

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee of Foxtan Parish Council

Held on 23rd January 2018 at 7:30pm in the Parish Council Office

Present: Malcolm Bore, Liam Elliott, Caroline Ilott, Ron McCreery.

Apologies: Simon Buggey.

Two members of the public were present – Mr Darran Kreit (Zettlex UK Ltd), and Mr Simon Somerville-Large (Laragh Homes). District Councillor Deborah Roberts was also present.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2018 were accepted as a true record of the meeting. This was proposed by Mr Elliott, seconded by Mr Bore and agreed unanimously.

Application S/4569/17/FL – Faraday House, 40 Barrington Road, Foxtan (Zettlex UK Ltd)

This is an application for construction of a B1 Technology Centre, with associated parking and external landscaping. Mr Bore noted that the development would be in the Green Belt, and would generate extra traffic on Barrington Road (it was remarked that the road surface outside the development site is very poor). He suggested that this application had been done in a slightly underhand way, since Zettlex had been given permission for a change from residential to business use in April 2017 (S/0326/17/FL), and had the proposals for this technology centre been made known at the time, it was unlikely that the application would have been approved. Mrs Roberts commented that due to the development in the Green Belt, the applicants would need to demonstrate that there were no alternative business premises in the local area.

The Parish Council recommend refusal, as the new technology centre would amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and the reasons for the proposal do not represent exceptional circumstances. The traffic generated by up to 70 staff will be a significant increase on the existing traffic on this residential road, and could cause noise and inconvenience for the neighbouring properties.

The Parish Council note that permission was given in April 2017 for a change of use of this site from residential to business (S/0326/17/FL), and wonder if that permission would have been granted had these proposals for a technology centre been made known at the time.

The Parish Council recommends that the decision be made by the planning committee, and that a site visit should be undertaken to see the effect of the development on the Green Belt. Should a decision be made to grant permission for this development, the Parish Council ask that use of the technology centre be limited to the current owners of the site (Zettlex UK Ltd), and that a S106 agreement be put in place with a condition that the company fully funds an appropriate speed reduction scheme on Barrington Road, to ameliorate the effect of the extra traffic.

Application S/0080/18/PA – 64 Station Road, Foxton (Mr Oguz Bastug)

This application is for prior approval for a single storey extension. It has been sent to the Parish Council in case there is any specific local knowledge that they can contribute.

The committee could see no problem with the application, so felt there was no need to respond.

Application S/0087/18/OL – Land off Royston Road, Foxton (Laragh Homes / Villers Park)

This application is for outline planning permission for the erection of up to 20 residential units, including affordable housing provision, open space and associated access, infrastructure and landscaping. All matters reserved except for access.

Mr Bore noted that the Parish Council have taken professional advice from a planning consultant, who will draft a response on their behalf. The view of the Parish Council, based on responses received from residents, is that the proposal amounts to inappropriate development in the countryside (since it is outside the Village Development Framework), and does nothing for Foxton since the application site will have no links directly into the village. The District Council can now demonstrate a 5-year housing supply, and so there is no reason for this development to be allowed, being outside the Village Development Framework of a Group Village. All access would be via the A10, which will increase the traffic on this already busy and dangerous part of the road, and even those who access the development on foot would need to use a pavement adjacent to the busy A10. The application claims that there is no relevant planning history for this site, but there have been 4 previous applications on this stretch of the A10, all of which were refused (2 at appeal), all on the basis of the danger of adding an access road onto the A10.

The Parish Council's response, written by planning consultant Philip Kratz, is given as an appendix (Appendix 1) to these minutes.

The Parish Council recommend refusal, for the reasons given in the appendix, and ask that this decision be taken by the planning committee because of its position outside the Village Development Framework.

An addendum to these comments was also submitted (Appendix 2).

Correspondence

None.

AOB

Mr Bore noted that the Parish Council had instructed planning consultant Philip Kratz to represent them at the SCDC planning meeting on February 7th re: application S/3566/17/FL (Thriplow Farms Grain Store). He has also been instructed to produce responses on behalf of the Parish Council to applications S/0087/18/OL (Villiers Park), and forthcoming application S/0117/18/OL (Shepreth Road).

The meeting closed at 8:00pm.

Appendix 1: Objection to application S/0087/18/OL (Villiers Park)

The Parish Council have carefully considered this outline planning application, and wish to object; the Council draws attention to the following considerations in support of its objections:-

1. *The Annual Monitoring Report, considered by the Planning Portfolio Holder's meeting on 11 December, considered the district's position on the housing trajectory and five year housing land supply. It is clear that the district now has a five year supply of housing land, and continued consideration of sites outside of defined settlement frameworks (such as this one) is simply not necessary. In the meantime, the corollary of the AECOM/Locality Housing Needs Assessment for Foxton, based on need and/or demand, suggest a housing requirement beyond existing commitments of only 9 dwellings for the period to 2031 (which also reflects the status of Foxton in the settlement hierarchy as a "Group Village").*
2. *The application is in outline only (apart from access), although this is to some extent obfuscated by the plethora of supporting details. An application of this type, on the edge of the village and potentially very visible, ought to be a full application to enable the visual and character implications of design to be properly assessed.*
3. *With regard to the access, the Parish Council is not convinced that the details would cause no conflict with the proposed improvements to the nearby railway crossing; this is not necessarily a matter of highway safety, but one of the impact on the convenience of existing residents and other road users.*
4. *Most importantly, the site has no appropriate connectivity with the remainder of the village; rather, it is in the nature of an isolated stand-alone development, on the edge of the village and with its only access being direct to a busy major road, with no natural pedestrian, cycle (or come to that, vehicular) connection with the heart of the village and the services and facilities that are there; the necessary route to those - joining the A10, and skirting the edge of the village – accentuates the isolation of this proposal from the remainder of the community. The Parish Council feels that this epitomises bad planning, and reinforces the unsuitability of the site for providing such a village housing development.*
5. *In support of its objection, the Parish Council would draw attention to the failure to comply with:-*
 - 5.1 *Development plan policies DP/1: Sustainable Development, DP/2: Design of New Development, DP/3: Development Criteria, DP/7: Development Frameworks and NE15 Noise Pollution (which can only be addressed by an incongruous acoustic fence on the road frontage); and*
 - 5.2 *NPPF paragraphs 17 (core planning principles), 56 (requiring good design), and 64 (refusing poor design).*

Appendix 2: Additional information sent to SCDC re: S/0087/18/OL (Villiers Park)

The Planning Statement included in the application, submitted by Bidwells states "There are no historic Applications that have been submitted or determined in respect of this Site." this is incorrect and misleading.

*A planning application **S/0255/89/F**, specifically for a new access at the same location as that proposed by this application, was refused and the subsequent Appeal **APP/W0530/A/89/123288** was dismissed.*

*A more recent application **S/2294/13/FL**, dated 28 October 2013 included access onto the A10 albeit on the opposite side of the road but within 50 metres of the proposed access was refused. The subsequent Appeal **APP/W0530/A/14/2214899** was dismissed, the Inspector included traffic safety issues as a contributory factor in the decision.*