

Notes from the Annual Assembly meeting held on Monday 23rd May 2016

Present: - Councillors Per-Axel Warensjo, Gary Sumner and Colin Offer,

In attendance:- Councillors Dave Hayward, Joe Smith, Colin Hayes, Roger Whitfield, Mark Simpson, Bob Biggs and Donna Stalker, Clerk and 36 members of public

1. Opening Remarks

Per-Axel Warensjo introduced himself confirming that at the last Parish Council meeting he was elected as the new chairperson for Wanborough Parish Council, taking over from Gary Sumner who he would like to thank for his work as chairperson over previous years. He also confirmed that Gary Sumner is now the new Borough Councillor for Ridgeway Ward.

Per-Axel Warensjo highlighted other items that have happened over the last year (that are not on the agenda)

- Community Speedwatch – There are currently four volunteers in the village carrying out community speedwatch. Per-Axel Warensjo provided some statistical information from previous speedwatch checks. He also asked residents to contact the Parish Clerk if they are interested in becoming a volunteer to be more involved in this.
- Broadband – Superfast broadband is coming to Swindon; look at superfastswindon.com for further information.
- Flood Mitigation Work – This work has now been completed by Swindon Borough Council's contractors. Parish Council will continue to monitor to make sure this has made a difference.
- Play Area – A new play area has been installed at the Lower Recreation Field and has been hugely successful.

2. Neighbourhood Plan

Per-Axel Warensjo confirmed that the draft Neighbourhood Plan consultation is now complete. The committee are now in discussions with Swindon Borough Council to decide if any amendments need to be made to the Plan. One area that will need to be changed is the section on Redlands, but the committee will work with Swindon Borough Council on this.

3. Transfer of Services from Swindon Borough Council

Per-Axel Warensjo confirmed that, as from 1st April 2016, Parish Council have taken on additional services from Swindon Borough Council to include grass cutting, litter bin emptying, footpath maintenance, fly-tipping and graffiti removal. Swindon Borough Council have provided some initial funding towards this but after three years this funding will cease. The aim is that Parish Council will have better control over these services and hopefully residents will see an improvement in these areas. If there are any problems with footpaths and village maintenance residents now need to contact Parish Council directly via the Clerk and not Swindon Borough Council.

4. New Eastern Villages update (only in relation to the impact on the village)

Gary Sumner gave a summary of the current status of the New Eastern Villages development. In particular regarding the following applications that have been submitted to Swindon Borough Council:-

- Redlands – Although in the Local Plan this is included as Phase 3 of the NEV (i.e. 2021 to 2026) there is currently a live planning application for some 370 homes and land for a primary school. This application is due to be determined at the end of June 2016, but it is likely to be delayed to a later date due to highways and other questions. Access is proposed via the Wanborough Road whereas the NEV masterplan envisaged access via the development as the other phases were to be built first.
- Lotmead – Two live applications by Ainscough, one for 2,300 homes and a smaller development off Wanborough Road for 200 homes. Both applications on hold until end of June 2016, again likely to be delayed further.

- Rowborough – This site is likely to come back with a full planning application later this year for some 2,400 homes.

Gary Sumner confirmed that a planning application for the “Southern Connector Road” (a link from the NEV to Commonhead Roadabout) is due later this year.

Gary Sumner confirmed that Parish Council will be working with Swindon Borough Council to look at the “rat running” problem within the village and the impact the NEV will have on this.

Gary Sumner confirmed that Swindon Borough Council have had some success in obtaining government funding towards the infrastructure improvements for the NEV which include: White Hart roundabout, Southern Connector Road, A420 improvements and widening the access to Junction 15 of M4.

5. Bus Service

Gary Sumner confirmed that he is currently working with Swindon Borough Council to find a possible long term solution for a bus service in the village. He hopes to have a draft bus timetable shortly which he will share with residents. This will be a 16 seater mini bus which will include a service to the hospital and also Sainsbury's. SBC will supply the bus, agree an operator and then, if the service requires funding, the 7-8 parishes involved will need to agree to fund this.

6. Questions

Per-Axel Warensjo confirmed that residents are welcome to raise any questions they may have.

A question was raised in relation to the traffic consultation that has been carried out on the NEV.

Gary Sumner confirmed that there is a Transport Study (SBC) currently out on consultation and available to view on SBC's website; residents are welcome to make comments on this.

Questions were raised in relation to the fact that SBC's Local Plan does not specify the exact the number of dwellings at Redlands. In the Neighbourhood Plan a number is specified but this is not the same as the number of dwellings shown in the recent application.

Gary Sumner confirmed that just because there is no number shown in the Local Plan this does not mean it is unlimited. Per-Axel Warensjo confirmed that he realises that the number quoted in the Neighbourhood Plan will need to be amended and this is one of the discussions the committee will be having with SBC.

A number of questions were raised in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan's Policy 13 regarding the proposed allocation of 20 homes off Hewers Close.

Questions were raised in relation to how the Neighbourhood Plan committee decided on this site and why there is a need for this many houses when there are already houses being proposed at Redlands.

Per-Axel Warensjo confirmed that as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process, landowners have to be allowed the opportunity to put forward sites that they think will be suitable for development. The NP Committee received 11 applications, plus SBC's SHLAA sites were also considered, all these applications were assessed under the same criteria.

Gary Sumner confirmed that the number of dwellings at Redlands is a separate allocation of houses within the Local Plan and cannot be used within the allocation of houses for the Neighbourhood Plan. In the Local Plan it states that within the rural areas, which includes Wanborough, there needs to be an allocation of 100 new homes up to 2026.

Questions were raised in relation to what feedback and responses had been received from the draft Neighbourhood Plan consultation, concerns were raised in relation to the proposed access through Hewers Close, and the impact of construction traffic and additional traffic onto the High Street.

Colin Offer confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan committee do not yet know what responses have been received from the consultation as these are still being reviewed. Colin Offer also stated that Highways England have fully assessed the proposed access to the development through Hewers Close and they have confirmed that it is acceptable.

Per-Axel Warensjo confirmed that a report needs to be compiled from all the responses received and to be submitted to Swindon Borough Council.

Questions were raised asking why the Neighbourhood Plan committee were so keen on this site when there are so many planning constraints, such as being a site of historic interest, conservation area, etc.

Per-Axel Warensjo confirmed that this site has been assessed under the same criteria as all the other applications and came out as having the best community benefit for the village. The committee have three options to consider:-

1. To leave policy 13 as it is,
2. To reduce the number of dwellings within the proposal, or
3. To remove policy 13 completely from the Neighbourhood Plan.

No decision has yet been made on which option. The Neighbourhood Plan committee are planning to hold an "Open Forum" meeting in late June, when residents will have a chance to discuss further.

Question was raised as to whether residents will get a chance to see the final Neighbourhood Plan before it is submitted to Swindon Borough Council and what are the next stages/timetable for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Per-Axel Warensjo confirmed the timetable for the Neighbourhood Plan will include the committee:-

- Looking at and reviewing all the feedback;
- Sending the Plan to SBC along with a summary of all responses;
- SBC appointing an inspector to review and comment on the plan; and
- SBC organising a referendum.

A resident raised a concern that there does not seem to be another chance for residents to be involved in the final Neighbourhood Plan and asked when the report showing the summary of responses will be available for residents to view.

Per-Axel Warensjo confirmed that he will ensure that this information is put onto the Neighbourhood Plan website for residents to view, but could not confirm when this report would be ready.

Gary Sumner asked residents for their opinion on where houses should be allocated within the Parish.

A few residents stated that they would prefer the access to the proposed site not to be off Hewers Close, but instead off Rotten Row, others felt a reduced scheme may be better, but would prefer nothing to be behind them.

Question was raised as to whether the Neighbourhood Plan committee had considered if the land behind Kite Hill, between Warneage Green and Kings Lane, would be a better site for housing.

Gary Sumner confirmed that this site had not been put forward to be considered as part of the Neighbourhood Plan. Colin Offer felt that the access to this site would be difficult.

A resident suggested that perhaps more dwellings could be considered similar to that being built next to Pond Farm.

Colin Offer stated that this was agreed under appeal, but this statement was corrected by Gary Sumner, who stated that permission was gained as there used to be a barn at the location which has been pulled down and replaced by a house.

Question was raised in relation to what was happening at Florence House.

Gary Sumner confirmed that SBC Planning Enforcement Officer is aware of this and it has been agreed that no more than 6 people can stay there. The problem will be knowing when they exceed this number so all that can be done is for residents to report to Parish Council if they are aware that an excessive number of people are living at Florence House.

Per-Axel Warensjo thanked residents for attending the meeting and confirmed that he would ensure that the information on the proposed Open Forum meeting will be advertised in the Lyden, on the website and on noticeboards.

Meeting closed at 9.15pm.