

PEN SELWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Council Meeting held at the Village Hall on Wednesday 18th May 2016 at 7pm

Present: Cllrs. Steadman, Ashman, Appleton, Jenkins, FitzGerald, Carter and Juckes.

Apologies for Absence: None.

Declarations of interest: None.

Members of the Public: Mr Geoff Parcell, Mr Tony Harrison, Mr Paul Shinar, Mr Richard Elborough, Builder on behalf of Mr Paul Shinar

1. Planning Application 16/01800/FUL – Buildings at Pen House Farm.

Change of use from a quasi-equestrian/agricultural stable block to a wedding car hire business incorporating storage and repair to cars and extension to existing stable block

Mr Paul Shinar explained the background to this application. In summary, the existing stable block (which covers 3.5 sides of a courtyard) would be extended to fully enclose the courtyard and 35-40 cars would be stored there, together with a small workshop and office. The residential flat that is already there will be retained, so it can be used for security. The cars are held mainly as an investment, however, they are occasionally rented out as wedding cars. This is not a high volume rental business and rentals are likely to be limited to 4 a week at the most (usually at weekends) and mainly during the summer months.

Cllr Carter asked Mr Shinar whether the 3 employees listed on the application were the 2 people already living on site plus a mechanic? Mr Shinar confirmed this. Cllr Carter also asked whether the vehicles would be taken in and out on a low loader or driven in and out. Mr Shinar confirmed that he did have a low loader, which was to be kept at Belmont Farm (the adjoining property which is also in the same ownership as Pen House Farm) but that the majority of vehicle movements would just be cars themselves. Mr Shinar also confirmed that in future, tractors would be accessing the site via Belmont Farm and internal tracks across the two properties, not via the Pen House Farm road entrance.

Cllr FitzGerald felt that on the plus side, the application would bring employment and the buildings would look better for being enclosed. However, his main concern was that the application would create a brownfield site and that he would like to see the application limited to an individual, rather than to a company (as this interest could be assigned/passed on to others).

Cllr Jukes confirmed that the application was in the name of Mr Paul Shinar as an individual and that she shared Cllr FitzGerald's concern on this and thought that limiting any consent to Mr Shinar as an individual would be a reasonable request to make.

Cllr Carter said that he had reservations approving this application as it stands. The feeling from the Community Plan was that most people were not keen to see business development in the village or any significant increase in vehicle movements along the lanes. He had no issue with the physical development of the site, but if the change of use couldn't be maintained as being specific to a particular occupant then he was not happy with where granting consent of this application might lead. In particular, he could see no benefit to the community to offset the risks and the two statements by Grassroots Planning (a) that they were generating employment in the village and (b) that this was part of a comprehensive farm diversification scheme were not strictly correct, but were being used to justify a business case.

Cllr FitzGerald suggested a Section 109 Agreement could be put in place limiting the number of vehicle movements.

Cllr Appleton thought it would be preferential for cars to be using the main entrance to the property rather than tractors.

Cllr Jenkins thought it was unreasonable to try and restrict vehicle movements when other businesses in the village, such as the equestrian users, had no limit set on them. Furthermore, he did not see the point of putting in place a restriction that would be almost impossible to enforce.

A debate regarding whether or not vehicle movements should be limited followed. The road to the property is a single track road with passing places, visibility is limited by the hedgerows and there is already a significant volume of traffic passing along it. It was agreed that the County Council Highways Department should really advise on this.

Cllr Ashman summarised what was agreed: The Parish Council would write to South Somerset District Council Planning Department to express concern about the two statements made by Grassroots Planning given above, but confirm that they understood the intended use by the applicant was not particularly intensive and that they were not minded to object, as long as any grant of approval was (a) made personal to the applicant as an individual and (b) County Highways recommendation was sought on a maximum number of vehicle movements into and out of the site, which could be attached to any permission granted.

2. Insurance arrangements for the coming year

The Parish Council's insurance policy is due for renewal at 1st June 2016. The current insurers, Maven (via brokers, Aon), have provided a renewal quote of £514.78 and when

asked to re-quote against a slightly amended/reduced Asset Register (see item below) provided a quote of £489.99. The following alternative quotes have also been obtained by Cllr Jukes. (All policies are specialist 'Local Council' policies).

Aviva - £826.10 (via Came & Co. brokers)

Hiscox - £309.72 (via Came & Co. brokers)

Ecclesiastical - £975.99 (via Came & Co. brokers)

Zurich - £407.92 (direct quote)

The policies proposed were reviewed and compared to confirm that the levels of cover provided were sufficient and it was agreed to insure with Hiscox. Although a very slight saving could be achieved if a 3 year policy was purchased (the premium could be reduced to £294.23), it was felt that the Council should have the ability to 'shop around' again at the next renewal date.

3. Parish Council Asset Register

The Parish Council asset register has been updated and is attached. The values listed are predominantly for insurance purposes.

4. Review status of Footpath Officers

Footpath officers for the village currently come under the remit of Somerset County Council. Cllr Ashman was concerned that volunteers assisting with repairs to footpaths may not be covered by the County Council's insurance policy and this item was added to today's agenda in case they needed to be covered instead by the Parish Council's own policy. Cllr Ashman confirmed however, that she had spoken to the County Council and that they hold a list of those who regularly volunteer and that those individuals are covered. There is therefore no requirement to alter the status of the Footpath Officers to come under the remit of the Parish Council.

Meeting closed at 8.15 p.m.