



WALSHAM le WILLOWS PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday 8th March 2022 commencing at 7.00 p.m. in the Priory Room.

[Pending formal approval, these minutes have been informally approved. Any further corrections will be proposed & minuted at the next meeting]

PRESENT: Cllrs. Arbon, Bartholomew, Belson, Kinnair, Mecrow, Roberts & Winch. Also in attendance: 30 members of the public, including 9 Causeway residents, and Mr Richard Martineau (applicant) and Mr John Martineau.

1. **OPENING** – The Chairman opened the meeting by setting out how the business for meeting would be conducted and explaining the Parish Council's role in the planning process and the limits to its influence.
2. **APOLOGIES** -
 - a) There were no applicable apologies for absence
 - b) Apologies of absence were noted from District Councillor Meyer.
3. **DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY & NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS**
 - a) To receive declarations of pecuniary, local non-pecuniary interest(s) incl. personal interests in items on the agenda to include any gifts of hospitality - none were none declared
 - b) To receive declarations of lobbying for planning matters on the agenda – none were declared.
 - c) To receive requests for dispensations - none had been received prior to the meeting.
4. **PUBLIC FORUM** -
 - a) Members of the public present were invited to put questions about the applications on the agenda to the Parish Council and the applicant so that the Parish Council could get a feel for reasons for objections to be taken into account in the Parish Council comment on the applications. There were many concerns raised among them:
 - Errors and contradictions in a 'vague' application
 - Lack of detail in the application making meaningful comment on the proposals very difficult. There was a strong feeling that more detail is required on the precise type of storage proposed so that meaningful assessments could be made about traffic impacts, limited pavement space alongside the road, environmental impacts (light and noise), the use of the yard for village events, the implications of employees on site etc. It was felt that as it stands once the detail is known it will be too late.

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- The impact on the unique and special importance to the village of The Causeway, its street scene and close proximity to grade II buildings and the grade I listed St Mary's Church.
- The fact that a main route out along The Causeway has one way passing only.
- The application for Class B8 storage which is for 'industrial locations' – it was suggested that this can include large distribution operations and all that entails.
- The 'policing' of the lease once B8 storage is permitted and enforcement of any conditions and the fact that subsequent usage changes would be easier once class B8 had been granted and very much depended on the particular tenants and how effectively lease agreements are enforced. It was asked what the enforcement mechanism would be. The Chair suggested that this would be by the community reporting any breach to the landlord or the Parish Council for appropriate action under the terms of the lease or by the enforcement of planning conditions.
- The fear that once B8 storage is permitted if the site is then sold, the local community, through the planning process, would have no further say on how activity on the site may evolve under different ownership.
- The concerns about adding to existing lorry traffic much of which should not be using the roads through Walsham if highways signage was obeyed.
- There were concerns about the usual methods of notification of planning application as required by law. These were clarified and are not under the control of the Parish Council.

During the public forum the applicant Mr Martineau was able to clarify some questions but did acknowledge that he had not actually read the application as this was being handled by appointed architects, but:

- that the intention is to preserve the barns by ensuring they are utilised whilst also possibly providing some employment (this point was also made by a member of the public)
- that the barns are actually used at the moment as a fertilizer store for which is it accessed twice a year by large articulated vehicles
- the current strict hours of use would be stipulated in tenancy agreements
- the yard would remain accessible for use for village events

The Chair asked for suggestions from the public as to alternative uses, among these were, restaurant, café, antiques centre, farm shop(s), garden centre. It was pointed out that many of these would involve considerable traffic movements, possibly more than the storage uses would generate.

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Cllr Mecrow reminded the meeting that the road from Badwell Ash onto the Causeway and Summer Road is a designated as lorry route. He also reiterated the limited role and influence that the Parish Council has in the planning process as it is not the final decision maker.

The Clerk advised that neighbours can have as much influence as the Parish Council in this process and the views of the officers of the planning authority (e.g., a highways officer), will usually carry more weight than either the Parish Council or neighbours. (refer to village website: <https://www.walsham-le-willows.org/explore/governance-community/parish-council/#planning-applications>)

It was also asked how people can comment if they are not online. The Clerk will put the postal address for comments on the village website but also will post this on the village notice board. Parishioners are of course also welcome to contact the Clerk for any such information.

- b) Representations from members of the public present relating to Walsham le Willows in general – there were none.

The chair closed the public forum at 20:10 to allow Councillors to consider the representations made and formulate a comment for submission. No members of the public remained for this part of the meeting.

5. PLANNING MATTERS -

- a) DC/22/00637 Proposal: Full Planning Application – Change of Use of agricultural barns for B8 (Commercial Storage). Location: Church Farm, The Causeway, Walsham Le Willows, Suffolk IP31 3AB
- b) DC/22/00640 Proposal: Listed Building Consent - Works to facilitate use of barns for commercial storage (B8). Location: Church Farm, The Causeway, Walsham Le Willows, Suffolk IP31 3AB

The Chair called for an indication as to how the Parish Council should comment on the planning application. The decision was to object. The Parish Council further discussed the basis of the objection and Cllr. Belson offered to draft a comment of objection for final approval at the meeting on 9th March 2022, before submission by the Clerk.

6. CLERK & COUNCILLOR REPORTS

- a) To receive any matters of concern for noting only. There were none.

Meeting closed at 21:05

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