**Crawley Parish Council**

**Minutes of extraordinary meeting held at 7.30pm on 19th April 2023 at The Lamb**

Present: Cllrs Mark McCappin (Chair for meeting), Tony Connell, Heather Northam, Graham Howkins; Sheena Derry (Secretary), Liam Walker (OCC); 28 members of the public.

1. Apologies: Cllr Colin Dingwall, Steve and Gillian Yates, Rebecca and David Hanson, Jill and Richard Kerr.

2. Declarations of interest: Following accusations of a conflict of interest for Colin Dingwall in relation to this proposed development, the remaining parish councillors met on 12th April to determine the facts and are satisfied that he has no pecuniary involvement. MM read out the following statement:

**“For the avoidance of doubt our Chairman, Colin Dingwall, has confirmed to the Parish Council that he has absolutely no pecuniary interest in the proposals surrounding the development of the Crawley Inn site. In this respect Colin has also confirmed that he has never been a director, associate or otherwise of Clerkenwell Properties Limited. The inclusion on that company’s website showing him as an associate director was erroneous and has since been removed. On this basis the Parish Council are satisfied that Colin has acted correctly and in compliance with our code of practice.”**

A number of people contested this statement. LW intervened and asked anyone with concerns to write directly to WODC or to send them to him to forward to WODC.

3. The Crawley Inn planning application

3.1. Issues of concern

* Some people thought that as a Category A village there was an outright ban on new development, other than conversion of existing buildings. SD had sought clarification and received this response: **“Crawley falls within the ‘small villages, hamlets and open countryside’ category of the settlement hierarchy to the Local Plan. In light of the Council’s five-year housing land supply position, this does not necessarily mean that new buildings would not be permitted - it is a matter of planning balance and judgement for the decision-maker taking into account relevant planning considerations.”** (Clare Anscombe, WODC Case Officer for this planning application).

In light of the Council currently being unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, it appears the weight of these stipulations is somewhat reduced. Nevertheless, we should attempt to uphold them if possible.

* The number and size of the proposed homes was questioned. Most thought that eight new properties were too many for the village and that fewer houses would also mean fewer cars. Suggestions included two instead of three properties in the old Crawley Inn and three small, terraced houses instead of four semi-detached on the car park. MM drew attention to the series of layout options shown in planning application in Design and Access Statement Part 2 (4 large houses plus 3 in Crawley Inn with car parking on both sides of Foxburrow Lane; 9 smaller houses plus 3 in Crawley Inn; 5 large houses plus 3 in Crawley Inn). These iterations had been discussed with WODC. The fourth iteration is in this planning application.
* Layout of the proposed development. One parishioner had asked if the historic blacksmith’s workshop/forge building opposite the Crawley Inn could be retained and refurbished “as-was” including the use of local materials and perhaps re-purposed as the wheelie bin store for the pub-side apartments. MM reported that the had been informed by the developer that they would be happy to consider this point but did not believe the stone building is included in the Crawley Inn property.
* Flooding was a major concern. Following heavy rain, water runs down Foxburrow Lane, some going into the existing car park. In the severe floods of 2007 parts of the site flooded, with most of the water coming down the valley in Showell Brook, which overtopped. Parts of the development (lower part of the garden of the proposed large house and the parking spaces for the terraced houses) are in a flood zone 3 (risk of flooding 1/100 years). The planning application proposes that the houses would all be raised to at least 600mm (2ft) above the flood zone. The plans include drainage and attenuation of surface water on the site. MM raised with the developer the issue of reinstating drainage from the ditch on the north side of Foxburrow Lane across the car park to Showell Brook, perhaps by piping it across, and with attenuation in situ. The developer has advised that he would in-principle be willing to incorporate this improvement.
* The village already has ongoing problems with sewage. (1) The pipes are leaky and let in significant amount of ground water during wet periods. Thames Water know about this and intend to reline the pipes this summer. (2) There is also a problem with “fat bergs”, which again Thames Water are aware of and are taking steps to clear. (3) Sewage is pumped from the pumping station on Dry Lane through the village and up Foxburrow Lane, on to the pumping station in Hailey on Priest Hill Lane. Thames Water’s maps show this rising main going up Foxburrow Lane to the junction with Priest Hill Lane, but Crawley residents understand that when it was laid it was actually taken across the pub car park and fields to Priest Hill Lane. MM has alerted Thames Water and the developer to this, and it is being investigated. The rising main may need to be diverted. Thames Water’s response to the planning application shows that the capacity of the sewage system is adequate to service the proposed new houses.
* It was felt that there were too few parking spaces in the proposed development (two per house + two for visitors). The plan meets parking requirements.
* Concern was raised about the increase in traffic movements that would result from the new houses. At the last count (a few years ago) there were 400-500 traffic movements/day on Foxburrow Lane, and this is likely to have increased. The road is single track down into the village centre, with no passing places and limited visibility in places, and no street lighting. LW suggested traffic calming at the entrance to the village on Foxburrow Lane to slow vehicles down. There is no prospect of getting a footpath due to the narrow verges.
* Concern was also raised about construction traffic. It was suggested that it should not come through the village centre, but down Foxburrow Lane.
* People were annoyed that the leaflet that was distributed round the village was a consultation document, as this was not made clear. The response from the leaflet was used to generate numbers supposedly in favour of the development. These numbers are now in the local press.

3.2. Build specification and quality.

* MM reported that the developer has confirmed that the new buildings will be stone-faced with stone roof tiles, will have high levels of insulation, air source heat pumps, and possibly solar panels. Some people objected to the solar panels.
* Some people commented they thought the illustrations looked too modern, “like a housing estate”, and not in keeping with the village.

4. Possible contribution from developer towards a village improvement/project.

* MM suggested that the developer could clear Showell Brook right through the village to where it joins the Windrush, to improve flow and mitigate flooding risk. He thought that following a thorough clearance it would be easier for riparian owners to maintain the channel. The developer has indicated he is happy to do this if it would help.
* One parishioner thought the construction traffic would further damage the already badly potholed road and asked if the developer could make good the road.

The parish council will now meet to compile a response to the planning application for WODC. This response will be available to view on the planning application web page, under Documents.

(<https://publicaccess.westoxon.gov.uk/online-applications/>)

Search for application no. 23/00539/FUL