

**MINUTES of the Planning Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at Berryfield Village Hall, Telford Drive, Berryfield, Melksham, SN12 6GF at 7:30pm**

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

**Officers:** Teresa Strange (Clerk) and Marianne Rossi (Finance & Amenities Officer).

Wiltshire Councillor Phil Alford (Melksham Without North and Shurnhold) attended later in the meeting.

There were 12 attendees at the meeting, for the Land north of Berryfield Lane planning application. This included a representative of MP Brian Mathew.

Melksham Without parish councillor Shona Holt attended the meeting as an observer.

There were no members of the public or council attending remotely via Zoom.

**436/24 Welcome & Housekeeping:**

Councillor Wood welcomed everyone to the meeting. As this was a new meeting venue, Councillor Wood 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. It was noted that the council were not using their usual recording equipment and so could not guarantee the quality of the recording.

Attendees' attention was drawn to the paperwork on their chairs, which included a list of what were, and were not, considered "Material Planning Considerations". There was a form to fill in with contact details if attendees wanted to be kept up to date on any planning application for consideration at the meeting, if there were revised plans or when/if it went to a Wiltshire Council planning meeting for example.

**437/24 Apologies:**

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

**438/24 Declarations of Interest:**

Councillor Martin Franks declared an interest in the application for land north of Berryfield Lane as he lived near the site, and abstained from voting on this application but did take part in the discussion. Councillor Richard Wood advised that he lived in Semington Road, but did not feel that this precluded him from voting on the Berryfield Lane application. Councillor Mark Harris declared a non-pecuniary interest in the application for Barnes Wallis Close, as he knew the applicant.

Councillor John Glover declared a non-pecuniary interest in the application for Land at Whitley House as he knew the applicant.

**439/24 Dispensation Requests for this Meeting:** None

**440/24 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.

**441/24 To consider holding items in Closed Session due to confidential nature:**

The Clerk suggested that agenda item 11a be in a closed session if the members were minded not to approve the comments to the Neighbourhood Plan Examiner as developers would be able to hear any deliberations. Agenda item 12)a)i) to be held in closed session as to discuss the start of financial negotiations with Gleasons for a potential community centre funding contribution from the Blackmore Farm application.

**Resolved:** Agenda item 11a, if members wished to discuss, and agenda item 12 a)i) to be held in closed session.

**442/24 Public Participation (1):**

Councillor Wood explained the procedure for public participation and asked individuals to not repeat comments already made, but to come forward with different aspects and to try and keep to material planning considerations.

The Council suspended Standing Orders for a period of public participation.

Members of the public raised their concerns and objections to the planning application for Land to the north of Berryfield Lane PL/2025/00626. When members subsequently discussed the application, they agreed with all the points raised and these are captured in the comments to be submitted to the planning application.

The representative of Brian Mathew MP gave an update on the current situation with the Wilts & Berks Canal Link restoration project and planning application and his support of that project, in relationship to the Berryfield Lane application.

Members of the public were urged to send their photographic evidence of the field and roads covered in surface water to the planning officer.

The meeting reconvened.

**443/24 Planning Applications (1):** The Council considered the following applications and made the following comments:

- a) [PL/2025/00626](#): **Land North of Berryfield Lane, Melksham, SN12 6DT**: Outline planning application for up to 68 dwellings and formation of new access and associated works (All matters reserved other than access).

Melksham Without Parish Council **strongly objects** to the proposals for 68 dwellings north of Berryfield Lane, for the following reasons:

**Principle of development:**

- This site is piecemeal development and is not plan-led. The parish council are not against all development per se and has gone to a lot of effort to allocate sites for development in the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan, particularly in the reviewed Plan (JMNP2) that is currently at Examination. They support plan-led development, in the right place, with input from the local community, of which this development is not.

Wiltshire Council's current Core Strategy, and its draft Local Plan do not include this site as a strategic allocation. There is no allocation for Melksham in the adopted Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (adopted February 2020) either.

Melksham's made Neighbourhood Plan (adopted July 2021) JMNP1, does not include this site as a housing allocation; nor does it include it in its reviewed Plan (JMNP2) that commenced Examination on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025. This revised version of the Neighbourhood Plan (JMNP2) has housing allocations for at least 450 dwellings across 5 sites. Also relevant is NPPF paragraph 14 in relation to the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan (JMNP1). An appeal decision in May 2022 (APP/Y3940/W/21/3285428 Land West of Semington Road PL/20/07334/OUT) details that the inspector concludes that 'all aspects of Paragraph 14 of the Framework have been satisfied' and that the 'JMNP1 complies with Paragraph 14b) of the Framework with respect to the Development Plan as a whole'.

Notwithstanding the fact that Wiltshire Council are currently only demonstrating a 2.03-year housing land supply, the emerging Local Plan has allocations for 845 dwellings across 3 sites in the Melksham area. This gives a total allocation of 1,295 set against a residual figure in the Melksham area of 1,120 and 68 for Shaw and Whitley (as of 31 May 2023) as set out in the draft Local Plan.

In addition, the current Core Strategy sets out policies until 2026, and the housing allocation for the Melksham area has been exceeded to date (refer to evidence documents for the draft Local Plan Reg 19: September 2023) and met its current allocations in the emerging Local Plan and emerging Neighbourhood Plan (JMNP2) review up to 2038.

There is currently a planning application for 500 dwellings set against Policy 18 in the draft Local Plan (land at Blackmore Farm) which has been given

approval at a Strategic Planning Committee and is close to a decision date pending the signing of the s106 agreement. There is also a live planning set against Policy 20 Land north of the A3102 for 295 dwellings. The plan process is working well in the Melksham area, and there is no need for speculative development so close to a decision date on JMNP2 within the next few weeks.

- As this site has not been allocated in the draft Local Plan it therefore does not form part of the strategic thinking regarding housing and infrastructure requirements in Melksham. The site is not part of a wider strategic site, bringing with it infrastructure, such as schools, medical facilities, community centre, highway improvements and a local centre etc.
- The site is outside the settlement boundary and is outside the village of Berryfield, which is classed as a “Small Village” in the Core Strategy. Please also refer to Policy 6: Housing in Defined Settlements of the made Melksham Neighbourhood Plan (JMNP1) regarding development in the small villages of Beanacre and Berryfield; and the submission version of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan (JMNP2) that retains Policy 6. This application is for development in the open countryside.
- Berryfield is now overdeveloped with approved planning permissions in the last few years for 150 dwellings (Bowood View – built and occupied); 144 dwellings (Buckley Gardens – being built and occupied); 100% affordable housing on two sites totalling 103 dwellings behind Townsend Farm by Living Space for Sovereign Housing. Phase 1 with 50 dwellings currently being built, with Phase 2 for 53 dwellings currently with a live reserved matters application. The small village of Berryfield has already had its character changed unrecognizably by the recent speculative development of some 400 new dwellings.

#### **Independent Assessment:**

- Whilst not an exact fit, SHELAA (Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment) site 3105b was independently assessed by AECOM as part of the evidence base for the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan review in June 2023. An extract of the report on the site is attached, but the summary explains why the site is not suitable for housing development:

*“The site is unsuitable for allocation for residential development. The site is greenfield outside and not connected to the settlement boundary. Core Policy 2 of the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy generally resists development outside of the defined settlement framework, including the small village of Berryfield.*”

*The site is not within walking distance of key services. Part of the site is subject to a live planning application for the creation of a new waterway and towpath for the Wilts and Berks Canal (W/12/01080/FUL).*

*The site plays a crucial role in retaining the separation of Berryfield and Melksham and allowing for some degree of transition between manmade and natural landscapes. Development of the site will lead to the coalescence of Berryfield and Melksham and significantly alter the size and settlement pattern of Berryfield inappropriate with its role.*

*Owing to its open character, development of the site would also adversely impact views of the Avon Clay River Floodplain which is a key landscape asset.*

*The site falls under the recommended Green Wedge between Melksham and Berryfield (Location 6) of the JMNP Green Gap and Green Wedge Assessment 2023.*

*Development of the site will lead to the loss of Grade 1 Excellent Quality Agricultural Land. Paragraph 171 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value. Footnote 53 suggests that where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of higher quality.*

*Development of the site would need to consider the Melksham Canal Link Route identified in the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy. Core Policy 16 states that development should not prejudice the future use of the route as part of the Wilts and Berks Canal restoration project.*

*Other key constraints identified include the presence of semi-mature trees, potential impacts on the setting of designated heritage assets, Public Rights of Way and potential highway improvements required at Berryfield Lane.”*

**Education:**

- Lack of school places, the comments from the Education team state that there are no spaces available for early years, primary or secondary education at present. There are plans for these three provisions in the emerging Local Plan site allocations in Melksham, with one of the provisions on each of the sites allocated. It's premature for this application to come forward before the site allocations are approved as applications and there are some timescales as to when the education provision will be provided, otherwise the children will be living in this development, with no school places available. Where is it envisaged that the children from this development will go to school?

## **Safe and sustainable walking/cycling routes to schools and community facilities:**

- Lack of safe walking routes to schools. Whilst Aloeric School may be the nearest school, this requires residents to have to cross the busy A350. The parish council challenged the Education Officer's assertion that the route from Semington Road in Berryfield is a safe walking route to Aloeric on previous planning applications, especially as there are no pavements, or very narrow pavements, in places on Semington Road. Their reply at the time was that children at primary school are accompanied by an adult and so therefore a safe route. The parish council continues to refute this claim, as many children at the end of year 5, and especially in year 6 (as part of transition arrangements preparing for secondary school) begin to walk, scoot and cycle to school unaccompanied. The parish council contest that the primary schools listed in the Education comments are actually within a safe walking route (of 2 miles).
- The proposed primary school at Pathfinder Place, Bowerhill, is not yet built and there is no footpath proposed from Berryfield to Pathfinder Way for those wishing to access the school on foot. On the Wiltshire Council comments (ID 27) at Reg 16 (Jan 2025) to the JMNP2, there is the following comment:  
<https://consult.wiltshire.gov.uk/kse/event/38226/peoplesubmissions/>

### **Figure 14c**

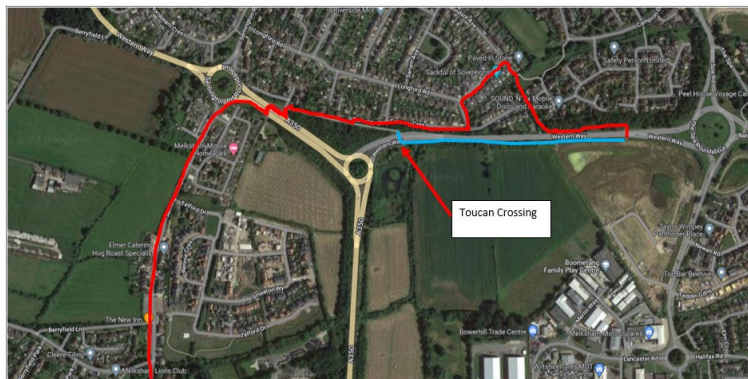
This plan shows a 'forthcoming new primary school'. This new school does have planning consent, but we are not intending to start building it at this stage. Officers are hoping to secure an alternative site through one of the larger local plan developments. Therefore, officers would prefer the wording to say, '*potential new primary school site*'.

This comment is referencing the proposed primary school at Pathfinder Place and its clear from this comment, presumably from the Education team, that the school at Bowerhill is not to be built imminently with preference to the Local Plan allocation sites, with the primary school in the Local Plan Policy 18 for East Melksham which is the current live planning application for Blackmore Farm [PL/2023/11188](https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning/2023/11/188). This would necessitate children from development at this application site in the south west of Melksham to travel to a new school site, which does not have planning permission yet, in the north east of Melksham, crossing the busy A350 and Eastern Way which is the Eastern Distributor road and the defacto A350 Melksham Bypass until any plans progress for the Bypass (currently awaiting news from the Dept of Transport on a preferred route for the Western Gateway).

- St George's Primary School in Semington is some distance away and to access by vehicle would require a circuitous route via the A350 due to the

Bus Gate (with ANPR camera in place) at the entrance to Semington Village from the Semington Road.

- It is noted that there is no pre-school provision at Aloeric school, and this needed to be borne in mind for any potential walking route being assessed for early years children.
- The parish council have been asking Wiltshire Council for some time to pool and use the s106 highway improvement funding received from the other developments on Semington Road to provide a safe walking route to Melksham Oak secondary school and the permissioned, but not built, proposed primary school at Pathfinder Way. To provide a footway to connect to the proposed footway in the Western Way Taylor Wimpey application, as there is a stretch of grass verge along the northern part of their development adjacent to the A365 which would need connectivity. And rather than the s106 condition in the Buckley Gardens development to “reduce the attractiveness” of the desire line on the arm of the roundabout on the A350, to use the funding to put in a pedestrian crossing. These are the two desire lines that residents in developments off Semington Road will use to access the town centre, and Melksham Oak school, that are currently considered unsafe by the parish council. The map below shows the route that residents will be expected to use, which the parish council do not believe is a direct route, and likely for pedestrians, especially unaccompanied secondary school students, to not use and try and attempt to use the southern route on the A365 with no pavement. (The map was produced for another application, but it’s the same route that they would take from the application site, and to both the proposed primary school at Pathfinder Way, but also onwards to Melksham Oak secondary school).



Walking route for those children coming from development (144 dwellings) East of Semington Road (PL/2022/02749) to access proposed new school at Pathfinder Place in RED.

Request for Section 106 Funding to be used to provide Toucan Crossing and create footpath along Western Way to proposed Pathfinder Place School in BLUE

**Coalescence:**

- The site is in a proposed Green Wedge, Policy 19 in the submission version of the emerging Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (JMNP2), to prevent the coalescence of Melksham with the small village of Berryfield.

**Green and Blue Infrastructure:**

- The application prejudices the future use of the route as part of the Wilts & Berks Canal restoration project. The site is subject to a live planning application (W/12/01080/FUL) for a new waterway and towpath for the Wilts and Berks Canal between the Kennet and Avon Canal and the River Avon, associated cycleway and 10x bridges along with new access roads.
- The restoration of the canal is also a protected route in the Core Strategy Policy 16 (Melksham Link project) and continues to be safeguarded through the emerging Local Plan policy 94.
- The made JMNP1 contains a Priority Statement 5: Wilts & Berks Canal Restoration which states that “The Town and Parish Council continue to support the safeguarding of the future route of the canal”. This support is still detailed in the emerging JMNP2 as Priority Statement 3, which is currently at Examination.

**Highways**

- Deterioration of the road surface, particularly in Berryfield Park and Berryfield Lane. This was built during the Second World War, on a concrete base, and therefore is an expensive scheme to resurface by Wiltshire Council. The potholes were so bad they had had some resurfacing work about a year ago, and all of this has already been undone by the constant construction traffic accessing the site of the development at land behind Townsend Farm. This was done in direct contravention of the CEMP (Construction and Environmental Management Plan) and caused a lot of road surface damage. This would be the route to the proposed development for both construction and access to site for residents living there.
- Concerns of highway access to the proposed site, particularly the single track Berryfield Lane, and the one-way section next to the New Inn pub. It is not clear how this junction of 3 roads is going to be dealt with, is this a new T junction next to the existing T junction? The parish council think this is particularly unsafe.
- In addition, the parish council do not understand the rationale for the site being divided into two sections, with no connection between them for vehicles.



- The road is subject to a lot of farm traffic, particularly at harvesting time, that would conflict with residential, and particularly construction, traffic on the surrounding roads. There have been real issues with the incorrect route for construction traffic using Berryfield Park and Berryfield Lane to access the construction of the site behind Townsend Farm 20/07334/OUT (refer to Cllr Nick Holder, Cabinet Member of Highways, and Ruaridh O'Donoghue, Planning Officer and Natalie Rivans in Planning Enforcement: Land West of Semington Road, Melksham - ENF/2024/00838) and this would send construction traffic in the exact same route, and then it would continue as the route for residents. There is no alternative route for the construction traffic, and this will cause a lot of disruption to the existing residents of Berryfield.
- The parish council asked at the end of 2024, through the LHF IG <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/6149/Local-Highway-and-Footway-Improvement-Groups> process for a holistic review of the traffic calming on Semington Road. This was originally put in place when the road was bypassed by the A350 and there is a lot of material change further to the housing developments already given permission and built out. To that end a Traffic Survey was undertaken in December 2024, which we attach as evidence of the traffic numbers using Semington Road. This is part of National Cycleway and the report details that there were 269 cyclists (report ref 036) and 289 cyclists (report ref 037) on Semington Road in one week. The additional traffic that this development puts onto Semington Road raises concern for pedestrians and cyclists' safety, particularly on stretches where there are no, or narrow, pavements. We can also supply the data from the Speed Indicator device that is regularly erected on Semington Road and note that Community Speed Watch also operates on this stretch, such are the concerns of residents that they run the volunteer scheme. The parish council feels that the statements that all sorts of community facilities and amenities are just a "20-minute walk" are not realistic and therefore residents will be likely to use their vehicles and not walk to facilities in town, and schools.

#### **Heritage:**

- The applicant acknowledges the significant heritage assets in the surrounding area. The parish council do not feel that a small stretch of meadow land at the west of the site mitigates the impact and degradation of the development on the setting of the heritage assets of the pair of cottages at 613 Berryfield Lane.

#### **Rights of Way:**

- The parish council supports all the Rights of Way comments by Paul Millard dated 17/2/25 and would like to be involved in any meetings with the developers and the officer.

## Flood Risk:

- Residents of neighbouring properties have raised concerns as to any increase in surface and ground water that already is routed to ditches in front of their properties, or to the rear and regularly flood their garden in heavy rain. Specific concerns have been raised by residents at 599 Berryfield Lane (who have supplied you photographs directly) and 52 Berryfield Park. There is also video evidence of the water in the recent archeology trenches, with digger buckets being used to empty the ditches, this has been sent directly to you by residents whose properties back on to the site from Semington Road. The evidence of residents puts into query the comments made in the Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy that there is no evidence of ground or surface water in the area. “2.3.6 Groundwater was not encountered whilst the borehole was drilled, however standing water to 2.40m was recorded the following day”. “5.2.2 The EA risk of flooding surface water indicates that the majority of the site is at “very low risk” of flooding from surface water.

The newly updated Surface Water mapping from the Environment Agency shows areas of a high chance of surface water flooding on the site.

<https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/map?easting=389642&northing=162488&map=SurfaceWater#>



- The Drainage Strategy is for the water from the site to drain into Berryfield brook, which is a relative distance from the site, and will take it past the ditch at 599 Semington Road, which already has internal property flooding concerns.

## Mains drainage:

- Wessex Water replaced the sewage system in Berryfield a few years ago. It was to replace aging, deteriorated pipes that were originally installed when Berryfield Park housing was built to home the married quarters and female staff that were stationed at RAF Melksham. Rather than replace the pipes running through all the residential gardens, the pipe was run through the parish

council's Briansfield allotment site, and then along the southern hedgeline inside the application site its entire length from Berryfield Lane to Semington Road, it then crosses under the road. The parish council queries what effect there will be on this pipeline, which presumably must be kept available for future maintenance.

**Wildlife and biodiversity:**

- The effect on the local wildlife. This has already been displaced by the developments off Semington Road that are currently under construction, and foxes and deer have been seen recently at both the parish council's allotment sites at Berryfield Lane, this was never the case only a few years ago with no sightings, whereas there are now regular sightings at the allotments.

**Design:**

- Whilst this may be more for a Reserved Matters application the parish council wish to raise now that in the Illustrative Masterplan there are no paths around the proposed development, no circular routes which residents tend to prefer for dog walking etc. For example, to get to the play area from the eastern part of the development, there is no connection, residents would have to come back out onto the road and then enter the separate western arm of the development. The play area is also out on a limb, and not overlooked by the houses, this is a safeguarding concern.

**Supporting evidence documentation:**

- The parish council also comment that they feel that there is an unreliable set of documents, some 800+ pages in total, with many inconsistencies. It's recognised that the documents are going to emphasise the positive and downplay the negatives, but the documentation is often inconsistent. For example, it says that the character area relating to most of the site does have a strong influence on the concentration of the resident development and then later in the document it discounts that statement and concurs that it has a low impact on the development. They also talk to the significant heritage assets in the surrounding area and then don't seek to really mitigate its impact. Several figures are missing that they reference elsewhere in the document.

**Community engagement:**

- Regarding the Statement of Community Involvement, the following are the comments that the parish council submitted to the public consultation, which have not been addressed, and no response received to the concerns raised by both residents and the parish council at the time.

"Members welcomed that your public consultation had a drop-in session for residents to attend in person, and we understand some 150 residents attended. Concerns have been raised as to the nature of the questionnaire survey you provided, which did not give adequate scope for residents to put their comments as only asked specific questions relating to a few elements of design of the proposed development and only asked for

contact details of those supporting the proposal.

### **Call In to Committee:**

The parish council have asked Wiltshire Councillor Jonathon Seed to “call in” this application.

### **S106 & Condition requests:**

Whilst maintaining their strong objection to this application, the parish council requests the following if Wiltshire Council are minded to approve the application:

- 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 hoggin.
  - 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 – informal play that is not all a “wildflower” cut.
- Contribution towards playing pitches.
- 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.

The majority of members of the public left the meeting at 8.22pm.

#### 444/24 Public Participation (2):

The Council suspended Standing Orders for a period of public participation.

Wiltshire Councillor Phil Alford had just joined the meeting and commented on planning applications in his Ward (Melksham Without North and Shurnhold). The hedgerow removal at Westlands Lane had been discussed with the Planning Officer and a planned reinstatement was in place. With regards to the application for Whitley House, for a new agricultural vehicular access or Corsham Road near the junction to Westlands Lane, he wished to listen to the discussion as there was a concern about this proposal being on a fast stretch of road.

The meeting reconvened.

#### 445/24 Planning Applications (2): The Council considered the following applications and made the following comments:

a) **[PL/2025/00963](#): 48 Barnes Wallis Close, Bowerhill, Melksham, SN12 6UJ:**

Demolish existing conservatory and replace with new conservatory with a Guardian warm roof system.

**Comments:** No objection

b) **[PL/2025/00865](#): Melksham East Storage Limited, Westlands Lane, Beanacre, Melksham, SN12 7QF:** Removal of 40m of hedgerow.

**Comments:** No objections. The parish council wish to draw to Wiltshire Council's attention that they do not believe that this application is related to the Melksham East Storage Limited battery storage site and therefore the publicity regarding this application is misleading to residents.

c) **[PL/2024/11639](#): Annexe, Kays Cottage, 489 Semington Road, Melksham, Wilts, SN12 6DR:** Certificate of Lawfulness for use of existing annexe as separate dwellinghouse (Revised Application).

**Comments:** The parish council maintain their objection to the application on the grounds that they cannot identify any change and recommend that Wiltshire Council's legal team review the legal case carefully.

d) **[PL/2024/09556](#): Land at Whitley House, Corsham Road, Whitley, Melksham, SN12 8QG:** Construction of a new agricultural vehicular access.

**Comments:** No objection subject to Highways approval.

e) **[PL/2025/00965](#): Home Farm, Shaw Hill, Shaw, Melksham, SN12 8EW:** Outline planning application for the erection of 2No. dwellings with all matters reserved apart from access and layout.

Members discussed that this application was technically outside the Shaw & Whitley Settlement Boundary but in the setting of an old farmyard. Whilst there

was still some farm activity on the site, there had also been more recent uses as a builder's yard and for caravan storage, and therefore, it was a brownfield site.

**Comments:** No objections.

- f) [PL/2025/01125](#): **Melksham Oak Community School, Bowerhill, Melksham, SN12 6QZ**: Installation of a 12m x 17.3m galvanised steel canopy to provide the school with an outdoor dining and learning space.

**Comments:** No objections.

**446/24 Amended Plans/Additional Information:** The Council considered the following revised/amended plans/additional information and made the following comments:

The only application with revised plans/additional information was [PL/2024/11639](#): Annexe, Kays Cottage, 489 Semington Road, Melksham, Wilts, SN12 6DR which had already been considered in the agenda item above.

**447/24 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](#)) Erection of up to 300 dwellings; land for community use or building, open space and dedicated play space and service infrastructure and associate works.

The Clerk reported that there were new Active Travel and Highway documents and correspondence on the online portal, with the applicant refuting the comments of the Highway officers.

Correspondence had been received from the Planning Officer to confirm that they were in receipt of the parish council's request for just a s106 financial contribution to a community centre, and not land, as that had been secured for the wider area on the Blackmore Farm application to the north; the officer was also happy to engage with the parish council on s106 drafting and requirements following the request made, before the Committee meeting was held.

The Clerk had also contacted the developer Catesby on this matter but was yet to hear back but had only been done in the last few days.

- b) [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

The Clerk reported that Highways had submitted a strong, comprehensive objection to the application, but did indicate that solutions could be found.

- c) **[PL/2024/10345](#): Land north of the A3102, Melksham (New Road Farm)** 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

The Clerk reported that she had sent the parish council's highway concerns on this application directly to the relevant highways officer, as requested, and the response was included in the agenda pack. Including in the comments was a holistic appraisal of the whole stretch of road which encompassed comments on the other current planning application in the pipeline. This was an approach that the parish council had just asked for on the recent application for the Gompels warehouse off the A365 and therefore had forwarded those comments directly to the Highway officer too, following discussion with the Chair of the Planning Committee earlier in the day.

Bloor are currently revising their plans following comments received and are going to send through some dates to arrange to meet with the parish council to explain the new revised plans.

- d) **Land off Corsham Road, Whitley, Melksham (Planning application [PL/2024/09725](#))** Outline planning application (with access, layout and landscaping to be approved) for up to 22 dwellings, new access off Corsham Road, public open space, drainage and associated works. **To note update on request for conditions by parish council.**

The Clerk reported that there was still no correspondence from the applicants following the request for conditions and that the "call in" request would be withdrawn if the conditions were met. There had been no contact with the parish council or via the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, as this was a site allocation in the made and subsequent emerging Plan.

**448/24**

To note update **from Lime Down Solar** project and its connection to the national grid at Melksham (Beanacre) substation and the commencement of the latest round of public consultation commencing Weds 29<sup>th</sup> January  
<https://www.limedownsolar.co.uk/>

Standing Orders were suspended to allow Wiltshire Councillor Phil Alford to speak to this item.

He advised that on 4<sup>th</sup> March, the Wiltshire Council Cabinet would be considering their response as a consultee to the Lime Down Solar project. The agenda papers for that meeting, with a report on the Lime Down proposal, would be published in the next day or so. Members of the public were able to attend the meeting in person and to listen online.

The meeting reconvened.



Members noted that the parish council had a meeting arranged on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February with the Lime Down team at 11am at the parish council offices, and then a public consultation drop in event was at Shaw School later that day from 5.30pm to 8.30pm. There is another online webinar on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February. CAWS (Community Action: Whitley & Shaw) had made a long list of questions, which had been shared with the parish council as well as with the Lime Down team. The questions were to ensure that an informed response to the public consultation was undertaken.

The Clerk had been contacted by the Melksham Energy Group representative on the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan to explain that she was talking to colleagues across the country to seek information on potential community benefits to ensure that any offered by Lime Down were in an equitable fashion. Councillor Peter Richardson explained that there were metrics for community benefit regarding solar farms and BESS (Battery Energy Storage Systems) but not for disruption due to cable routing.

The deadline for the public consultation is Weds 19<sup>th</sup> March, with the parish council considering their response at the next Planning Committee meeting on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March.

**449/24 Planning Enforcement:** To note any new planning enforcement queries raised and updates on previous enforcement queries.

The Clerk reported that there were no new queries raised, but ongoing action taking place on others.

**450/24 Planning Policy:**

- a) **Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan:** The Clerk reported that the Examiner had provided a Clarification Note with a list of queries with a meeting arranged to review on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February with Place Studio. It was noted that there had still not been any confirmation from the Town Council that any officer or councillor was attending. It was noted that this response to the Examiner was additional work for Place Studio and will require paying for. The parish council were seeking confirmation from the Town Council on this, as they had not paid the initial invoice from Place in early February for the initial comments to the Examiner following the Regulation 16 consultation.
- b) **Wiltshire Council Local Plan:** The Clerk was still to raise some examples with Wiltshire Council to ask how they were specifically addressed, and it was agreed that she would work on this with Councillor Peter Richardson. An initial thought was the parish council's response on the lack of school places for the housing allocation number for Shaw and Whitley, as Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 had gone on and allocated sites against this housing number, with comments at Regulation 16 from Wiltshire Council's education department that there was no capacity at Shaw School and no ability to expand the facilities.

**451/24 S106 Agreements and Developer meetings: (Standing Item)**

**a) Updates on ongoing and new S106 Agreements**

**i) Land at Blackmore Farm, Sandridge Common, Melksham, SN12 7QS**

[PL/2023/11188](#): Demolition of agricultural buildings and development of up to 500 dwellings, up to 5,000 square metres of employment, land for a primary school, land for mixed use hub, open space. Applicant: Tor & Co for Gleesons  
The Clerk reported that there was no update on this application.

**ii) Pathfinder Place:** The Clerk reported that the play area is still to be inspected before the legal transfer, but last week had been avoided due to it being the half term holiday. The point reported earlier that threw doubt on the proposed primary school was to be an agenda item for the next Full Council meeting. It was noted that the fence was currently being erected around the school and to separate it from the Public Open Space.

**iii) Buckley Gardens, Semington Road (PL/2022/02749: 144 dwellings)**

The Clerk reported that a recent Highways report included a bridge project and so had followed up with the Right of Ways team to find out more and ask for assistance with the parish council's bridge project on this development. Councillor Richard Wood explained that 20 dwellings were now occupied, with another 5 due shortly.

**iv) Land South of Western Way for 210 dwellings and 70 bed care home (PL/2022/08504)** To note any updates and consider a way forward.

No update.

**v) To note any S106 decisions made under delegated powers**

None to report

**b) Contact with developers:**

None to report.

Meeting closed at 8.44 pm

Chairman, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025