



## Queen Camel Parish Council

### MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2014 AT 7.30 PM IN THE MEMORIAL HALL

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**Present:** Chairman                      **Rosemary Heath-Coleman (RHC)**  
Councillors                      **Chris Bennett (CB)**  
   **Sue Cole (SC)**  
   **Angus Davidson (AD)**  
   **Andrew Hoddinott (AH)**  
   **Steve Millard (SM)**  
   **Patrick Pender-Cudlip (PPC)**  
   **Ben Turner (BT)**

**In Attendance:** County/District Councillor      **Mike Lewis (ML)**  
Clerk    **Laura Paul (LP)**

Members of the public 29

- 1. Welcome and Apologies for absence** – Apologies for absence were received from David Biggart (DB). LP reported that Carol Bond (SCC) would not be attending because she had nothing further to add at this stage but that she was in dialogue with Highways who will be responding to the planning application. She also advised that a document providing feedback from the Public Consultation Event has been produced and is being finalised ready for placing on the website. Simon Patton, Chair of Governors, was unable to attend due to work commitments, but advised that following the Public Consultation Event planning matters had now moved to SCC.

For the benefit of those in the public gallery who did not know members of their Parish Council, each Councillor introduced themselves and then RHC read the following statement explaining the position of the Parish Council in relation to the application, the format the meeting would take and a brief summary of how the school site was selected:

*Following standard practice, Somerset County Council is formally consulting interested parties about its plans for the new school. It has already done this with the school's governing body and part of that process was the public consultation on 9th October. It is now the turn of your Parish Council and the District Council, but I must emphasise, we are consultees only and it is Somerset County Council that will decide whether to accept, amend or reject the plans, but they will take into account observations made by the two Councils and also by the public – so if you as residents have not yet registered your observations we urge you to do so with SCC – and by 3rd December.*

*As with all Parish Council meetings (and in accordance with the law) the press and public are welcome to attend and will be invited to speak before the meeting opens. However, once the meeting is open only Councillors are entitled to speak.*

*Before inviting you to voice any questions, I want to clarify something. I am aware from a few e-mails that some have been wishing objections to be made in respect of the site itself and, indeed, even to some of the facilities proposed. You are at liberty to do that as residents but not here for your Parish Council to include in its observations. We have to keep these observations on planning matters relating to what has been tabled, we are not at liberty to revisit the how, when and where.*

*Let me remind everyone that in 2005, long before the dreadful floods of December 2008 which galvanised action, your Parish Council produced a Community Plan that identified the need for a*

*new school with the overriding reason being the safety of the children on arrival and departure. Three other key reasons listed were that:*

- *Sports were suffering due to the distance between the school and the playing field*
- *The classrooms were outdated*
- *The school was at risk of flooding*

*The site suggested by residents at that time was what has become known as the Medical Centre field. That was almost ten years ago. Interim safety measures included installing 20 mph limits in front of the existing school.*

*The Parish Council's Development Plan of 2009 still had that field as the preferred site. However, after a year trying to negotiate a sale SCC 'gave up' as it was clear the owners were not willing to sell at an exception site price.*

*We then had the drop-in sessions with the village model and the alternative site choices from residents were (2nd) behind the Playing Field (the Affordable Housing having provided a possible access) and (3rd) the field finally chosen. This final selection by SCC was due to the far more extensive archaeology found in the 2nd choice field (by the way the archaeology has also been found to extend into the Medical Centre field). It has been a subject matter of every Annual Village Meeting (and a few ad hoc Village Meetings) since.*

*It has always been **West Camel Road** and whichever of these three sites had been selected the parking issue would have been the same as would the issues relating to the road itself. The one safety issue that would not have been present is the road crossing but a Pelican Beacon should hopefully resolve that one. There is an Appendix 1 (Ref 141103) in the suite of planning documents on line and this sets out the background evidence regarding the sites considered.*

*Your Parish Council has and will continue to do what is within its powers, to achieve the best possible solutions. We have already written letters – on display, and have been in communication with most of the recipients. As I said we are here to speak about the plans on the table and I think this will be under four headings:*

- *Appearance and Materials*
- *Road Safety*
- *Parking*
- *School Hall/space for swimming pool*

*Please do not let the parking issue overshadow the fantastic achievement of those concerned in getting a new school for the children, present and future.*

*And let us all remember that safety is of paramount importance to the Head and governing body. They are, of course, responsible for the children once they are inside the school. Parents are responsible 'til then.*

CB advised that if he chose to, he would record the meeting at any given point, as was the right of anyone in attendance, and it was confirmed that every meeting is recorded by the Clerk.

PPC referred to a communication from a resident that he had been forwarded by the Clerk which alleged that the Council had a 'hidden' agenda and that one Councillor did not have the interests of Queen Camel at heart. PPC commented that although individuals have the right to their own opinion about the PC's quality or lack thereof, with regards to the discussion that would take part at this meeting it was not related to the performance and merits or otherwise of the PC but the merits or otherwise of the planning application. He added that if anybody felt that Councillors were not fulfilling their duty to the Parish then they had the opportunity to act on such feelings at the May 2015 elections.

## **2. Public Session –**

- A resident from West Camel Road raised concern over the size of the allocated playing field as it appears small on the plan. He wondered if there would be a consideration for an all-weather pitch that could be used all year round by both the children and the community. He also stated that his family felt that the inclusion of a swimming pool was of great importance and the location should be included on the plans.
- The matter of safety was raised with a resident asking what the point in holding the Consultation Event was if the concerns raised during that and written on questionnaires weren't going to be considered and wouldn't affect the submitted planning application. He added that there should be 30 spaces for parents to park during drop off/collection times

and more parking should be provided on site and asked who would be held responsible for safety if a child was injured.

- Another resident asked if there was sufficient room for coaches to turn right from the exit of the school.
- There was a query as to what the PC can do in real terms if SCC do not change the plans for parking. To which the response was very little. AH asked what the Parish would like the PC to do if that were the case. He suggested that if parishioners wanted the PC to raise the money to buy additional land for car parking then yes that could be looked at but the only way for the PC to raise funds for such a project would be by raising parishioners Council Tax through the Precept.
- A resident confirmed his support for the new school but commented on the present plans for the school being unsafe for the following reasons:
  - West Camel Road most likely to see an increase in traffic with commuters to Yeovilton from the 90 married quarters in Wincanton.
  - The unrestricted speed on the road until just before where the school would be sited.
  - The danger of the crossing if vehicles are speeding along the road.He felt that with sufficient parking spaces this would help to alleviate some of these issues.
- Concern was raised that any observations/objections made online would be lost but PPC confirmed any representations submitted online are shown on the list of documents associated with the planning application.
- A school Governor spoke to confirm that the Governors have always been aware of the parking issues and it was naïve of people to think that the Governing Body didn't understand the importance of finding a solution. He commented on the progressive gains made on the parking provision since the original plans. He advised that the Public Consultation Event was very well attended and that all feedback had been forwarded to SCC and that responses to the application online are helpful. The assurance was made that more parking options will be given consideration in future. He referred to the one way system that will operate in and out from the school site which is wide and that cars will be able to park in a herringbone style along its length which gives the possibility for up to 20 more temporary spaces. He shared his disappointment that so much effort had come from the community into complaining about the parking issues that the good points of the new school i.e. better teaching environment, larger play area had been forgotten. The question over the new site being less safe than the current site was queried and he confirmed that safety is a major consideration. He finished by reminding residents that the parking decision was very much driven by Highways and the feedback helps but that it is a difficult battle.
- A resident stated that the PC should object to the current plans. The parking will cause problems on West Camel Road and the PC need to consider how they are going to deal with future problems, as he felt that it would not go away. He stated it is not the doctors against the school it is Queen Camel against Taunton. He stated that SCC has not considered the setting of the school in their plans. He advised that he had suggested to SCC, as a compromise, Grasscrete is used in a suitable area for parking as an inexpensive solution to remove traffic from the road.
- Another resident raised a concern about the position of the crossing being too near to the roundabout as it was a serious safety issue for pedestrians who would be using it.
- Concern about how traffic and bikes will negotiate West Camel Road with cars parked along it was raised by a number of residents and it was asked if double yellow lines would be used to improve safety.
- A resident queried the size of the hall and the benefit of the school and its facilities to the community. He felt that the PC needed to make sure that the new school maximises the potential for best use by the village.
- The question was raised as to how to guarantee that the 'green belt' of Queen Camel will not be moved due to the site of the school.
- It was commented that other sites situated further away from the roundabout would have been much better for traffic congestion along West Camel road and on into the High Street.
- A resident also asked if decisions would be made during the evening and if so would these be the ones submitted to SCC.

## Meeting opened 8.19pm

Upon commencement of the PC meeting approx. 15 members of public remained. The following points were agreed for submission to SCC in response to the planning application. All points in bold were resolved unanimously apart from the item regarding herringbone parking style on site which received three abstentions.

### 3. **Planning Application 14/04945/R3C – West Camel Road, Queen Camel Construction of a New Single Storey Primary School with associated Play Area, Landscape and Parking**

#### **PARKING FOR PARENTS** (dropping off and collecting children)

- The Council is very seriously concerned about the inadequate provision for those many parents who can only get their children to and from school by car - thought to be around 50 cars at present arriving and leaving intermittently between 8.00am to 9.30am and then between 2.45pm and 4.15pm.
- The Council fears that without adequate provision during these periods many parents will park along West Camel road which is too narrow for on-street parking. This is likely to cause serious traffic congestion along West Camel road and roads leading to it including the A359 trunk road.
- The Council is very concerned that this congestion could endanger anyone on foot, including children and parents getting into and out of cars and crossing the road to get to the village.
- The Council is especially concerned about the effect this lack of provision will have on the Medical Centre directly opposite the school. Congestion on West Camel road will impact directly on the patients and staff of the Medical Centre and its effective operation. The Medical Centre car park and its approach road could come under intense pressure from parents desperate to park somewhere causing great inconvenience and even danger to patients (many of them frail or elderly) and staff, and possible damage to their cars.
- The Council is also concerned about the impact this lack of provision is likely to have on residents of nearby properties, including congestion, difficulty parking their own cars and increased danger to pedestrians and damage to vehicles.
- **The Council therefore considers that the developers should be required to assess the actual current and projected future parking needs of parents and make demonstrably adequate provision before planning consent is granted.**

#### **PARKING FOR SCHOOL STAFF**

- The Council is concerned about the inadequate provision for school staff who can only get to and from school by car, approximately 30 at present. Although many of them work part-time their work shifts frequently coincide so FTE calculations do not give a true picture of real need.
- The Council considers that with the addition of kitchen staff and a likely increase in school numbers more parking spaces are likely to be needed in future.
- The impact of insufficient staff parking places could have an impact similar to that of insufficient parking places for parents, as noted in the previous section.
- **The Council therefore considers that the developers should be required to assess the actual current and projected future parking needs of school staff and make demonstrably adequate provision before planning consent is granted.**
- **The Council requests that parking within the school be arranged in herringbone style which takes up less space and is easier to use.**

## ROAD SAFETY

- As noted above the Council is very concerned that insufficient parking provision for parents at the beginning and end of the school day and for school staff may have serious implications for road safety.
- The Council is also acutely aware that even with adequate parking provision the West Camel road is not safe for cyclists and pedestrians, it is narrow and many vehicles drive faster than the current 30mph limit.
- The Council is particularly concerned about the safety of children and adults needing to cross the West Camel road and about the danger to vehicles emerging onto the West Camel road from Old Farm Court, the Medical Centre, the proposed new school, the affordable housing estate currently under construction and South View.
- **The Council therefore asks that the following Conditions are placed on the planning approval:**
  1. **Improve visibility by removing the blind corner on the section of the West Camel road between the junction with the A359 and South View so that motorists have a clear view of pedestrians and cyclists on the road ahead.**
  2. **Impose a 20 mph limit on that part of the West Camel road where there is currently a 30mph limit, and on the A359 from the southern end of the High Street to the end of the 30mph restriction on the Yeovil road.**
  3. **Install pedestrian-controlled signals onto proposed new pedestrian crossing on the West Camel road.**
  4. **Conduct a comparative study of the current and new school sites to ensure that the new site is significantly safer than the current site.**

## APPEARANCE AND MATERIALS

- The Council notes that decisions in respect of colour, texture and form of materials have yet to be made.
- **The Council requests that it is consulted as part of the approval process in respect of colour, texture and form of materials, especially render, wood cladding and the roof.**
- **The Council further requests that consideration be given to incorporating some stone from the local Queen Camel quarry as a feature, possibly in a section of wall near to the school entrance.**

## SCHOOL FACILITIES

- The Council is concerned over the surface of the playing field and asks whether it will be adequately drained to provide use all year.

RHC closed the meeting at 9.40pm.

Signed:

Date: