

# Sibford Ferris Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on **Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022** at **7pm** at Sibford School  
(OLIVER STUDIO)

Present: Cllrs Simon Rayner, Ginny Bennett, John Wass, Katherine Roussel, Amy Taylor, Clerk.

In attendance: 33 members of the public.

**65. Apologies for absence** – County and District Cllr George Reynolds will be joining the meeting later due to needing to attend another meeting before this one.

**66. Members' declarations of interest for items on the agenda** – Cllr Roussel declared an interest in item 69, application 21/04271/F, as the site is adjacent to her property therefore she will not vote on this item.

**67. Public participation session** - A parishioner noted they have e-mailed Highways about unblocking the drains that run from the turn to Mulberry Cottage heading down the hill past the shop and Rose Cottage as they are completely blocked and Highways advised it would be done in November but it has still not been done. The **parishioner** was advised that issues such as these should be reported on fixmystreet.com but if they **could forward the communications received from Highways to the Clerk she will follow this up with Highways.**

**68. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council (PC) meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021** – The minutes were proposed, agreed, and duly signed.

## **69. Planning applications received**

**21/03847/TCA – 4 Mannings Close, Sibford Ferris.** T1 x Cedar- Crown raise 3.5m over drive. T2 x Contoneaster - Coppice close to grand. T3 x Holly- Reduce by 2.5m in height. T4 x Maple- Fell out grown location. G1 x Yew - Crown raise 5m over garden and side up to boundary wall. **No objections.** (Response submitted using delegated powers). **APPROVED.**

**21/04038/F – Shortlands, Hook Norton Rd, Sibford Ferris.** Alterations and extensions, erection of new garage, and formation of swimming pool. **No representations made. It was agreed that the Clerk should submit the following comment 'where possible all building work and excavation (specifically swimming pool) related traffic should be routed away from the village'.**

**21/04271/F – Land South of Faraday House, Woodway Road, Sibford Ferris.** Erection of 6 one storey age restricted dwellings (55 years) for older people with access, landscaping and associated infrastructure.

*Simon Tofts (Blue Cedar Homes) and Des Dunlop (D2 Planning – Planning consultant) were in attendance to give some information about their proposals and answer any questions on this planning application. The main points made on behalf of Blue Cedar Homes were:*

- All sites are fully managed and age restricted through the planning authority and through their own restrictive covenants.*
- All properties will be N43 compliant for disabled/wheelchair/elderly access.*
- Blue Cedar Homes is not a care operator so all properties are sold freehold.*
- An estate manager will be employed for around 15-20 hours per week to maintain the communal parks, grounds, gutter clearance etc.*
- Around 40% of their schemes are usually sold to local people within a 5 mile radius of the site. In some of their sites they have an agreement in place that local people get first opportunity to buy their properties.*
- Prior to the submission of this application pre-application discussions were held with the local planning officer at CDC and Highways regarding access etc.*

*Members of the public were invited to ask questions about the proposal:*

**Q. If you were granted permission for this site when would you be starting construction?**

A. We would need to discharge any planning conditions and pre-occupation conditions first so we would expect around 18 months to be built but more likely to be around 24 months to the point of being ready to sell. We also would need to buy the site as we don't currently own the land.

Rod Pullen made the following points and questions on behalf of the Sibford Action Group Community (SAGC) which is a group of around 150 residents from Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower.

**Q. You mentioned the Gade development on Hook Norton Rd. This started out as 8 affordable Homes and is now 25 properties, the majority of which are luxury homes for sale. We have seen a Land registry document that allows access through the Gade site to the site you are looking to develop and to a much larger area to the south of the Gade development and this raises several concerns that your development is actually phase 2 of a much larger development in that area which is out of proportion with the existing village. Can you give us reassurance that your proposals are not likely to have the same amount of growth from original proposal to final numbers?**

A. There is no further scheme from Blue Cedar Homes. This is a detailed final application, not an outline application, so this is the scheme that Blue Cedar will build if approved.

**Q. The number of houses needed in rural areas stated in the Local plan to 2031 (750) has already been met and exceeded therefore there doesn't appear to be any need for this proposal to meet that target.**

A. You are right that the 750 has been met but this is not a cap on building so if our proposals comply with other requirements for planning in this area we can build above the total of 750.

**Q. The Cherwell Rural Areas Integrated Transport and Land Use Study (CRAITLUS) August 2009 looked at potential villages for development and they listed 4 villages that had little capability for supporting development, 2 of which were Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower and there have been no changes to the road infrastructure or transport links since then so we do not believe that this has changed. Are you aware of any changes since then?**

A. We have not seen the CRAITLUS report as we are only required to look at policies for planning in this area.

**Q. According to information received from Cherwell District Council (CDC) on 4th January in response to a Freedom of Information request it stated there had only been 1 online meeting between CDC and Blue Cedar Home. Could you confirm if that is correct as if that is the case it seems odd that the application was submitted and validated in one day, particularly during the Christmas period when many officers are off work?**

A. That information is correct. We had a pre-application meeting via zoom on 2<sup>nd</sup> November and the pre-application had been submitted a number of weeks before that so CDC had already had time to review it before the zoom meeting and final submission of the application.

**Q. There are concerns in the community about sewage as the local system is already overloaded, particularly in bad weather, so additional homes could make this worse. There are also concerns that the local GP surgery is already at capacity and there is no public transport available to get to it so additional properties will most certainly add more vehicle movements in an already congested area.**

A. The trip generations from our scheme is very low at 1 an hour as there should not be commuting to work or school pick ups and drop offs due to residents being over 55 years old. During construction there would be more vehicles which would be considered and agreed as part of the construction management plan.

Rod Pullen made a final point that it is a concern that the application has been given delegated decision to an officer and the SAGC ask that the Parish Council request that the application be decided by a CDC Planning Committee of elected councillors rather than an individual officer. Cllr Rayner advised that District Cllr Chapman is requesting that the application be considered by committee on 10<sup>th</sup> February but it is not yet known if it will go to committee.

Robin Grimston, also on behalf of the SAGC, challenged Blue Cedar Homes' Planning Consultants assertion that the '750 figure was in effect irrelevant' and in response read out the following section (para 13) of the Inspectors Report at the Appeal of November 2019.

*"The Council acknowledges that the 750 housing figure is not a target. A point reinforced by my colleague inspectors in recent appeal decisions. However, it should be regarded as a benchmark to govern future decisions on applications for housing development otherwise the integrity of the plan would be undermined."*

Robin continued that 'the Cherwell Development Plan 2011 – 2031 which was adopted in 2015 aside from minor infills and windfalls provides "Allocation" of 750 homes to larger rural villages.

The Annual Monitoring Review of 2020 states that 977, not, 750, are being delivered. In Cherwell's own words an excess of 227 which by 2021 had grown to 40%.

The Local Plan Review reports that homes planned and delivered in rural villages are 87%. Bicester and Upper Heyford are both 28%. Cherwell should be directing the likes of Blue Cedar homes to Bicester and Upper Heyford. We should not have further ruination of rural villages and farmland countryside adjacent to the Cotswold AONB and certainly not in Sibford which Cherwell's CRAITLUS says is one of the least sustainable villages.'

Blue Cedar responded that the CDC call for sites document states that the Sibfords are some of the most sustainable villages in the district.

Further questions/statements from members of the public:

**Q. In essence there is no guarantee that you will be offering the properties to local people and Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower already have an out of kilter demographic with older people so this brings more elderly people into the village whereas if anything we need to bring in more young people. You mentioned that there wouldn't be commuters re traffic movements but many people now need to work until age 67 + so it is unlikely that anyone at the age of 55 would not need to commute or take children to school as grandparents do so school runs.**

A. There is a detailed traffic report but if the parishioners don't agree with it they should raise this with highways.

**Q. Do you go back to sites you have previously completed and validate your traffic data?**

A. Yes we have done that and that is included in the documentation. We agree that many people won't retire at 55 but the average age of our buyers is upper 60s but we open it up to over 55s to increase our market. It is possible that people from outside the village will move in but the best we can offer is to allow a period of time to give priority to local people to try to give local people a higher chance of purchasing these homes.

**Q. I feel really angry about how this village has been assaulted by the 25 homes and now these additional properties. This village is unsustainable and the GP surgery is under pressure, degradation to the local environment and I just wonder what is in it for you?**

A. We are a developer providing properties in an area where there is a need to meet national government housing requirements and fulfil that need. CDC put this site down as suitable for up to 20 properties but we are only submitting 6.

*It was agreed to object to the application as follows:*

**Note; The Blue Cedar homes site needs to be considered, not separate to, but in relation to the adjacent Gade homes site, which will begin construction 04/22. Reasons for this are stated below.**

*This is clearly a phase 2 extension of the Hook Norton Road site, with a phase 3 site also put forward as part of the Local Plan review.*

*Land registry document Title Numbers ON196300 and ON239204 show that access has already been established for all 3 sites. The access point is opposite the main entrance to Sibford School, which raises serious traffic and safety concerns.*

*Why was the village not informed at the outset so that these sites would yield the most affordable homes and advantages for the village?*

### **1.Sustainability and Infrastructure.**

*We do not yet know how the infrastructure will cope with the Gade Homes development for 25 new homes on the adjacent site. We are particularly concerned about sewage and note that Condition 8 (Sewage) has not yet been discharged for the Gade Homes development. Our sewer (sewerage and waste water treatment plant) is located in a steep valley and we do not want to risk foul sewage escaping into The Sib, which is adjacent to it.*

*The key services of Sewerage, Water Supply, Roads, have all yet to be tested by the building of the new 25 homes being developed on the Hook Norton Road.*

*As such we object on the basis that there is as yet no proven capacity so why would CDC support adding further risk to these key services noted below?*

- *Sewerage system is at capacity.*
- *Limited access to appointments and parking at the local surgery*
- *Lack of public transport*
- *Lack of pavements*
- *Lack of Broadband*
- *Water Pressure*
- *Blocked drains are already a problem in the village*

## **2. Traffic Safety Concerns with Concurrent Development**

*The 25 homes on Hook Norton Road to be developed by Gade Homes are due to break ground 04/2022. If the Blue Cedar Homes application is approved there will be two lots of independent construction traffic overlapping for a period of potentially two years. The impact on the village and road infrastructure will cause even further congestion on what are already badly congested roads during peak school and commute times. The CDC Planning Committee attended a site visit in 2019 and witnessed first hand issues related to road layout and traffic congestion.*

- *Two lots of site traffic entering the site opposite the main entrance to Sibford Friends School*
- *The potential for site traffic to be moving through the Gade homes development site after the homes have been completed and families are living in them*
- *The amount of extra traffic generated by 25 new homes plus another 6 retirement homes with double garages and little or no public transport available. This will drive up CO2 emissions and drive down air quality.*
- *This proposal will result in development in an isolated location, remote from key services and facilities, and with increased reliance on private car journeys, contrary to CLP 2015 Policy ESD1 and saved policy H18 and so is in conflict with LA housing strategy.*

## **3. The class A categorization of The Sibfords is already under review as part of the CDC Local Plan Review, with both communities and our local MP Victoria Prentis seeking a review on this as soon as possible.**

- *This Categorisation has exposed the Sibfords to inappropriate size and scale of development that is unsustainable.*

*The Planning Inspector commenting on the appeal case of the Hook Norton Rd Development stated,*

- *“Given the spread of services across each settlement, it is unlikely that the development of any site around the Sibfords would readily enable access by sustainable transport modes. This is an argument against the inclusion of the Sibfords as a Category A Village, but is not a matter before me in this appeal”*
- *“Of 33 Villages only 4 show little capability to sustainably support additional housing. Shennington, Sibford Ferris/Sibford Gower and Charlton-on-Otmoor perform poorly due to their location on minor roads with long travel times and distances to access key facilities. CRAITLUS Report August 2009*

## **4. Housing delivery villages Vs CDC Local Plan 2011 – 2031**

*Due to the wording of the current plan there is a level of ambiguity related to the development figure set for rural development. We understand that the plan talks about providing 750 dwellings in rural areas for the planning period 2011 to 2031 but this is not tightly worded and so open to interpretation as being: a ceiling, a goal, a minimum etc. However, we would like it noted that,*

- *Since 2014 a total of 1062 dwellings have been identified to meet the Policy Villages 2 requirement for 750. Any further permissions granted will be a material exceedence of this target and at present the plan still has 10 years to run.*
- *There are 8293 permissions granted for homes, which haven't been built yet around Bicester, Banbury and Upper Heyford. This highlights the contentious issue of land banking.*
- *Developers are still being allowed to put land forward for development in rural areas on good agricultural land where targets have already been exceeded and the homes have already been built.*

## **5. Retirement Homes**

*The developer is age restricting the sale of the proposed houses to 55+. The assumption is that these purchasers will be retired and generate little additional traffic movements. The reality is that purchasers of these types of properties will still be working, have family support roles (school run) and will almost certainly exacerbate traffic congestion at peak periods.*

*The developer also has assumed that the residents will be able to walk to community based services. This is unrealistic given the limited footpath network, topology (steep valley between Sibford Ferris and Gower) and limited public transport.*

## **6. Unsustainable Increase in Housing in Sibford Ferris.**

*Sibford Ferris has a housing density of 148 properties. The Hook Norton Road Development being built by Gade Homes will add 17% additional homes, adding the Blue Cedar Home Development will increase the housing density to 22% or approaching a quarter. For a village that has seen limited if any investment in infrastructure or roads this is unrealistic and unsustainable.*

## **7) Landscape Impact**

- *The proposed development will adversely affect the local character of the village and the outlook over the AONB.*
- *Looking across the valley from The Colony in Sibford Gower, the second site will be more visible than the Gade Homes site as it extends further West.*

## **8) The Application goes against The Sibfords Community Plan**

- *In the Sibford's Community Plan (2012), 64% of people said they would be willing to envisage up to 10 new houses, 31% up to 20 and only 3% over 20 houses. These needs have been exceeded by the Hook Norton Road site and there is no further local requirement.*

## **9) This development is Unnecessary, Inappropriate and Unsustainable.**

- *Extending beyond the built up limits of the village into the attractive open countryside surrounding Sibford Ferris. Its layout, form, design and location for older people is unsuitable and would produce an incongruous and cramped form of development, which fails to respond to local character, landscape and surrounding context and should be refused as harming the visual and rural amenities of the area.*
- *The proposal is contrary to Policy C28 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996, Policy villages 2 and Policies ESD13 and ESD15 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 part 1 and Government guidance contained within the National Policy Framework and the National Design Guide.*

*Simon and Des left the meeting at 8:03pm.*

**21/04166/F - The Pheasant Pluckers Inn, Burdrop.** Permission is sought to re-position and amend the structure of the previously allowed 3 bedroom building. *Sibford Ferris Parish Council objects to this application as the location of the new building could put the integrity of the neighbouring listed building at risk. We also agree with the detail of the response submitted by Sibford Gower Parish Council.*

- 70. Discussion with Andrew Maxted of Cherwell District Council (CDC) to assist with our understanding of planning policy matters, and in particular, how national policy supersedes local policy in specific circumstances to inform how we respond to planning applications** – Cllr Rayner advised Andrew that Victoria Prentis MP met with some members of the SAGC last week and she seemed surprised that the Sibfords are category A and she agreed to support the SAGC to try to get this rectified. Andrew was asked if there are any plans to review the current categorisation. Andrew advised that he can't give any suggestions as to what a new categorisation will be as they haven't done the work on it yet but the categorisation will be considered and it will be consulted on with members of the public. The only vehicle CDC have to change the categorisation is the next Local Plan and regardless of pressure from Local MPs they can only change things after inspection by an independent planning officer after showing a fair process has taken place. It was noted that one of the main areas of contention in the parish is that a developer can have a meeting with CDC to discuss ideas they have through a pre-planning application but there is no opportunity or right from the community to speak to CDC to make them aware of their concerns about potential development in the area and are only able to react to applications once they are submitted. Andrew responded that CDC do a number of consultations over time such as the Local Plan to give parishioners the opportunity to give their views and

planning officers fully consider the community's response to individual applications before making a recommendation on applications. The next consultation will be in summer 2022 and is expected to be a full draft plan where parishioners can see all proposals being made by CDC. There will be a minimum of 6 weeks consultation period and depending on the covid situation there may be some public exhibitions. The plan provided at that stage will be the final plan so any land considered suitable for development within the Sibfords will be included in that plan and there will be no further opportunity for development sites to be proposed within this plan. CDC don't yet have a housing needs figure so it is hard to say what the detail of the plan will be as they don't know what it is they need to plan for and where in the county but CDC will continue to be committed to supporting the communities and focusing development in areas with the best infrastructure, transport facilities etc which will continue to protect rural areas where possible. CDC currently have 3.8 year land supply. Any sites being put forward will have site visits from officers to consider their suitability.

*Andrew Maxted left the meeting @ 8:33pm.*

**71. Update on status of PC request for the categorisation of the Sibfords as a single category A village to be reviewed – Already covered under item 70.**

**72. Outstanding matters/actions from previous meetings**

- i) Defibrillator training (Cllr Wass) – There will be defibrillator training session in the Village Hall on 15<sup>th</sup> February @ 6pm.

*31 members of the public left the meeting at 8:40pm. Cllr George Reynolds joined the meeting at 8:40pm.*

- ii) Tree planting (Cllr Taylor) – A community planting event needs to be arranged for after 18<sup>th</sup> March. Clearing of the land in readiness for planting will cost £100. It was proposed and agreed to go ahead with the land clearing. An article asking for volunteers to take part in the planting even should be placed on the website and in the next Sibford Scene. **Cllr Taylor to put together an article.**
- iii) Emergency Plan – The Clerk has been unable to arrange a meeting with the parishioner who offered support so it was agreed to approve the Emergency Plan in the format currently presented.
- iv) Update on actions relating to Speedwatch/Speed reduction in the parish – No further update. **Clerk to contact Richard Irons to see if there are any updates.**
- v) Update on concerns raised by parishioner about road safety at the Elms Crossroads – There has been another accident in this location in the last week or so and the sign was knocked down. It is not known if anyone was injured but the PC are very concerned that there will be a more significant accident soon. **Clerk to e-mail Cllr Reynolds for him to follow this up with Highways.**
- vi) Concerns raised by parishioner about Banbury Plant driving through the village when not making a delivery/collection within the village – No further update. **Cllrs to monitor and advise Clerk if it needs to go back on the agenda.**

**73. Hook Norton Road Development**

- i) S106 funding allocation – An officer from CDC met with Sibford School last week and have discussed some options for use of the S106 funds that were allocated to the school. The S106 does have an allocation for the village hall so this may be able to be used to help fund the replacement of the village hall roof.
- ii) General update – None.

**74. Play area (Cllr Bennett/Clerk)**

- i) Proposal to instruct contractor to complete the required repairs on the play equipment at a cost of £272.20 – Proposed and agreed.
- ii) To consider quotes for the removal of dead tree and overhanging vegetation – No further update.

**75. Sibford School request for a dog waste bin to be installed on the footpath - cost per bin for purchase and installation will be around £220 with ongoing emptying costs of around £120 per annum per bin – Still seeking permission from the land owner. Cllr Roussel to enquire who the landowner is.**

**76. Proposal to fund up to £500 towards a Platinum Jubilee Celebration which will be organised by a group of volunteers from the Sibfords - Proposed and agreed.**

**77. County Councillor Report – County and District currently have some shared officers but they will now be going their separate ways and the current agreement will end in the next 6-12 months. The County Council 20mph scheme has 5 villages in a pilot scheme to see if signage will slow people down rather than having to put physical barriers in place. Freight lorries discussions – Burford have just had their lorry ban reversed and the county are now looking at a county wide freight route. CDC council tax will go up by £5 per band D and**

County will go up by 4.99%. CDC's land supply has dropped dramatically as although they have given 8000 permissions the builders are not building.

**78. District Councillor Report** – See item 77.

**79. Finance**

- i) Confirmation of the bank balance as at 12.01.22 of £22,444.17 – Cllr Rayner confirmed the balance stated is correct.
- ii) To confirm completion of the third quarterly (Oct to Dec) financial check for 2021-22 – Cllr Taylor confirmed the check has taken place and all was found to be in order.
- iii) To approve budget and precept for 2022-23 – Proposed budget is £8,425 resulting in a precept of £7,487 with the difference coming from reserves. Proposed and agreed. **Clerk to submit precept demand.**
- iv) Confirmation of payments made since the last meeting using delegated powers: Proposed and agreed.

18.11.21	ICO	Data Protection Fee	£35.00
01.12.21	Thomas Fox Landscaping	Mowing of play area 14.10.21	£24.04
01.12.21	Thomas Fox Landscaping	Mowing of play area 04.11.21	£24.04
01.12.21	Kirsty Buttle	Salary November	£207.90
01.12.21	Kirsty Buttle	Expenses November - SIM	£6.00
20.12.21	Thomas Fox Landscaping	Mowing of play area 25.11.21	£24.04
20.12.21	Kirsty Buttle	Salary December	£170.70
20.12.21	HMRC	Tax December	£36.00

- v) To note the following receipts: None

- vi) To approve payment of the following invoices: Proposed and agreed.

Sibford Village Hall	Hall hire for CPR/Defib training 50% share	£15.00
Kirsty Buttle	Expenses - Eye test and Cloud storage	£13.99
Sibford Gower Parish Council	Burial Ground - 50% share of maintenance costs minus 50% share of income	£513.87

**80. Planning decisions received**

**21/03039/F – Sibford School, The Hill, Back Lane, Sibford Ferris.** Demolition of existing sport pavilion and erection of a new pavilion. **Approved.**

**21/03472/TCA – 10 Walford Road, Sibford Ferris.** 1.Sycamore. Reduce south facing crown spread over junction and close by up to 2.5 metres in circumference. Reduce west facing crown spread adjacent to property to previous. Reduce remaining circumference to north and east proportionately to balance symmetry. Remove major deadwood. 2.Beech – Compression at primary crown break with included bark and a longitudinal cracking. Reduce stem to east by approximately 4.5 metres. Reduce lateral spread of crown to east by up to 3 metres in branch length. Reduce overall crown height by up to 2 metres. Prune remaining crown circumference proportionately to contain and shape. Install x1 GEFA crown support system (brace) between stems to west and east. 3.Ash - Section fell to leave the remaining stump cut as close to ground level as situation allows. 4.Beech Remove lower smaller diameter stem overhanging adjacent Cherry. Prune south facing section of crown overhanging property by up to 2 metres in branch length. Reduce and balance north facing side of crown by up to 3 metres in branch length. Prune to shape. 5.Cherry. Prune extending branch ends to contain and improve shape. **Approved.**

**21/03354/F – Folly Farm, Grange Lane, Sibford Ferris.** Single storey rear extension. **Approved.**

**21/03259/F – Clematis Cottage, Main Street, Sibford Ferris.** Alterations and erection of single storey rear extension to replace existing conservatory. **Approved.**

**21/03260/LBC – Clematis Cottage, Main Street, Sibford Ferris.** Single storey rear extension to replace existing Conservatory. Internal renovation works including a new Bathroom and stair to the second floor. **Approved.**

**21/03491/Q56 – Elm Farm, Swalcliffe.** Change of Use and associated building operations to convert existing agricultural building to single dwellinghouse. **Comment only:** (Response submitted using delegated powers). The entrance proposed is on a blind bend therefore we have concerns about road safety. The barn is likely to need significant rebuilding rather than conversion therefore a full planning application would seem the more appropriate route rather than a class Q application. Should CDC decide that a class Q application is appropriate we would ask that you ensure that all class Q requirements are met. **REFUSED.**

**21/02870/DISC - Os Parcel 4300 North Of Shortlands And South Of High Rock, Hook Norton Road, Sibford Ferris.** Discharge of condition 12 (Energy Statement) - Outline planning permission with all matters reserved for up to 25 dwellings with associated open space, parking and sustainable drainage of 18/01894/OUT. **Approved.**

Meeting closed @ 9:17pm

**Date of next meeting – 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

Signed..... Date.....