comment if required was needed to address this.

Q. The development will have a major impact on the infrastructure which is not very good already. The roads and footways need repairing and this development will just make matters worse.

A. The Parish Council have recently had a traffic survey carried out in the village. Five areas were done all the information has been collated. Station Road/Whitecroft Road is the main flow. Unfortunately, the Parish Council has no authority on roads and footways, it is down to the Highway Department (CCC).

Q. Who is legally responsible for the pollution on site?

A. Cllr Hart stated that Marley is clearing up the site not the developer. What will be done is to get outline planning permission and then sell the site to a developer. It must be remembered that this is an OUTLINE application and is therefore open to change.

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will be replacing Section 106 (S106) once the LDF is adopted. Money will not come directly to communities it will go into a large pot and be divided between communities.

Q. At the moment children who are walking to Melbourn Village College go via the road whereby the footway going over the bridge towards Flambards is not safe, or they go via the woods near Flambards and under the underpass. Neither way is appropriate, however improving the footpath from the station would not address this as the children would not use it, what is needed is a better footway over the bridge and to have it extended so that crossing to the other side is safer.

Q. Could the Parish Council, under FOI, ask for the statistics concerning the proposed closing of the level crossing near Fieldgates, as it would appear that by doing this residents are being directed to cross at this junction at the bottom of the station bridge.

Q. If this goes ahead what will happen to Mettle Hill?

A. The Mettle Hill Working Party are still active, however much time is being spent on the Marley application at the present time.

Cllr van de Ven reported that the footway from the station to Melbourn will be lit by solar lights and that MP Heidi Allen is very much aware of the speculative developments and has already written to the planning inspectors.

The meeting was closed to the public at 8.20pm

# MELDRETH PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Mr. C.A. Land

Clerk: Mrs. J. Damant  
Parish Council Office  
Sheltered Housing Communal Rooms  
Elin Way  
Meldreth SG8 6LX

Telephone: 01763 269928  
E-mail: [parishclerk@meldreth-pc.org.uk](mailto:parishclerk@meldreth-pc.org.uk)  
Website: [www.meldreth-pc.org.uk](http://www.meldreth-pc.org.uk)

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Mr. David Thompson  
Planning Officer  
South Cambridgeshire District Council  
South Cambridgeshire Hall  
Cambourne Business Park  
Cambourne  
Cambridge  
CB23 6EA

13 September 2016

Dear Mr Thompson

## **S/1901/16/OL**

Registration Date: 25-Jul-2016

Application Type: Outline Planning (Small Major)

Parish: Meldreth CP ("the Council")

Main Location: Eternit UK, Whaddon Road, MELDRETH, SG8 5RL ("the site")

Outline planning application for mixed use development (up to 150 dwellings, public open space, and new technology plant); new car park and access for Sports & Social Club; and associated infrastructure all matters reserved except for access. ("the scheme" or "the proposal")

We write to record our strong objection to this Outline Planning application and we recommend South Cambridgeshire District Council to refuse the application for the following reasons:

### **Overview**

The application is in outline only, and envisages the development of 'up to' 150 houses on the site. There appears to be no proposal to include any affordable housing in this scheme, so the details of need including dwelling size and tenure remains to be identified and secured. It should be noted that there are 55 names on the Meldreth housing list. The site lies outside the village framework as identified in the (out-of-date) development plan; under the last local plan Meldreth is a 'group village' which would ordinarily allow no more than 15 houses on brownfield sites, and this has informed the character and appearance of the village for many decades.

If approved, this scheme would add over 19 per cent to the housing stock of the village of Meldreth and there would be a similar increase in the number of people living in the village. Such increases would in the opinion of local residents have a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the village and place intolerable burdens on the community and all aspects of infrastructure and services in the village, especially as the effects of the scheme would be imposed in a relatively

short time frame which would not allow possible improvements in infrastructure and services to be effectively developed in a timely and well planned manner.

In the course of this submission the Council will present specific points for detailed consideration but would strongly urge that overall sight should not be lost of an increase in size of over 19 per cent. It is highly unusual for a village community to be asked to absorb the social, economic and environmental consequences of increases of this magnitude and it is completely unreasonable to expect the local infrastructure and services to be able to meet this level of additional demand.

The impact on local services would in the Council's opinion be further increased to a level in excess of nominal increases of 19 per cent because the position of the site, which for families in particular is outside normal walking distance from the centre of the village and the railway station, would inevitably mean a disproportionate increase in vehicular traffic in parts of the village which are already heavily congested both in terms of moving traffic and for parking purposes. Traffic in the High Street around the village shop is already now often at a standstill and backs up in both directions.

The Planning Statement accompanying the application states the distance to be 1 km but this is a significant under representation, as the distance is 2 km or more from the site to the railway station and the village centre. On a related point, the Planning Statement refers to "good public transport services available from the proposed development including bus services..." but there is no public bus service from the site. It is well known that Meldreth's only daytime bus service, apart from the early morning commuter bus, is due to lose its County Council subsidy in April 2017.

Traffic issues include major congestion at Whaddon Gap on the A1198, to be aggravated by the development at Cambourne West, as well as major parking congestion in the High Street as a consequence of overflow from the Railway station car park and the local school and shop.

The recent successful appeal allowing 199 new houses off New Road Melbourn has a material impact on sustainability, given that Melbourn and Meldreth rely on shared facilities, particularly the railway station and local doctors and dentists. There is in particular no spare capacity at the railway station car park.

Apart from the obvious consequences of such a major increase in the residential footprint, there is also a risk issue of highly dangerous contaminants – notably asbestos – being released or distributed during any development, thereby exposing the village to obvious and unacceptable health risks. These contaminants are extensive and substantially embedded in the site. The Council considers that the applicants have not properly, adequately or specifically addressed this issue.

### **Surveys of Residents' opinions**

There have been three surveys of Residents' opinions, two carried out by Marley Eternit and one, most recently, by the Council.

The Council believes that its response to this proposal should properly and fully reflect the opinions of local Residents, following the publication of the proposals. Accordingly, the Council carried out a survey in August/September 2016 (Appendix 1 – Survey questionnaire). This was conducted on line and by forms delivered to every residence in the village.

Nine hundred survey forms were delivered and 562 responses were received. The Council considers that this is a satisfactory rate of response from which valid conclusions can be drawn. A summary of responses is attached as Appendix 2. In addition to responding to specific questions, narrative comments were also sought. A very large number of such comments were received; these have been recorded and they are attached as Appendix 3.

The results of the Residents' survey showed that 80 per cent of respondents did not support the proposal, 17 per cent favoured it and the remaining 3 per cent did not express an unconditional response.

The questionnaire also asked the important question whether facilities in the village could cope with the increase in the number of households envisaged in the application. 88 per cent of Residents did not think that the village could cope, 9 per cent felt that it could and the remaining 3 per cent expressed no clear opinion. Overwhelmingly, therefore, the Residents have no confidence that the village would be able to absorb the effects of an increase of this magnitude.

To better understand the concern of Residents, the questionnaire asked for opinions on key aspects of village infrastructure and services, under the headings of Affordable Housing, Traffic, Transport Services, Schools, Health facilities and Environmental issues. The full results can be read in detail in Appendix 2. Greatest concern, in excess of 90 per cent, was expressed as regards the impact on Health facilities, Traffic and Schools. It should be noted that both Meldreth and Melbourn Primary Schools are full (this is before account is taken of the additional houses in Melbourn) and similarly the local doctors are struggling with local demand. The Council is very concerned about the ways and means of actually increasing GP surgery capacity for a sharp increase in the local population recently approved. In the other categories (Affordable housing, Environmental and Transport services) levels of concern significantly exceeded 70 per cent.

Many of these points are elaborated in the narrative comments volunteered by Residents as part of the survey. These are attached in Appendix 3, which runs to 59 pages and serves as the clearest indication of the very obvious concerns of Residents.

For the sake of completeness the results of two further surveys should be noted. Prior to the recent survey conducted by the Council, Marley Eternit carried out two surveys earlier in the year. The first of these, in February 2016, took place as part of an exhibition in the Village Hall. 167 Residents recorded views on proposals to build on the industrial site. Only 40 of those taking part supported the scheme (then presented as 170 new houses) but 95 indicated opposition. A further opinion sought in the questionnaire produced the result that only 52 of the respondents were in favour of any residential development at all and 89 opposed it. The many narrative comments expressed concerns about the issues mentioned in this letter.

The second survey took place at an event organised by Marley Eternit in the village school in May 2016. Only 77 people took part in this survey, of whom 15 expressed their support in principle and 55 objected in principle.

The surveys organised by Marley Eternit were very small samples but the results foreshadowed the opinions now strongly evident after publication of the scheme.

In all three Residents' surveys great concern has been expressed about issues Residents feel will have significant and real effects on their everyday lives.

## **Sustainability**

The Council has carefully considered the need to support and achieve Sustainable Development and the extent to which the proposals are likely to meet or fall short of recognised dimensions of the economic, social and environmental aspects.

The proposals involve reclaiming a largely redundant industrial site, which has suffered long-term contamination, and carrying out a residential development.

From an Economic viewpoint the site would no longer be able to be used as a job-sustaining business asset but would instead accommodate residents who would be able to contribute to the local economy in other ways. However, this would impact on the balance of the community, as to accommodate such additional residents satisfactorily would require very significant financial investments in both local fixed infrastructure and in the provision of adequate facilities, notably health and education. The Council considers that in the absence of such additional investment, and with no certainty as to how and to what degree it might be secured either as part of the proposals or otherwise, the proposals as submitted cannot be shown to meet the economic role, which is a foundation of Sustainable development. Finally, the site could support more jobs than offered (which cannot be guaranteed by planning conditions) and a more sustainable option, which appears not to have been considered, would be a mixed commercial scheme with a smaller residential development. This would have a less unfavourable impact on village infrastructure and services issues.

From a Social viewpoint, the Council accepts that the proposals would help to meet a district-wide housing need but does not consider that the accompanying necessity of adequate local services can be demonstrated and that the proposals and their likely impact would not meet the social role of supporting the community's health and social well-being. In addition, the absence from the proposals of an affordable housing element would create a segregated housing development which is not a good quality for community social life.

From an Environmental viewpoint, the proposals are likely materially to increase traffic in an already challenged locality. They also raise the locally sensitive issue of dealing with decades of contamination at the site and the risks that this implies for the well being of local Residents.

The Council therefore considers that, by reference to all three of the accepted ingredients of Sustainable development, the proposals do not meet the criteria and should be refused accordingly.

## **Environmental issues**

The Council has considered the Delegation Report S/2228/16/EI, in response to a request for Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") under Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (as amended by the 2015 regulations).

The Council is surprised that there is no direct reference to Asbestos contamination and the risks that will arise from the excavation of a site contaminated with this health hazard over many decades. An EIA was not required despite the EHO requiring land contamination, construction environmental assessment and dust management plans which have not been provided. The village community is especially conscious of the history of the site and its long-term involvement with asbestos products, during a period when there was general ignorance about this particular hazard. The Council would have expected to see special reference being

made to what is now known to be a significant and potentially fatal health hazard. It should also be noted that the proposed development is 50 m from a hazardous landfill site which contains asbestos and produces landfill gas.

**Conclusion**

We write to record our strong objection to this Outline Planning application and we recommend South Cambridgeshire District Council to refuse the application.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J. Damant  
Clerk to the Council

Appendices

Questionnaire form for Residents' survey  
Summary of Responses from Residents  
Transcription of all narrative comments submitted by Residents