

**MELDRETH PARISH COUNCIL**

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**unAPPROVED MINUTES** of the Planning Committee Meeting held on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2013 at 6.30pm in the Green Room of Meldreth Village Hall.

**Present:** Mr S Hawkins (SH) – Chairman; Mr R A Searles (RAS) – Vice Chairman, Mr A P Burlton (APB), Mr J Chamberlain (JC), Mrs J Fallon (JF) and Mr C A Land (CAL)

**In attendance:** Mrs J Damant (Clerk), Cllr S Soond - SCDC

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**1. Apologies for absence:**

There were no apologies as all councillors were present.

**2. To sign and approve Minutes of meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2012**

Amendment: APB was present at this meeting. Following amendment the minutes were proposed by JC, seconded by RAS, all agreed. The Chairman then signed the minutes as a true record.

**3. Public Participation: Opened at 6.45 pm - Closed at 7.15 pm**

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

There were 13 members of the public in attendance.

Concern was raised about item 5.1 and the proposed increase of yards from 11 to 23. There is confusion as to what is a plot, yard or site. The land was originally divided into 40 areas of land/plots. The 40 plots were to be divided into yards of varying sizes. The proposed 23 yards match the same footprint as the original 40 plots. The numbering of the plan is also causing confusion as this differs from the current planning approval.

Concern was also raised that the present yards do not have post codes allocated to them. Worry was also expressed about changes in density and balance of population that would occur.

**4. 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 declarations declared.

**5. Request for the following:**

**5.1 Showman's Site, Biddall's Boulevard**

**S/2607/12/VC**

**Mr J Biddal**

Variation of Condition 9 of planning permission S/0177/03/F to allow an increase in the number of plots from 11 to 23

It was suggested by RAS that the parish council write to the planners with the information gained from the public and ask for clarification. Some of the proposed yards do not appear to be large enough. The application is very confusing and not easy to decipher. In a regular application there would be plans showing what is already in situ with what is proposed. The issue raised with the area at Mettle Hill concerning clustering still holds at this site, if it was fully developed it would result in an over development of the area. A vote was taken with all in favour to recommend **Refusal** with comments. See attachment 1.

**6. SCDC Decisions:**

**6.1 Land east of 104-108 High Street**

**S/2232/12/VC**

Permission granted for variation of condition 2 of application S/0958/10/F to relocate terrace of 3 dwellings

**7. Other Items**

There were no other items discussed.

**There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.30pm.**

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**Chairman**

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**Date**

These minutes are published and provided, and may be used, only on the basis that the user assumes all responsibility for any loss, damage or consequence resulting directly or indirectly from them or their use. 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

## Attachment 1

**Meldreth Parish Council's response to Planning Application No. S/2607/12/VC for "Variation of Condition 9 of planning permission S/0177/03/F to allow an increase in the number of plots from 11 to 23" at The Boulevard, Kneesworth Road, Meldreth by Mr John Biddall**

**Meldreth Parish Council resolved at their Planning Committee meeting on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2013 to recommend:**

### **REFUSAL with comments**

#### **Comments**

Meldreth Parish Council asks if the application above meets the proposal by the Inspector who turned down an appeal by Mr Biddall after refusal of permission for more plots in 2009. In his response (APP/W0530/A/09/2116344) the inspector said "In my view the correct mechanism for the consideration of an increase in the number of plots, and associated mobile homes/caravans, on the appeal site is by way of fresh applications or applications under s.73 or 73A of the 1990 Act (as amended)". It is our understanding that this application is just a request to vary the number of plots under Condition 9 and that this is not "a fresh application".

Notwithstanding the above we have further concerns on the application and its potential impact on Meldreth and all its residents.

(Within this document the term Plot refers to one of 40 parcels of land on the site into which the site was originally divided for sale and the term Yard refers to a unit for planning purposes allowing 3 residential vans/mobile homes and associated rides/equipment )

Meldreth Parish Council has stated on a number of occasions, including in addressing the SCDC Planning Committee and by letter to Mr Paul Sexton (18th September 2009), that a full planning application should be made so:

1 1. It would make clear which land is owned by Mr Biddall as opposed to that already sold to others.

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3 2. The process would have full transparency, particularly to those affected on site, who would presumably all be "carded".

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5 3. At the conclusion of the process it would be clear which plots have planning permission and which do not, making planning enforcement possible.

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This application did include a Certificate B list of 17 co-owners of the land in question but there was no plan showing, as we have requested several times, the current layout of the site and who owned which plots and which land is owned by Mr Biddall. However in November 2012 Mr Biddall's agent, Mr Thurlow, attended the public questions section of one of our planning meetings, at his request, and showed us a plan of their proposed increase in plots. While we made no comment on our position we took the opportunity to remind him of our requests above. At a site visit on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2013 Mr Thurlow handed our chairman a table (attached) showing ownership of the land using the plot numbers of the original layout of 40 "plots" and the numbers of the 23 "yards" now proposed (composite plan attached).

***NB Each time Mr Biddall makes an application he renumbers the yards. This makes the process of understanding the layout and associated planning permission for each plot difficult and opaque but also gives the residents the problem that they have not been allocated postcodes.***

While the plot ownership details are not part of the planning application, they have helped us in understanding the problems for the residents of the Boulevard (who attended our meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> January) and in addressing the new yards proposed.

There are currently, we believe, 17 occupied yards on site. We say "believe" because it was not clear for yards that had caravans whether they were stored or occupied.

The situation at present is:

1. The site was originally divided by Mr Biddall into 40 plots (50' frontages; 100' deep) for sale and numbered from the front of the site – 1-20 on the left and 21-40 on the right.

2. These were bought by families in various multiples and all were sold with planning permission and title deeds. There is confusion amongst freeholders as to whether planning consent for yards was per plot or per transaction.

3. However the various plans in the past have not reflected the separate transactions and this application in part seeks to regularise that by splitting yards that were bought separately. Using the numbering in the 12<sup>th</sup> August 2009 drawing (shows 11 existing yards and 2 extra required by that planning application) it is proposed to split yard 5 into new yards 6 & 7, yard 8 into new yards 10 & 11 and yard 11 into new yards 22 & 23. 4. Meldreth Parish Council would support these 3 extra yards, as this would regularise the current situation with no major impact.

4. We are however concerned at the application for new yards 1, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 & 17 on so far undeveloped land owned by Mr Biddall and another non-resident and the sub-division by the new owner of yard 10 into new yards 19-21. These are small plots in the main and although they could be joined together by new owners, each plot could (if given planning permission as yards) be occupied by 3 caravans or mobile homes.

To summarise our reasons for recommending refusal:

1. The proposed site of 23 plots taken with the adjoining 10 plot showmen's site at "Five Acres" would, with 33 plots and, potentially 99 caravans or mobile homes, dominate the nearest settled community of West Way (28 houses) and Burtons (24 houses) in contravention of government guidelines.<sup>1</sup>

2. It is said in the application that the vacant plots at A and B in the latest plan will not be submitted for planning permission in the next 3-5 years. We are concerned at the piecemeal approach for planning on this site which could lead to a very large site indeed. This application, if allowed by SCDC, or any future application to regularise the situation should be a complete and final application with a clear limit on the number of yards that can be supported. Houses in the countryside are controlled by tight policies where only replacement houses are allowed and this site is in the countryside and should similarly be subject to controls on the number of yards allowed.

3. Travelling showpeople are defined <sup>1</sup> as "Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows.....". However this site, unlike its neighbour at "Five Acres", seems to be a commercial venture to provide accommodation for members of the Showmen's Guild but without strong family or business bonds.

4. The letters of support added to the application, which we assumed were to indicate the need for extra showmen's accommodation in Meldreth, seemed to be for accommodation for transit or short term accommodation, although we were assured by Mr Biddall's agent that the occupancy would be permanent. Transit use would we assume need to be applied for separately.

5. The Gypsy and Traveller Issue and Options DPD identified the capacity for 6 plots (yards) on this site for a part of the identified local need for showmen's plots. We believe that those 6 plots are already taken but without planning permission.

We would be happy to meet with officers and to help to find a way forward.

Meldreth Parish Council  
20<sup>th</sup> January 2013

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<sup>1</sup>

"Planning policy for traveller sites", March 2012, Department for Communities and local Government