

MINUTES of the Planning Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 13th January 2025 at Forest & Sandridge Primary School, Cranesbill Road, Melksham, SN12 7GN at 7:00pm

Present: Councillors Richard Wood (Committee Chair), John Glover (Council Chair), David Pafford (Council Vice-Chair), Alan Baines (Committee Vice-Chair), Peter Richardson, and Mark Harris.

Officers: Marianne Rossi (Finance & Amenities Officer).

Miriam Zaccarelli (Officer support)

Wiltshire Councillors Phil Alford (Melksham Without North and Shurnhold) and Nick Holder (Bowerhill- from 7.45pm)

366/24 Welcome & Housekeeping:

Councillor Wood welcomed everyone to the meeting. As this was a new meeting venue, he explained the evacuation procedure in the event of a fire. The housekeeping message in relation to the Zoom chat feature was read out. Everyone present was made aware that the meeting was being recorded and would be published on YouTube following the meeting and deleted once the minutes were approved.

Councillor Wood advised that the Clerk was not at the meeting due to a personal matter.

367/24 Apologies:

There were no apologies as all members of the Planning Committee were present.

It was noted that as Councillor Chivers had resigned from the parish council, Councillor Franks was no longer a substitute on the Planning Committee. Although Councillor Franks was present at the meeting, he understood that he would not be able to vote on any matters.

368/24 Declarations of Interest: None

369/24 Dispensation Requests for this Meeting: None

370/24 Parish Council standing dispensations relating to planning applications:

It was noted that the parish council has a dispensation lodged with Wiltshire Council to deal with S106 agreements relating to planning applications within the parish.

371/24 To consider holding items in Closed Session due to confidential nature:
There were no confidential matters that needed to go into closed session.

372/24 Public Participation:

There were 11 members of the public present at the meeting and two members of the public on Zoom. Councillor Wood explained the procedure for public participation.

Wiltshire Councillor Alford wished to speak on the application for land off Woodrow Road. He advised that as the Wiltshire Councillor for the area where this application was located, he had “called it in” to the Wiltshire Council Planning Committee for a decision. He wished to draw members' attention to the response from the Wiltshire Council Sustainable Transport department, which he thought was quite damning, relating to a number of concerns about this development. Councillor Alford has raised a number of concerns with planning officers, which are as follows:

- The proposed site access is opposite the existing right of way coming from Savernake Avenue onto Woodrow Road. There is no footpath on this side of the road, meaning that people coming out of this right of way opposite the site access would have to cross over the road opposite the junction in order to access a footpath. In addition, the absence of a footpath on the opposite side of the road to the proposal would mean that residents would have to cross over the road to access a footpath and would be in direct contact with vehicles turning in and out of the development.
- There is only one access point into the development.
- This site is not allocated in the existing Wiltshire Local Plan, nor is it allocated in the draft Local Plan, which is currently with the planning inspector.

Councillor Alford also wished to give an update on the status of the draft Wiltshire Local Plan; as stated above, it is currently with the planning inspector, and Wiltshire Council is estimating that they will be in a position to adopt it around September time.

It was noted that the two members of the public on Zoom did not wish to speak.

Councillor Wood asked whether any members of the public wished to speak on proposals for the Land off Woodrow Road application.

Resident 1:

Resident 1 explained that they were a resident of Woodrow Road and lived close to the proposed development. They had submitted comments to Wiltshire Council against the travel plan on this proposal. In particular, they raised the following:

- There is no mention of the Sustrans National Cycle Route, which Woodrow Road is part of. This is route 403 from Semington to Marlborough with many cyclists up and down the route.
- There are a number of horse stables on Lower Woodrow Road which has not been mentioned in the travel plan.

Resident 1 explained that there were a number of other comments submitted to Wiltshire Council in relation to the missing information from the travel plan.

Resident 2:

Resident 2 explained that they were in attendance at the meeting in relation to the Woodrow Road application but felt that their comments related to the proposal for the A3102 application as well.

- All the development is on the east side of town, and there are concerns about traffic management. Everything will be going down New Road and out towards Lacock, which the resident felt had not been adequately considered within these proposals.

Councillor Wood asked whether any members of the public wished to speak on proposals for the Land north of the A3102 application.

Resident 3:

Resident 3 explained that they had attended the Melksham Town Council meeting to listen to discussions in relation to the Woodrow Road and A3102 New Road Farm applications. All of the objections about the Woodrow development in terms of sustainable development, impact on traffic, the environment, and the capacity of the local infrastructure apply to the A3102 application. The only material difference that they could see between the applications was that one was allocated in the Wiltshire Local Plan, and the other one isn't. Other than that, all of the other issues still apply, and until they can be mitigated to lessen the impact, this application should be objected to.

It was noted that Melksham Town Councillor Ellis was in attendance at the meeting to listen to discussions on the A3102 New Road Farm application to ensure that both the town and parish councils' comments relating to the application align with each other.

Resident 4:

A town resident was in attendance at the meeting and wished to speak on the proposal for the A3102 New Road Farm application. They explained that they had looked at the flood maps, in particular with regard to Linnet Lane, which is opposite the development. Linnet Lane is identified on flood plans as high risk for surface water flooding. He explained that looking at the flood plans, it identified that part of the road from Eastern Way towards New Road Farm had a high flood risk for surface water flooding.

The resident felt that the idea of having a nursery within the development was good; however, felt that with a building of that size it may increase the risk of surface water flooding happening in that area due to the flood risk identified on the mapping. They felt that it would probably be better for a building of that size to be further inside of the development.

373/24 Planning Applications: The Council considered the following applications and made the following comments:

- a) [PL/2024/10674](#): **Land off Woodrow Road, Woodrow Road, Melksham, SN12 7AY:** Outline application with all matters reserved except for access for the development of up to 70 dwellings, open space, ecological enhancements, play space, associated infrastructure (including drainage structures and works to the public highway), access, parking, servicing and landscaping. Applicant: Waddeton Park Ltd.

Councillor Baines explained that this was a speculative development proposal. It is not in the current or upcoming Wiltshire Local Plan, nor is it in the adopted Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 1 or the reviewed submission version Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2, which is out for consultation at Regulation 16. He feels that there are many reasons why the original refusal should be repeated.

- The width of Woodrow Road at the point of the proposed junction is 5 meters, with the estate road into the site being 5.5 meters wide. A swept path analysis has been undertaken for refuse vehicles, which demonstrates that this access is impossible without vehicles making the manoeuvre before it gets to the give way line, which poses a highway risk. If this proposal did go ahead, it would be very difficult for construction traffic to use an entrance off of a 5-meter-wide road. When the farmer attends the land to harvest their crop, they adopt a one-way system and then take the loaded trailers down Lower Woodrow Road and along New Road because they are unable to negotiate the route into town. This was due to the narrowness of the road and constantly parked vehicles making it impossible. He questioned how the developer would be able to construct 70 dwellings on this land with the current access..
- There are a number of services that would have to either be relocated or protected in order to create the access. Notably, a foul sewer that serves eight properties in the parish which runs diagonally across the entrance land. There is also BT infrastructure, cable communication infrastructure, a highway gully, a highway surface water carrier drain, and a gas main, which all would either need to be relocated or protected. There is also a connecting electricity cable from the substation to the overhead line that runs the length of Woodrow Road.
- Having lived opposite this site for many decades, it has never been as waterlogged as it is now. Councillor Baines provided an example of this in the fact that the farmer had harvested last summer's crop, ploughed the land, and rotavated it, but when they came back to reseed the land, they immediately got stuck, which has resulted in the land still not being seeded due to it being extremely wet for the farmer to get onto the land at this present time. There is a suggestion from the developer that in relation to site drainage, highway soakaways will be adopted by Wiltshire Council. Councillor Baines explained that the water does not soak away and in fact stands on the land continuously. Furthermore, introducing surface water drainage on this land will increase the

runoff into an abandoned waterway, which is where the developers have proposed for the water to go. It is felt that this will create flooding elsewhere in the area.

- Within the transport assessment there are a number of errors, most notably the suggestion that the 271-bus service goes from Church Lane through to Devizes, which is not the case. This bus service operates between Bowerhill and Bath, except for two evening services that run through to Devizes.
- There is a suggestion that there will be a pedestrian link into the Forest estate through to Methuen Avenue. The documentation also talks about the existing rights of way, MELK5 and MELW66, as Hardie Walk, which is completely incorrect. Hardie Walk resides between Spa Road and Shelley Gardens, which is right at the other end of town, nowhere near this proposed development.
- The travel plan also has inaccuracies; for example, in the introduction it details that the development would have 'up to 70 properties but then references 'up to 80 properties,' so this is contradictory. There are a number of other errors in the document, which casts doubt over the accuracy of the details provided. He had noted that in the comments submitted by Active Travel, they had identified all the deficiencies from a transport point of view on this proposal, which he endorsed.
- He highlighted that a lot of the information that has been provided in this application is from the previous refused application submitted in 2016

As a result, like with the original application, which was refused, he felt that the parish council should strongly object to this application.

Councillor Pafford agreed with the points raised and explained that this application was an opportunistic application. He has identified this in the introduction of the documentation, where the developers have detailed that they are making this application because Wiltshire Council is unable to demonstrate that they have a four-year housing land supply. It also detailed that the emerging Local Plan and Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 had no weight due to them not being submitted. This is no longer the case, with both being submitted to their next stages before Christmas and prior to the update of the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework). In the NPPF it makes it clear that the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan processes are fully valid, and therefore, they carry considerable weight. In the proposals, the developers state that there is a shortfall of houses in Wiltshire, but this is not the case in Melksham. In fact, the housing numbers identified in the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan are more than sufficient to meet the requirements that Wiltshire Council needs to meet. While he appreciates that there needs to be more, this needs to be plan-led development, not speculative like this application.

He feels that the traffic issue already highlighted is very important and wishes to highlight that the traffic is likely to go one of two ways: north up Woodrow Road via Lacock, which will increase the level of traffic travelling through Lacock. It should

also be noted that vehicles would have to cross Lacock Bridge, which in wet weather is quite often closed. The other way is south down Forest Road, where there are already existing parking and traffic issues as previously described. To this end it is not a suitable site. He wished to draw members attention to the fact that, according to the plans, the developer details that they are planning to build on approximately a third of the site, so he wished for members to be aware that if this application is not objected to, there will most certainly be another application on this site in the future, which is why this needs to be objected to.

Councillor Glover raised concerns about the fact that there were many inaccuracies and errors in the transport plan that may be carried forward in all of the other documentation submitted. In particular, he was concerned that there were so many mistakes shown in one simple plan, which suggests that the more complicated plans have just as many. Councillor Wood echoed this and advised that the transport plan was a desktop exercise, which doesn't mean that people who have compiled the document have physically attended the area.

Councillor Glover highlighted that in the application the developers refute all requests for contributions and believe that in the instance where this application is approved the parish council should ask for all contributions as asked for previously as nothing has changed. He noted that there has been no request from the NHS for a contribution towards patient care.

Councillor Richardson highlighted that detailed in the trip analysis, it talks about 100,000-plus journeys generated by the development within a year, which is a significantly large amount of additional traffic. In addition, if this proposal went ahead, it would lead to a loss of open countryside and have an impact on the landscape.

Comments: The parish council objects to this application on the following grounds:

- The proposal is speculative development and is contrary to the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy and the adopted Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan as well as the submitted Wiltshire Local Plan and Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2.
- The development is outside the Settlement Boundary of Melksham & Bowerhill, is development in the open countryside and will have a landscape impact.
- The site has surface water flooding and is waterlogged for large periods of the year with standing water. The proposal to introduce surface water drainage on site will take the runoff into a nonfunctional abandoned watercourse, which will increase the risk of flooding in other areas.
- The site access to the development is inadequate and would make it impossible for the construction vehicles to access, especially as the width of Woodrow Road at the point of the junction is 5 metres with the access road to the site being 5.5 metres in width. The swept path analysis for refuse vehicles proves that vehicles had to start before they reach the Give Way sign.
- There are a number of services that would have to either be relocated or protected in order to create the access. Notably, a foul sewer that serves eight properties in the parish which runs diagonally across the entrance land. There is also BT infrastructure, cable communication infrastructure, a highway gully, a

highway surface water carrier drain, and a gas main, which all would either need to be relocated or protected. There is also a connecting electricity cable from the substation to the overhead line that runs the length of Woodrow Road.

- This proposal will greatly increase the traffic coming in and out of the area. The traffic out of this development is either going to travel north up Woodrow Road via Lacock, in turn creating more traffic through the village of Lacock or south down Forest Road, where there are already existing parking and congestion issues. The route via Lacock goes via a mediaeval bridge that floods and is frequently closed. The trip generator predicts 100,000 journeys generated by the development per year.
- There are a number of errors and inaccuracies detailed in the travel plan; in particular, it mentions the public rights of way MELK5 and MELW66 being Hardie Walk, which is incorrect. In addition, the introduction of the travel plan states that the proposal was for 'up to 80 properties' but then goes on to say 'up to 70 properties' everywhere else, so it is contradictory. The bus route detailed in the documentation is also incorrect as it details that the 271 service runs to Devizes. This bus service operates between Bowerhill and Bath, except for two evening services that run through to Devizes.

Members are concerned about the number of errors noted in the travel plan and question the accuracy of details provided in all of the other documentation submitted as part of this application.

The parish council would like to reiterate the comments they made in 2016 with regard to this planning application which were as follows:

- The width of Woodrow Road at the point of the proposed junction is 5 metres, with a suggestion that the road to the north will be reduced by 0.6m so that visibility splays are obtained. The access road into the site at 5.5 metres wide would therefore be detrimental to highway safety.
- The only footway on Woodrow Road is on the western side and narrows in portions towards the town.
- The footpath from Savernake Avenue means that all residents have to cross the road to get to the side with a pavement to get into town. Some form of crossing will be required.
- There is no kerb on the western side of Woodrow Road to the north, and the narrowing of the road will mean that vehicles are likely to overrun the verges (as they do already).
- There are a lot of equestrian uses near the site and use Woodrow Road.
- Woodrow Road is part of the National Cycle Route 403 which will be more at risk by increased traffic.

- Increased traffic from other east of Melksham developments is already using unsuitable roads (single track New Road and Forest Lane with S bends and through Lacock).
- Woodrow Road has speeding traffic. Metro count from 2010 recorded 85% of traffic travelling at 38mph or below in a 30mph zone.
- The submitted Traffic survey and Traffic Plan include factual errors.
- Concerned about unfenced ponds and the danger to young children
- Foul drainage systems can't cope.
- Play areas have been removed from the proposal

Whilst maintaining their objection to the planning application, if Wiltshire Council are minded to approve the application, then the parish council would like to see the following:

- Adherence to Melksham Neighbourhood Plan policies and emerging Neighbourhood Plan and evidence documents.
- Circular pedestrian routes around the site.
- The Parish Council seek the provision of play equipment above that required by the West Wiltshire District Council saved Policy in the Core Strategy and wish to enter into discussions being the nominated party for any proposed LEAPs (Local Equipped Area of Play)/Play area and seek the following:
 - A maintenance sum in the s106 agreement
 - Safety Surfacing extended beyond the play area fence line (by at least 30 cm) and for the whole area to be surfaced as such, with no joins to prevent future expansion gaps, and no grass that will require maintenance
 - Tarmac paths provided not hoggins.
 - No wooden equipment provided.
 - Dark Green Metal bow top fencing provided.
 - Clean margins around the edges, no planting.
 - Bins provided outside the play area.
 - Easy access provided for maintenance vehicles.
 - Public access gates painted red.
 - No inset symbols provided in the safety surfacing, which should be one solid surface.
- Equipment installed for teenagers such as a teen shelter/MUGA and somewhere to kick a ball around
- Contribution towards playing fields.

- The provision of benches and bins where there are circular pedestrian routes and public open space and the regular emptying of bins to be reflected in any future maintenance contribution.
- Connectivity with existing housing development so not isolated.
- There are practical art contributions Parish Council are involved in public art discussions
- Contribution towards improved bus services, which serve the area.
- Any bus shelters provided should include seats rather than perches, as well as sides and are suitable in providing Real Time Information (RTI) ie access to an electricity supply, WiFi connectivity and are an appropriate height.
- Speed limit within the site is 20mph and self-enforcing.
- Proposed trees are not planted on boundaries of new/existing housing, but further into public open spaces.
- The development is tenant blind.
- If adjacent to existing dwellings the design is such that the layout is garden to existing garden.
- The road layout is such that there are no dead ends in order that residents and refuse lorries do not need to reverse out of roads.
- Contribution to educational and medical facilities within the Melksham area.
- There is visible delineation between pavement and roads so they are easily identifiable.
- The provision of bird, bat and bee bricks, reptile refugia and hibernacula within the development, in order to increase biodiversity.
- Improvements to Rights of Way.
- Provision of allotments with access to parking and water supply.
- Provision of convenience store with free access cash point.
- Ground source heat pumps to be included in proposals.
- To include capacity for hydrogen heating in the future within proposals.
- Provision of solar panels and storage batteries for every house or group of houses/block of flats.
- Inclusion of lifebuoys, noticeboards, and defibrillators. The maintenance of these items to be undertaken by the management company, unless the council decides that they would like to take on the asset.

b) **[PL/2024/10345](#): Land north of the A3102, Melksham:** The construction of 295 homes; public open space, including formal play space and allotments; sustainable drainage systems; and associated infrastructure; with 0.4ha of land safeguarded for a nursery. The principal point of access is to be provided from a new northern arm on

the existing Eastern Way/A3102 roundabout junction, with a secondary access onto the A3102. Additional access points are proposed for pedestrians and cyclists.
Applicant: Bloor Homes South West.

Councillor Pafford explained that this site is allocated in the Wiltshire Local Plan and therefore is a strategic site that has been selected to provide housing. He suggested that the council needed to ensure that this was the best application that could be achieved to ensure that it was a successful, sustainable, and safe plan. It was noted that this application was for full planning rather than outline planning; therefore, members needed to review the proposals in detail.

Councillor Pafford explained some of the concerns he had in relation to this proposal. Firstly, with regard to access into the site, in the proposals it talks about a secondary vehicular access along the A3102 (Sandridge Common) to the southwest of the site. There were also statements regarding pedestrian and cycle access, and he would like some clarification on this.

Information with regard to travel distances from the site to other amenities was included in the documents. He noted that the developers have stated that the distance from the development and various amenities was walkable, which he disputes. While he acknowledges that in some circumstances people may be able to walk from this development to other amenities, it wasn't practical for people who were carrying bags of shopping or pushing a pushchair along a road where there is only a pathway on one side, for example. A lot of the amenities that have been described in the documentation are far away from the development, for example, the town centre and Melksham Oak Community School. He felt that these were statements that needed to be clarified.

He understands that there is no footway on the north side of Sandridge Road, meaning that pedestrians will come out of the development onto the busy 40 mph road without any crossing. This needed to be addressed in the interest of public safety coming in and out of the development.

Councillor Pafford feels that the only way this development can be sustainable is with the provision of public transport, which in this instance is buses, and feels that there needs to be clarification on the bus routes and whether buses actually turn up to these locations.

Councillor Glover explained that when the parish council met with the developers at the pre-application stage, concerns were raised with regard to the secondary access and the fact that this would become a major access in and out of the development without the implementation of no right/left turns as appropriate. The developers indicated that this access would be emergency access only, which does not appear to be implemented in the plans submitted. Plans also show that there is a bus route off of the roundabout into the development, but there is no turning ability. He advised that normally bus companies like to see a circular route for in and out of the development. He isn't sure there is enough room on the main secondary road to accommodate the bus coming down there.

Councillor Glover raised concerns that the land allocated for a nursery and appropriate parking required was not big enough, especially as children will be attending from all over the parish and town. Equally, within the documentation, it details that if it is not developed or sold on within a year, it will revert back to the owners, who will resubmit another application. He believes that when this has occurred in the past, a five-year requirement (sometimes 5 years from the end of the development) has been placed on the building before it can revert back to the owners. He raised this as a concern, as there wouldn't be any infrastructure in the development within this timeframe for someone to want to purchase/develop it.

Councillor Glover raised concerns that if there were errors and inaccuracies in the travel plan documentation, which is a desktop exercise, there may be errors in the more complicated documentation.

Councillor Baines echoed the concerns raised about the highway aspects. He highlighted some comments made by the Wiltshire Council Highways Officer relating to a pedestrian connection to the adjacent housing, which is insisted upon in the Wiltshire Council Core Strategy. It is felt this needs to be included. This is land subject to surface water flooding with a watercourse running through the middle of the site, which is why there is a sizable gap in the plans to accommodate this. There are issues with the foul drainage in the fact that it will be a pump system to the Bowerhill treatment works, not the Melksham treatment works. The possibility of vehicles exiting the development and making their way north down New Road is a concern, as there is already an excess of rat running between the east of Melksham towards Lacock via unsuitable roads, and any increase in traffic would be detrimental. It is also a national cycle route 403 with many equestrian stables between Melksham and Lacock. He also raised a concern about the lack of connectivity between the A3102 and the east of Melksham development, where there is a right of way, MELK103, although it is currently not usable and wouldn't be advisable for people to use. It was noted that within the proposals it talks about the LEAPs (Local Equipment Area for Play) and LAPs (Local Area for Play) being transferred over to either the management company, town, or parish councils. The parish council normally only takes on the LEAP; however, in these plans it appears that both the LEAP and LAP would come together, which was something that needed to be thought about.

Comments: The parish council recognises that this site has been allocated in the Wiltshire Local Plan and is not against the application in principle but requires clarification on the following issues prior to any approval being given:

- The design and access statement details that there are several bus stops within walking distance of the development. It details an hourly service on route 14 in the travel plan, which is inaccurate as there are only two in the morning. The request stop is correct, but this is only for people wanting to get off the bus. The council would like to see some clarification and evidence that buses serve these locations and that they arrive regularly.

- The plan shows a bus route off of the roundabout going into the development, but there is no circular route. Bus providers like to see a circular route coming in and out of developments; however, there doesn't appear to be enough room on the main secondary road to accommodate a bus travelling down there.
- In the proposal there are details of a secondary access into the site as well as cycling and pedestrian accesses. The parish council is concerned that this secondary access will become a major access in and out of the development without the implementation of the necessary highway safety measures, e.g., no right/left turn in and out of the development as necessary. The council would like further clarification on these plans as they are contrary to the request of the parish council at pre-app stage with the developer.
- The amenities that are described in this application as being walkable are some distance away from the site, so this is not the case for many people. In particular, it notes that the town centre is located approximately 2 km west of the site, which is not considered to be walkable for elderly people, people with shopping, or pushchairs, for example.
- There is no footway on the north side of Sandridge Road with pedestrians coming out of the development onto the A3102, which is a busy 40 mph road without any crossings in place to get to the footpath on the other side of the road, which poses a public safety risk. The parish council requests to see plans included for the installation of suitable pedestrian crossings in order for pedestrians to enter in and out of the development safely.
- The land allocated in the proposals for a nursery is not big enough to accommodate a building as well as sufficient parking and for children drop-off and pick-up. Concerns were raised about the fact that if this site is not developed or sold within a year, it will revert back to the original owners. In other instances where this has occurred previously, a five-year requirement, sometimes from the date of the completion of the development, has been implemented. The council would like to see a five-year requirement put on this land.
- The increase of vehicles from this development travelling north down New Road is a concern, as there are already issues with vehicles rat-running between the east of Melksham towards Lacock via unsuitable roads with many equestrian stables along this route.
- The parish council would like to see a pedestrian connection to the adjacent housing development; one was incorporated in that recent development through to Churchill Avenue.
- Walking routes around this site are not clear on the plans provided; therefore, more detail is required.
- More clarification on the LEAP (Local Equipment Area for Play) transfers and whether the LEAP could be transferred to the parish council without the LAP (Local Area for Play) is required.
- More clarification on the transfer of the allotments is required, whether this could be to the parish council.

- Affordable housing, although spread across the whole site, has defined pockets that will be identifiable in the development and were not tenant blind.
- More clarification on the walking routes across the development.

Members felt that there are a number of details that are either missing or need more clarification in this application; therefore, they wish to ask Wiltshire Councillor Holder (as ward member) to call this application in to the Wiltshire Council Planning Committee. Members wished to be clear that they were not against the application in principle; however, there were a number of issues that needed to be resolved. It was felt that the parish council should contact the developers in the meantime to try and get some clarification on the points raised as detailed above and explain why this application has been called in. Explaining that if the above issues are resolved to the council's satisfaction, they will ask for the call-in to be withdrawn. The council should copy in Wiltshire Council into any correspondence to the developer. Wiltshire Councillor Holder advised that the officer decision date for the application was the 28th February, so there was still time to get these issues resolved with the developer.

Resolved: The parish council ask Wiltshire Councillor Holder to call in this application for the reasons as detailed above. The parish council to contact the developers in the meantime to try and resolve the issues, and if they are resolved satisfactorily, the council to withdraw the call in.

- c) **[PL/2024/11112](#): 24 Hercules Way, Bowerhill, Melksham, Wilts, SN12 6TS:** Use of land for self storage (Class B8) and siting of external containers (Retrospective). Applicant: Mr D Spencer
Comments: The parish council have no objections
- d) **[PL/2024/11493](#): Little Bowerhill Farm, 457 Bowerhill Lane, Bowerhill, Melksham, SN12 6RA:** Removal/variation of conditions of condition 2 of PL/2024/04460 (Full Planning Application for the Erection of a Self-build Rural Workers Dwelling and associated infrastructure) To enable a Storage Garage to be added to the dwelling. Applicant: Mrs & Mr Ed Bodman
Comments: The parish council have no objections
- e) **[PL/2024/11521](#): 189A Westlands Lane, Whitley, Melksham, SN12 7QQ:** Two storey side extension, single storey rear extension, removal of existing roof and dormers and replacement with additional storey and new roof construction, including increase to ridge height. Applicant: James Tysoe
Comments: The parish council have no objections
- f) **[PL/2024/11467](#): 38 Shaw Hill, Shaw, Melksham, Wilts, SN12 8EY:** Proposed detached garage. Applicant: Ms Caroline Michie
Comments: The parish council have no objections

374/24 Amended Plans/Additional Information. There were no amended plans for consideration.

375/24 Current planning applications: Standing item for issues/queries arising during period of applications awaiting decision.

a) **Land south of Snarlton Farm, Snarlton Lane, Melksham, SN12 7QP (Planning Application [PL/2024/07097](#))**

No update.

b) **Land at Blackmore Farm, Sandridge Common, Melksham, SN12 7QS (Planning Application [PL/2023/11188](#))**

The Finance & Amenities Officer drew members attention to the fact that there were a number of agencies that had submitted their comments for this application. Members noted that there were a number of objections to this application. In particular, Active Travel England had responded to the application, detailing that they were not in a position to support it at this time and requested further assessment and evidence in order to analyse the proposals in relation to transport properly. Councillor Pafford highlighted that in the active travel report it talks about sustainability and suggests that more facilities should be available on site to cut the need for people to have to travel into town, which he felt was a good idea. Members wished to support the comments detailed in the active travel report.

It was noted that the conservation officer had also objected to the proposals on the grounds that there are no heritage benefits that outweigh the harm caused to the historic environment.

Councillor Pafford welcomed the fact that Wiltshire Council officers were ensuring that this was as transparent as possible in order to come to a satisfactory conclusion.

c) **Land off Corsham Road, Whitley, Melksham (Planning application [PL/2024/09725](#))**

It was noted that there had been some comments submitted to Wiltshire Council for this application. Particular of note were the comments made by the NHS requesting funding from the s106 if this development was to go ahead. This has been requested to go towards the gap in funding created by each potential patient from the development for the RUH. Councillor Glover welcomed this; however, he queried why the NHS hasn't commented on any other applications that had come in. It was felt that they should be written to with information on all of the planning applications and asked whether they have asked for any contributions to fill the funding gap created by each potential patient from those developments.

Councillor Pafford highlighted that the ecology report has requested more information due to insufficient information being included in the documents provided. The landscape report details objections in relation to the development and the need for a green infrastructure audit to set out how the public open space and landscape design will integrate with the surrounding existing green infrastructure. Tree planting was also mentioned in the comments, as well as water management at the site. It was noted that the parish council had thought that some of the issues that had been highlighted in the report had already been resolved, so were pleased that they had been raised by the landscape department.

Recommendation: The parish council write to the NHS identifying all current applications that have come forward and ask them whether they have asked for a contribution towards them.

d) 52e Chapel Lane, Beanacre (Planning Application [PL/2023/05883](#))

No update.

376/24 Update from Lime Down Solar project and its connection to the national grid at Melksham (Beanacre) substation:

It was noted that the parish council had received an update regarding the Lime Down Solar Park. Following the initial consultation, they have refined proposals based on feedback they had received, along with findings from ongoing survey and environmental work. They are now at the second statutory consultation stage, which will run over seven weeks from Wednesday 29th January to Wednesday 19th March 2025, with in-person and online information events anticipated as running throughout February. Councillor Richardson highlighted that they did offer to meet with the parish council, which the Clerk has confirmed, but a date has not yet been set.

377/24 Planning Enforcement:

a) Land West of Semington Road, Melksham (behind Townsend Farm):

The Finance & Amenities Officer advised that a new Construction & Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been issued. This was version 7 of the document. She drew members' attention to the emails sent from the Clerk to Wiltshire Council officers in relation to some inaccuracies in version 6 of the document, which she asked to be addressed. This was in relation to the fact that the document had no mention of blocking access to the properties of residents on Townsend Farm. In addition, version 6 of the document still referenced "Melksham Road," when it should be Semington Road. It was noted that Wiltshire Council officers had requested this to be included in the document, which has now been updated, and version 7 of the CEMP has been issued.

Councillor Franks explained that there was a commitment some time ago for the road to be swept, which was made by the Director of Living Spaces. He

confirmed that mud was still on the road, so this needed to be addressed. Councillor Pafford felt that Wiltshire Council should be written to with regard to the new management plan, welcoming it and advising that the parish council hopes that this will be the subject of detailed monitoring and, if necessary, enforcement action. It was felt that along with the relevant Wiltshire Council officers, Wiltshire Councillor Holder (as Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene, and Flooding) and Living Spaces should be copied into the correspondence.

Resolved: The parish council write to Wiltshire Council welcoming the new Construction Management Plan version 7 and explaining that the council hopes that this will be the subject of detailed monitoring and, if necessary, enforcement action. The council to highlight that no road sweeping is being undertaken despite this being committed to some time ago, which needs to be addressed. Wiltshire Councillor Holder and Living Spaces should be copied into the correspondence.

b) Westlands Lane, lorries using weight restricted bridge:

Councillor Wood advised that the Clerk had raised an issue with Wiltshire Council enforcement on 9th January, with regard to lorries delivering BESS battery storage kits near the Melksham substation off Westlands Lane in Beanacre. The lorry's route of travel is over the weight limit bridge, which is impacting residents and is in complete contradiction of the Construction Traffic Management Plan. Along with the email sent, the Clerk had included photographic evidence. It was noted that this was in relation to battery storage kits being delivered to two approved Battery Energy Storage facility adjacent to each other near the Melksham substation with different limited companies. Members noted this.

378/24 Planning Policy:

a) Examiner for Melksham Neighbourhood Plan review, under delegated powers:

Councillor Wood explained that the Clerk, under delegated powers with Councillor Pafford (as Chair of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group), in consultation with Place Studio, the neighbourhood plan consultants, has chosen an examiner to assess the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2. Councillor Pafford advised that the examiner chosen had examined the Calne Neighbourhood Plan, which included Calne Without so was similar to the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan. In the correspondence included in the agenda pack, there was information with regard to the next steps after the Regulation 16 consultation has finished, prior to the plan being submitted to the examiner. It was noted that Regulation 16 was due to finish on 22nd January, and there would be a two-week period after this date for the Steering Group to decide whether they wished to submit any comments to the responses. The Clerk had spoken to Place Studio, who advised that there may be some repetition from comments made at the Regulation 14 stage;

however, there could be some new points raised, so it might be worth submitting responses to these. A neighbourhood plan steering group meeting has been pencilled in for Wednesday 29th January, for any responses to be approved. If there are no responses that need to be approved, this will not need to be held. It was noted that the parish council had a Planning Committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday 4th February, which would be in the two-week timeframe where any recommendations from the Steering Group meeting could be approved as one of the qualifying bodies for the plan. The Clerk had contacted the town council to confirm that they could include any approvals required within the time frame as the other qualifying body for the neighbourhood plan and was waiting for a reply.

b) Update on progress of Semington Neighbourhood Plan:

Councillor Pafford advised that the update on the Semington Neighbourhood Plan gives an indication of the process involved and what is likely to be seen for the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan. It was noted that the Examiner had made a number of recommendations; however, it was detailed that if the plan is amended in line with the recommendations, their plan will meet statutory requirements and could move forward to referendum.

c) New Homes (Solar Generation) “Sunshine Bill” Private Member’s Bill:

It was noted that the New Homes (Solar Generation) “sunshine bill” private members bill was due to be voted on in parliament on Friday 17th January. The Campaign to Protect Rural England has requested that the parish council lobby the local MP to vote in favour of this bill. Councillor Richardson felt that this bill should be supported as it was a great idea to contribute towards the challenge of net zero.

Councillor Pafford advised that he had seen rumours in the press that the government was backing off on insisting on blanket enforcement for new homes to be fitted with solar panels. He still felt that it was useful for the council to ask Brian Mathew MP to support this, as even if 75-80% of new homes were fitted with solar panels, it would be a benefit to the environment. .

Councillor Wood queried with members whether they wished to ask Brian Mathew MP to vote in favour of the bill, which was agreed.

Councillor Harris advised that he had been in contact with the MP with regard to this bill and had received a response back advising that he would not be at the vote due to other commitments.

Resolved: The parish council ask Brian Mathew MP to vote in favour of the New Homes (Solar Generation) private members bill on 17th January.

379/24 S106 Agreements and Developer meetings:

a) Updates on ongoing and new S106 Agreements:

i) Pathfinder Place:

None.

ii) Buckley Gardens, Semington Road:

None.

iii) Land South of Western Way for 210 dwellings and 70 bed care home (PL/2022/08504);

None

iv) S106 decisions made under delegated powers:

None.

b) Contact with developers:

i. Request of Wilts & Berks Canal Trust to raise concerns and/or sign petition on the planning application for the Swindon Oasis redevelopment:

It was noted that the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust is concerned about plans submitted for the Swindon Oasis redevelopment. This was because current plans ignored the need to provide adequate routing for the re-establishment of the Wilts and Berks Canal. They have set up a petition and have asked the council for their support. It is noted that in order to keep the canal restoration as an option for the future, the boundary of the site just needed to be moved slightly, which has been ignored despite the Wilts & Berks Canal hosting meetings with the developer.

Councillor Harris felt that the parish council should support this request. Councillor Pafford explained that the parish council has consistently supported the principle of the Wilts & Berks Canal being generated, so this request should be supported.

Recommendation: The parish council sign the Wilts and Berks Canal petition for the reasons provided above.

Meeting closed at 20:28 pm

Chairman, 27th January 2025