

MATHON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a PLANNING MEETING of the PARISH COUNCIL held in Mathon Parish Hall, Mathon, on Thursday 17th February 2022 at 7.00 pm

Present:- Cllr S Harte, Cllr C Green, Cllr P Davies, Cllr K Perkins, Cllr N Walker

Apologies - Cllr M Malsbury

6 members of the public attended the meeting.

Declaration of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) or other Disclosable Interests falling within the terms of para 12(4)(b) of the Code of Conduct. – Cllr C Green declared a Pecuniary Interest in item 5(c) on the Agenda, and had e-mailed her interest in this item to the Clerk prior to the meeting.

No requests had been received by the Clerk for any Dispensations relating to items on the Agenda (Sec 33 of the Localism Act 2011)

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME - Mr Bulmer (a parishioner) wished to record his objection to Cllr C Green (Vice-Chairman) being in attendance at the meeting. However, it was pointed out that Cllr C Green was the applicant re item 5(c) and was entitled to put forward any points she wished to raise regarding her application and to respond to any points raised (should she wish to do so). Cllr C Green would be leaving the meeting when application No 214472 was considered by the Council.

Mr Bulmer as the main spokesperson for the objectors attending the meeting, circulated a list of concerns he wished to raise, and urged the Council to visit Rookrow Farm to see how the Farm had developed into a major international industrial site for the storage, processing and distribution of food, with the almost total absence of planning permission. Other issues of concern raised by Mr Bulmer and other parishioners included :-

Heavy articulated lorries, tractors and trailer traffic visiting the site day and night, causing extensive damage to the narrow country roads in the area; seasonal workers being recruited from Europe and transported to work in fields outside the area of Mathon; vegetables for packing being imported from Spain, Portugal and Holland; local residents unable to access their drives because of the lorries; non English speaking lorry drivers needing directions to Rookrow Farm having got lost following their satnavs; rubbish being thrown into the fields and hedges in the area; a general feeling of intimidation; 33 static caravans to house the seasonal workers sited on the edge of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty could not be described as enhancing the environment; the packing of vegetables was an industrial activity and should take place in a factory on an industrial estate, not in the heart of the countryside;

Cllr C Green responded by saying that to remain viable, many farms have to purchase/rent/lease land outside their original boundaries, and this is a common practice throughout the UK. The static caravans had been on site for over 10 years, and although they should be moved off site for two months of the year, this would cause more upheaval and nuisance for the farm and neighbouring parishioners. It was important to have a base for all workers in one place. This was especially a key element in containing the coronavirus outbreak when Rookrow farm worked in partnership with all the relevant authorities to ensure minimum risk to parishioners. The farm

also employed 12 full time English workers. She had made numerous representations to and was in constant dialogue with Balfour Beatty/Herefordshire Council re the road surface/potholes.

10/22 PLANNING

The Council considered the following planning applications :-

- (a) App No: 220187
Site: The Granary. Moat Farm, Mathon WR13 5PF
Proposal: Construction of Garden Room and study extension plus detached garage/workshop.
Grid Ref: OS 374615,244713
App Type: Full Householder

The Council discussed this application and the Clerk was instructed to send the following comments to Herefordshire Planning Services :-

Mathon Parish Council noted the objection from HBO Herefordshire Council and that the Granary is a listed building in its own right and not listed as part of the curtilage of the farmhouse as stated in the application. The Council's view is that the new detached garage/workshop/gym is too large a building to be sited near to a Grade II Listed Farmhouse.

- (b) App No: 220141
Site: Merrow Cottage, Mathon WR13 5PR
Proposal: Two storey rear extension with internal and external alterations
Grid Ref: OS 372891,245197
App Type: Full Householder

The Council discussed this application and the Clerk was instructed to send the following comments to Herefordshire Planning Services:-

Mathon Parish Council has no comment to make on this application

Cllr C Green then left the meeting

- (c) App No: 214472
Site: Rookrow Farm, Mathon WR13 5PR
Proposal: Use of agricultural land for seasonal worker accommodation & associated physical works which included the creation of access tracks and areas of hardstanding, and the installation of a package treatment plant & drainage field (**Retrospective**)

The Council discussed this retrospective application at some length bearing in mind the concerns that had been raised. The development of the farm had taken place over many years, and as with other farms throughout the UK Rookrow had needed to expand outside its historical boundaries. The Clerk was asked to send the following comments to Herefordshire Planning Services:-

The Council understands that there is a lot of local concern about this application as it affects those parishioners who live near to Rookrow Farm. As the farm business has developed over the years, problems have been caused by the increase of heavy lorry traffic, tractors and other farm/business related traffic on the narrow roads. Any further expansion of accommodation for seasonal workers at Rookrow Farm will require Planning Permission. Mathon Parish Council does not object to this retrospective application for the existing caravan accommodation.

..... Chairman

Date

DRAFT