

# Elm Parish Council

## Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of Elm Parish Council held at Tower Hall, Friday Bridge on Wednesday 18th August 2021 commencing at 6.30pm

[Meetings of the Parish Council may be recorded by the Clerk to aid with minute taking. Any such recording is destroyed once the minutes are agreed].

Present: Cllrs, Brand, Feaviour, Ferguson (Chairman), Goodley, Hopkin, Milham & Welbourne, Mrs S England – Parish Clerk, 1 member of the public. Mr G Edwards, Mr C McGill.

188.21 **Apologies** – The Clerk reported apologies for Cllr Cotterell; Council resolved to accept her reason for absence. District Councillor Sutton had submitted his apologies for not being able to attend the meeting.

189.21 **To receive declarations of disclosable interests and requests for dispensation** – None reported.

190.21 **To resolve to suspend Standing Orders in order to allow a presentation to be made concerning proposals for the residential development of Friday Bridge Camp.**  
6.40pm – It was resolved to suspend Standing Orders.

191.21 **PRESENTATION** ‘Proposals for residential development of Friday Bridge Camp’ Presenters – Gareth Edwards (Swann Edwards, Architects), Craig McGill (WMS Recruitment, Applicant).

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Mr Edwards and Mr McGill for attending to make the presentation. The following information was put forward as part of the presentation;

- An **outline** planning application had been submitted for the erection of up to 102 dwellings, a retail unit and sports changing facilities, involving the demolition of existing buildings, at Friday Bridge Agricultural Camp, 173 March Road, Friday Bridge.
- Proposals included a mixture of flats and houses (one, two, three and four-bed).
- It was proposed that the tree belt along March Road would be retained and there would be improvements to the existing access at the site.
- Whilst it was hoped that the site would be able to continue as an accommodation facility for agriculture workers; due to external factors such as Brexit; the camp was running at approximately 50% capacity and any further reduction would prove it to be unsustainable. This led to the question, ‘What did the camp become if it could not be used for its current purpose?’.
- Whilst improved access to labour was being investigated, the site’s owners also needed to explore a long term strategy to prepare for a situation where the number of migrant workers reduced even further.

192.21 **Question & Answer Session** – Everyone present was provided with the opportunity to raise questions or concerns relating to the proposals. The following points arose during the discussions;

- The idea to develop the site was first talked about in 2016 after the Brexit Referendum had taken place.
- In the event that outline planning was granted, it was likely that the site would be sold to a developer rather than being developed by the current owners. Potential developers would not be approached until such time outline planning was agreed.
- The current owners were conscious of the historic significance of the site and intended to recognise this in some way as part of the development proposals.
- The S106 agreement required that 20% of properties would need to be social housing. It would be up to the developer whether or not existing village residents would be prioritised for these properties. Registered social landlords would expect a mix of both shared ownership and 100% rented properties.
- Residents raised a number of issues concerning the density of the proposed development and the need for improvements to infrastructure should the application be granted, for example; schools, medical surgeries, hospitals, affordable homes, libraries, recreation areas. It was explained that all of these areas would be considered as part of the S106 agreement.
- Concerns were also raised in respect of highway safety, in particular, (i) the 60mph speed limit along the March Road which was regularly exceeded by motorists, (ii) the narrow pavement which did not allow two persons to walk side by side, (iii) hazard caused by additional volume of traffic which would be using the

access, (iv) increase in commuter traffic which would add burden to the 'back roads' particularly when the A47 was closed. It was explained that access to the proposed site would be significantly improved and an adoptable road would be incorporated into the development. Cambridgeshire Highways would be consulted on matters of highway safety as part of the planning process.

- Residents indicated that they did not want another 'executive style' development, their preference would be for housing which was affordable for first-time buyers. It was explained that the housing mix would be down to a 'reserved matters' planning application but the current plan included a significant number of smaller houses and flats.
- Should full planning permission be granted for the development, it was expected to take approximately three years for the site to be constructed. If a developer wanted to change the details of the outline planning application, they would be required to go through the full planning process again.
- A traffic management plan would be set up during the construction phase to deal with additional HGV movements. Residents raised concern that the rules would not be adhered to.
- Addressing concerns raised relating to drainage, it was explained that a comprehensive drainage strategy would be part of the application, furthermore, it would provide more water disposal facility than presently existed.
- Residents queried the measures taken for conservation of habitats and wildlife; it was confirmed that ecological and biodiversity surveys had been sourced from independent specialists, these would be analysed as part of the planning process. Preservation of hedges, tree planting, installation of bat and bird boxes were included in the proposals.
- It was confirmed that professional bodies such as English Heritage and Natural England would be approached as consultees during the planning process.
- The current owner of the Camp invited members of the public to visit the site and confirmed that they were open to suggestions for alternative economically viable uses for the land should current operations cease.

**193.21 To resolve to reinstate Standing Orders and enter closed session for reasons of confidentiality.**

The Chairman thanked everyone present for attending the meeting. Mr Edwards and Mr McGill agreed to stay on to answer further questions independent of the Council meeting.

7.35pm – Council resolved to enter closed session. Members entered a private room adjacent to the hall to continue their discussions.

**194.21 To discuss any matters arising from the presentation which may be considered confidential due to legal or data protection issues.**

Members held a general discussion concerning issues raised. It was resolved for the Clerk to write to English Heritage alerting them to the proposals and seeking their guidance.

**195.21 Close of meeting** – the meeting closed at 7.50pm

Chairman .....  
Elm Parish Council

Date .....