

Shouldham Parish Council

Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Meeting of Shouldham Parish Council held on Monday 10th June 2024 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Present:

Parish Councillors: Nigel Walsh (Chair), Geoff Hipperson, John Carman, Ant Hobbs and Sarah Sheldon.

Proper Officer/RFO: Mike Inder.

Apologies: Keith Matthews, Pallavi Devulapalli.

In attendance:

Public: Nil.

- 80/24 **Introduction and apologies for absence:** The Chair opened the meeting and accepted apologies.
- 81/24 **Declarations of interest:** None.
- 82/24 **Public forum:** None present.
- 83/24 **To agree the minutes of the previous meeting:** The draft minutes of the meeting held on 20th May 2024 were posted and circulated ahead of the meeting. Cllr Hobbs proposed the minutes as a true reflection of the meeting, seconded by Cllr Carman, and agreed.
- 84/24 **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group update.** Cllr Hobbs reported that the NHP SG held the public consultation on the plan and site allocation on the 1st and 3rd June and that c50 residents attended. The consultation questionnaire has been distributed and returns to the Post Office are due to close on 15 Jun 24.
- 85/24 **Update on alternate planning application proposal for the 'Rhubarb Field':** Following item 68/24.c. the clerk had contacted the applicant's agent to convey the Council's response. The Council had been split on whether to accept the proposal for 7 homes in a linear design along the boundary that extended outside the current development boundary; it was considered an improvement on the permitted plan but did not consider sufficiently their comments during the original application regarding density, green space (garden size), more affordable housing and a design more in keeping with the Shouldham vision. A possible overlooking issue at the property nearest the road was also highlighted. The agent responded that the new proposal was not for discussion and that either the Council 100% supported it as proposed or they would just return to the permitted application. The Clerk asked that the Council's offer to enter into a discussion to find a mutually acceptable plan was put to the applicant. The clerk received a phone call from the agent 20 minutes later confirming that the applicant was not open to discussion, and they would proceed with the permitted application. The Clerk reported the outcome to Cllrs, and they were disappointed. Cllr Walsh called for an extra ordinary meeting to review the situation and for Council to ensure that they explored and documented all avenues to ensure the decision reached was fully supported. The plans were reviewed again using the approach set out in Annex A. Councillors were of the opinion that the new proposal, having stepped outside of the development boundary to a linear design along the boundary, whilst reducing the feel of tight town development density didn't actually alter the density and the allocated gardens and green space had remained smaller than its rural setting could support and was achievable.

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It was proposed by Cllr Sheldon that the new proposal was not supported in its current form, seconded by Cllr Carman and it was voted unanimously not to support the new proposal. It was also agreed that the applicant should be informed that the Council remained open to meeting to discuss and were optimistic that a compromise could be reached.

- 86/24 **To consider a protocol for dealing with pre-submission consultations:** Cllr Hobbs put forward a policy to form a steering group for planning and for them to meet to review proposals in-depth and research all material matters and compliance with the future Neighbourhood Plan, Local Plan and NPPF. The clerk suggested that rather than a stand alone policy that duplicated some aspects of the existing Approach to Planning Policy, that the steering group and its protocols be embedded in the existing policy and that following the review of Cllr roles and responsibilities if there were at least 3 cllrs volunteers to be part of a planning steering group then that could be incorporated and the policy amended, it was agreed to address at the next meeting.
- 87/24 **Close:** next meeting Mon 17th June at 7.30pm. Cllr Walsh gave his apologies in advance.

Meeting closed at 8pm

Chairman

Date

Prepared by
Mike Inder, Parish Council Clerk & RFO

shouldhampc@gmail.com
<http://shouldhampc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk>

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Annex A**Rhubarb Field Planning Strategy****Context and Background:**

- The initial proposal for the Rhubarb Field involved developing five properties in one corner of the field.
- The Parish Council (PC) objected, citing concerns about creating a miniature urban build that would not fit with the parish's character.
- An alternative proposal was suggested to expand beyond the development boundary, incorporating seven properties with more garden space, aiming for a design that would be less dense and blend aesthetically with the village.
- The applicant has now approached the PC again with a new proposal for seven properties.

Objective

The objective is to determine whether to support the applicant's new proposal of seven properties, ensuring the development aligns with the village's character and meets the PC's approval.

Approach

- 1. Initial Decision Making:**
 - Discuss and clarify if the PC is in favour of considering the new proposal for seven properties.
 - If the decision is a 'yes', proceed with conditional discussions.
 - If the decision is a 'no', inform the applicant and record the decision.
- 2. Conditions for Approval:**
 - Ensure the development includes ample garden space and maintains an aesthetic that blends with the village.
 - Avoid an urban design and ensure the development enhances the rural character of the parish.
 - Establish design and layout guidelines in collaboration with the applicant.
- 3. Engagement with the Applicant:**
 - Schedule a meeting with the applicant to discuss the proposal in detail.
 - Convey the PC's conditions and expectations for the development.
 - Work with the applicant to revise and refine the design and layout as needed.
- 4. Documentation and Records:**
 - Document all discussions, decisions, and conditions set by the PC.
 - Record the final agreement or disagreement with the applicant's proposal.
 - Maintain thorough records for future reference and transparency.

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Key Considerations

1. **Aesthetic and Character:**
 - Ensure the development maintains the rural and aesthetic character of the village.
 - Incorporate green spaces and gardens to prevent a dense, urban look.
2. **Community Impact:**
 - Assess the potential impact on the community and local infrastructure.
 - Consider feedback from parish residents regarding the development.
3. **Regulatory Compliance:**
 - Ensure the proposal complies with local planning regulations and guidelines.
 - Work with the borough council to address any objections or concerns they may have.

Conclusion

The PC must conduct a thorough review of the applicant's new proposal for seven properties on the Rhubarb Field. By setting clear conditions and working collaboratively with the applicant, the PC can ensure that any development aligns with the parish's character and meets the community's needs. Documenting each step of the process will provide a transparent record of the PC's decision-making and planning efforts.

Immediate Actions

1. **Internal PC Discussion:**
 - Convene a meeting to discuss the new proposal and reach a preliminary decision.
2. **Applicant Meeting:**
 - Arrange a meeting with the applicant to discuss the proposal and PC's conditions.
3. **Documentation:**
 - Begin documenting the process, including meeting notes, decisions, and conditions for the development.

By following this approach, the PC can manage the Rhubarb Field development effectively and ensure it meets the community's expectations and regulatory requirements.

N Walsh
Chair

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