

MINUTES OF KERSEY PARISH COUNCIL EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 3 JULY 2017 IN KERSEY VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30 PM

PRESENT

John Hume – Chair, Veronica Partridge, Giles Hollingworth, Yvonne Martin, Iqbal Alam, Ian Fidell, Alan Ferguson – Babergh District Councillor, 40 members of the public (1 arrived late) and the Clerk – Sarah Partridge

The Chair welcomed those present and set out the protocol for the meeting. Each planning application will be announced and then the applicant will be invited to comment. Members of the public present will then be given the opportunity to speak, with questions and comments made through the Chair. Standing Orders state that each person may speak for a maximum of 3 minutes. The meeting will then be reconvened for Councillors to discuss the application and make their decision.

69/17 APOLOGIES - None

70/17 ACCEPT MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Disclosable Pecuniary Interests were declared by Councillors. Veronica Partridge stated that she had a potential conflict of interest in planning application B/15/01196.

71/17 CONSIDER ANY DISPENSATION REQUESTS FOR PECUNIARY INTERESTS RECEIVED FROM COUNCILLORS – None received

72/17 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2017 were signed and dated as being correct.

73/17 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

There was no progress on planning applications to report.

B/17/00455 and B/17/01147 Curtis Farm, Wickerstreet Green - Application for Listed Building Consent- Replacement leadlight window on gable end of property. This is a retrospective application as the new window has already been fitted. *The meeting was adjourned to receive comments from the floor.* The applicant was not present. A member of the public commented that this new window looks directly across into a private garden on the other side of the road, leading to a loss of privacy. It was also commented that following a discussion with a planning officer at Babergh it appears internal alterations have been made to this listed property. Until recently, the area the new window opens into was loft space but this has apparently now been made into a room. It was also commented that some years ago, a historian advised that this opening was a smoke hole and not a window. There were no other comments from the floor. *The meeting was reconvened.*

Councillors discussed the application, as set out in the documents available on line. Councillors supported the proposal based on the evidence available. However, the concerns raised by the member of the public would be included in the response to Babergh. The Council also agreed that retrospective applications should be avoided as it is always better to seek advice and gain permission before carrying out any development.

B/17/00477 8 Vale Lane - Outline Planning Application (all matters reserved) - Erection of bungalow. The Parish Council had received one letter of objection signed by two parishioners. *The meeting was adjourned to receive comments from the floor.* The applicant was not present. A member of the public commented that this proposal was not in keeping with Vale Lane. He was concerned that the documentation for this application was inaccurate and misleading therefore it would not be possible to make a sound judgement on this proposal. He pointed out the application states that this proposal is for a bungalow when the drawings clearly show a two storey chalet style house. He added that the boundary lines are inaccurate and do not show the garage attached to number 9. The proposed dimensions of the new property do not allow for any access along the

boundary line for adjacent properties. If sufficient access was taken into account, the proposed property would be less than 5m wide. It was commented that there are no windows on number 9 Vale Lane which would be obstructed by this proposal but there are several windows on number 8 Vale Lane which would be obstructed by the proposed house. It was also commented that there is a water hydrant at the front of the property which may be compromised by this proposal. There were no other comments from the floor. *The meeting was reconvened.*

Councillors discussed this application. Councillors were concerned that the documentation appeared to be misleading and inaccurate. There were concerns that this proposal is totally inappropriate to the setting being squeezed into a tiny space, there would be a clear loss of residential amenity due to a loss of privacy, overshadowing and dominance of the proposal on the adjacent properties, one of which would have windows obstructed. It was agreed this proposal conflicts with the National Planning Policy Framework, particularly with paragraphs 53, 56, 58 and 61 because the proposal is not of a good quality; it is not good architecture; not attractive and would not add to the quality of the area. For these reasons the Council agreed to object to this proposal.

Veronica Partridge left the meeting because she has a potential conflict of interest in the next item.

The Chair confirmed that the Clerk, Sarah Partridge, does not have any voting rights and does not have any interest in the planning application for land to the rear of 1-6 The Street.

B/15/01196 Land to the Rear of 1-6 The Street - Erection of 7 No. two storey dwellings. This application is an amendment to an application which was considered by the Parish Council in December 2015. The original application was for the erection of 6 two storey dwellings. The amended proposal is for the erection of 7 two storey dwellings. *The meeting was adjourned to receive comments from the floor.* The applicant stated that they had taken some time to consider the comments made to the original application and had now submitted an amended application to take into account those comments. Members of the public were then invited to make comments. One member of the public who had lived in Kersey all her life fully supported the proposals because over the years, many small cottages in Kersey have been knocked together to make larger houses so that there is now a lack of smaller homes for young families. This has impacted on village life due to the lack of young people living in the village. She felt this proposal would not blight the landscape in the proposed location.

Many members of the public present objected to the proposal on the grounds that it would harm the Conservation Area and the historic setting of the Grade II* listed cottages in front of the proposed development. There were also concerns raised about increased traffic movements in an already congested village. There were comments that just because there had been poor back land development in the past this was not a reason to allow more back land development and development on this site would set a precedent for further unwanted back land development. Kersey is a linear village and any change to this would spoil the visual appearance of the village. It was considered to be the wrong development in the wrong place. Parishioners commented that Kersey has a unique heritage in a relatively unspoilt medieval village and this should be respected and preserved. It was suggested that there would be a detrimental impact on the listed buildings in front of the proposed new properties during construction. The Chair confirmed that this was not a valid planning reason and could not be taken into account when considering an application. A question was asked as to why the amended proposal had increased to 7 new properties and why they are larger than the original proposal. The applicant responded to state that the amended application was redesigned to make less impact on the existing listed buildings at the front which was a concern raised by Historic England and the Parish Council. The new proposed properties are smaller, now reduced in scale being 1.5 storey and are sited further away from the listed cottages. It was commented that there are opportunities for development in other, less historically sensitive areas of the village. A local historian commented that 1-6 The Street were originally larger properties which had been split up at a time of poor incomes into 6 smaller cottages and perhaps it was time to make these back into larger houses. A concern was also raised about the loss of habitat, as the new proposal was for development in historic gardens. There were also comments made that the existing cottages 1-6 The Street were not fully occupied nor in a good state of repair. These should be attended to before more development is proposed. A question was asked about the demand for the proposed houses. The applicant stated that he did not have access to the Babergh District Council housing register but had

been informed there is quite a long list of people requiring homes in Babergh. A further question was raised about the housing need in Kersey. The applicant said that in 2015, within 24 hours of putting up posters on noticeboards in Kersey to advertise an open event about the proposals they had received interest from 7 people with links to Kersey and adjoining villages. He has been assured that there is a significant need for small houses in rural villages. A question was asked about what proportion of the houses will be for rent. The applicant said that four will be for affordable rent in perpetuity and the remaining three will either be for rent or will be sold. There were then a series of questions asked about the meaning of 'in perpetuity'. The applicant said this would be a legal undertaking in the form of a section 106 planning obligation on the property which would be upheld and enforced by Babergh District Council and this obligation would remain with the property regardless of ownership. It was commented that a S106 obligation can be lifted following a formal process administered by the District Council. A question was raised about the ability for these houses to pass into private ownership and not remaining for affordable rent, as had happened with many of the council houses in Vale Lane. The applicant stated that the selling of council housing was part of the reason that there are now a lack of small houses for rent but the s106 planning obligation would not allow for the properties to be sold in the same way that council housing can be. A question was asked about future maintenance of the properties and the applicant said their housing company was committed to maintain their properties to a high standard.

Alan Ferguson, a Babergh District Councillor was introduced to the meeting. He confirmed that as he was on the Babergh Planning Committee he would not be making any comments on the application as he cannot prejudge an application which may come before the Planning Committee. He was just listening to the comments made at this meeting. Some questions were asked about the planning process Babergh will follow. Mr Ferguson confirmed that bodies such as highways and the emergency services will be asked to comment on the application. The Planning Officer or the Planning Committee will consider the application and all the details. No assumptions can be made; their decision must be based on evidence.

There were no other comments from the floor. *The meeting was reconvened.*

One member of the public joined the meeting.

The Chair asked the applicant a series of questions. The applicant confirmed his company owned the land. The applicant confirmed the access points as being below number 1 and above number 6 as clearly marked on the plans. The applicant confirmed the amended properties are smaller in scale and are 1.5 storey. The new designs are no longer similar to existing properties in the area but are of a design which had been deemed as suitable for this location in consultation with experts. They will be brick properties. There will be 14 parking spaces for the 7 properties. The applicant confirmed they try to build their properties to be as sustainable and economic as possible to make them affordable for their tenants, with air source heat pumps. One Councillor then read a long written statement setting out why he felt the Parish Council and Babergh should refuse this application. The two pieces of legislation quoted which he felt should be taken into consideration when this application is determined are The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and The Planning Act 1990. It was stated that this proposal will cause significant harm to the setting of the Grade II* listed buildings of 1-6 The Street and to the Kersey Conservation Area. It was also stated that this proposal, if approved, would set a precedent for back land development and disrupt the views from The Street to the open countryside beyond. He also referred to letters of objection from Historic England, Suffolk Preservation Society and Michael Collins who had responded to the original application in November 2015 which support this view. It was also stated that the development would be unsustainable and would not reduce pollution or encourage the use of public transport which all contravene the NPPF paragraph 17. The Chair commented that he did not agree with the sustainability comments as these would preclude any development in the Parish. Other Councillors then had the opportunity to comment on the proposals. Councillors agreed with many of the comments already put forward and unanimously agreed to object to the application for the same reasons as in December 2015. The proposal will cause significant harm to the listed buildings and heritage of the village and Conservation Area and this could not be outweighed by any benefits the new housing would bring. Councillors had concerns about the increase in traffic in an already congested area of the village. Councillors felt that there may be a need for affordable housing in

Kersey but this was not a suitable location. There are other less sensitive locations for development in the Parish. The Clerk will respond to Babergh objecting to this application. It was noted that Babergh had not re-consulted the Suffolk Preservation Society to ask for their comments on the amendments to this application. The Parish Council was surprised by this omission. Now the Suffolk Preservation Society is aware of the amendments they will be submitting comments to Babergh. Alan Ferguson was requested to ask Babergh Planning Officers why the Suffolk Preservation Society had not been re-consulted.

74/17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS - None

75/17 PARISH TIME

There was a parking problem on Church Hill on Saturday when a coach was unable to pass up the hill and had to reverse all the way back through the village and come the other way round to get to Vale Lane. It was suggested this was due to poor parking by visitors staying in a holiday home. The owners of the holiday home will be asked if they could advise their visitors to park considerately. It was also commented that it would help ease congestion if all residents could use their off road parking whenever possible.

A member of the public brought a copy of a picture of the village from many years ago showing the footbridge across The Splash and the railings at the other side of the road. The Chair commented that following the comments raised by a member of the public at the last meeting for an alternative style of footbridge over The Splash, he had found no support for a change amongst parishioners, only for the existing bridge to be properly maintained and tidied up.

A concern was raised about the scruffy appearance of Cherry Hill and the overgrown hedge near the entrance to Church Walk and the school. The landowner will be contacted.

It was also commented that the footpath up from the top of The Street towards The Priory is rather restricted by overgrown hedges.

The Chair thanked the person responsible for cutting the verge on Cherry Hill.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.13pm.

There are no sheets appended to these minutes.